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IN DEFENSE OF ENGELS' MARXIST METHOD

by Evelyn Reed, Lower Manhattan Branch,
New York Local

In his polemic "Towards a Critique of 'Political' Anthropology" (Discussion Bulletin Vol. 31, No. 5), Comrade Jan Garrett expresses his disenchantment with the "politicals" who apply the method of historical materialism in their analyses of anthropological data. It is directed against Engels and Reed. He takes Engels to task for his methodological errors in *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, and then criticizes Reed, the blind follower of Engels.

According to Garrett, the great error made by Engels was to "start at the beginning," that is, with the sequence of stages of social evolution delineated by Lewis Morgan, founder of American anthropology. Morgan had presented this sequence as going from savagery through barbarism to civilization. He had arranged his findings on the basis of the existing material conditions of life and labor at each successive stage in this evolutionary process. Through this approach, which Engels praised as a "rediscovery" of the historical-materialist method, Morgan made his two most fundamental discoveries: (1) that primitive society had been founded on the maternal gens or clan system (matriarchy), and (2) that it had been a society of "primitive communism."

Drawing upon this data, Engels then applied his own Marxist analysis to spell out more fully the drastic changes that had occurred with the advent of civilization, or class society. He highlighted the fact that along with the downfall of the primitive communistic system there occurred the historic downfall of the female sex. From a former status of full equality with men, women became the degraded and oppressed sex.

Comrade Garrett is now dissatisfied with this exposition; the book was based upon the findings of Morgan and others who mistakenly thought they could probe into a dim and distant past about which we still know very little, if anything. Many anthropologists today deny that savage society was communistic or matriarchal. Who can say for sure whether such a society ever existed? Wouldn't it be simpler to just drop the sequence of stages, especially the stage that represents "the beginning"? It is too far in the past to be of any use today.

There is nothing new about arguments of this type. They have been put forward for over half a century by the anti-historical twentieth-century anthropologists, who have rejected the findings of Morgan, Tylor and the rest of the nineteenth-century evolutionists. This repudiation enabled them to lop off the epoch of savagery, the period that is most embarrassing to defenders of capitalist society because it is both communistic and matriarchal.

Comrade Garrett, too, would like to lop off this period of social history. But he differs from the others in one respect. They are open opponents of the Marxist method in anthropology. Garrett is a concealed opponent; he criticizes Engels for incorrectly applying the Marxist method in *Origin*. Buttressed by a quotation from Marx, he tries to show that Engels was foolish enough to delve into the *past* whereas Marx always proceeded from the *present*.

This methodological gem is presented in his section, "The Error in 'Starting at the Beginning'" (p. 8). Here Garrett takes Marx's *Capital* and other writings on political economy, weaving them together with Engels' *Origin*. Despite the disparity between the two types of study, Comrade Garrett tosses them together like the ingredients of a mixed salad and then garnishes the pile with an olive on top—the quotation from Marx.

An unwary reader of this quotation might assume from his remarks about a "primordial state" and a "political economist trying to clarify things" by pushing the issue "into a gray, misty past," that Marx was directing his remarks against Engels and the folly of those who go probing around in the past when it's the present that counts. But this is not the case. *Capital* and related writings are studies of capitalist political economy which concern a *present* social system, capitalism. *Origin*, on the other hand, is a study of precapitalist and preclass society, and deals with a *past* social system.

It is dishonest of Comrade Garrett to tear a quotation out of Marx's context and arbitrarily insert it into his own context of a polemic against Engels. The quotation was written in 1844, some 33 years before the science of anthropology was founded with the publication of Morgan's *Ancient Society*, and 40 years before Engels' *Origin* was published. Marx was merely pointing out that in a study of modern political economy it is necessary to proceed from the present. It should be equally obvious that a study of ancient society cannot proceed without delving into the past, as was done in *Origin*.

But Comrade Garrett wants to portray Engels as a deficient Marxist and separate him from Marx. Engels, he says, "does not seem to have completely understood this aspect of Marx's thought;" he "adopted, more or less, this posture of 'the political economist trying to clarify things' which Marx had earlier criticized." According to Garrett, Engels caused "harm" with his study (p. 8). Returning to this theme in another segment, he pulls a quotation by Marx out of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* to press his point that it is not necessary for us to "drug ourselves" with the past to achieve our present-day revolution (pp. 9, 10).

These quotations are supposed to prove that Engels had a fundamental flaw that separated him from Marx. There is nothing original in this technique. Revisionists over many decades have resorted to the same device, pulling quotations out of context and trying to set Marxists against each other—all to cover up their retreat from the Marxist method.

Thus, Comrade Garrett's crude attempt to divide Engels from Marx is not new. He has been preceded by others; some have even tried to divide the young Marx from the mature man slicing off, so to speak, the non-Marxist portion of Marx. Comrade Garrett would like to give the impression that *Origin* was an Engelsian deviation from Marxism when, in fact, the book was the product of the closest collaboration between the two men. Engels

utilized the notes made by Marx when he wrote and published the book after the death of Marx. It represents a joint application of the historical-materialist method developed by both.

Since Comrade Garrett does not hesitate to employ devious methods in his attack upon Engels, it is not likely that he would be more scrupulous with respect to Reed. His assortment of complaints and jibes against me are largely based upon misstatements of fact or his own flights of fancy about what I said or wrote. Moreover, since he favors the bourgeois academic anthropologists—about whom he expresses not one word of criticism—he is not averse to borrowing their anti-Marxist arguments to use against me.

In his section, "Evelyn Reed's Myth of the Golden Age" (p. 8), he says that I portray preclass society as a Golden Age. This expression, as I have previously indicated, has been used by some anthropologists who believe in the everlasting character of the capitalist system and are scornful of those who say otherwise. They cannot conceive of a time when the evils of our society did not exist. Imagine mere savages enjoying a society of liberty and equality! How ridiculous to believe in such a Golden Age! To their credit, they at least grant that if it did exist it was a Golden Age by contrast with our own greedy and predatory social relations.

In this respect Comrade Garrett differs from them. To Garrett, primitive communism probably never existed, but even if it did, it was not genuine communism. He is particularly incensed by my statement in the introduction to the new edition of Engels' *Origin* (taken from Morgan) that "Savage society was founded upon the cardinal principles of liberty and equality for all" (p. 9). Garrett is positive that primitive society was not "egalitarian"; and a spurious communism cannot be called a Golden Age.

He emphasizes this point in scattered segments of his article. ". . . she ought not to use the term egalitarian without qualification," he writes. "Egalitarianism does not mean simple absence of highly developed class antagonisms. . . . In preclass society neither equality nor general inequality was institutionalized" (p. 7). Again, "Just because there is a lack of evidence for institutionalized oppression in preclass cultures, we are not automatically entitled to call it egalitarianism" (p. 9). Finally, my greatest sin is my "attempt to make preclass society look like socialism" (p. 6). In other words, according to Garrett, I am not only guilty of the Myth of the Golden Age, but have endowed a fake form of communism with that title.

I differ with Comrade Garrett on every one of his contentions. Egalitarianism to me means precisely the *absence* of class antagonisms, even those that are not "highly developed." If there is no *evidence* of institutionalized oppression, as Garrett admits, we *are* entitled to accept the mass of evidence that proves primitive society was egalitarian and communistic. Finally, if I am attempting to make preclass society look like socialism it is because egalitarianism and the absence of oppression are essential characteristics of both communism and socialism. In other words, I do not agree with Comrade Garrett that primitive communism was a fraud.

Comrade Garrett, however, goes so far as to declare that egalitarianism is only an idea, and an idea that

developed late in history; it came in around the time of Christianity. He writes: "It took the rise of Christianity, or at least pre-Christian philosophies such as Stoicism, to introduce the principle of equality of all *men* (before God). The bourgeois revolution transformed this into the idea of social-political equality" (p. 7).

He unabashedly imposes this idealistic view upon the Marxists. He writes, "Marxism's egalitarian thrust is an outgrowth of this tradition, also involving a negation of its limitations, such as class society's patriarchalism." The great error made by Evelyn Reed, the deficient Marxist, is "in foisting onto preclass society the categories that only class society's culture has created." According to Garrett, egalitarianism never existed until the idea popped into men's minds late in history and I have foisted this late Christian-class idea upon preclass cultures.

This is a complete distortion of the views of the Marxists as well as of my position in anthropology. Marx emphasized that ideas were materially determined and historically and socially conditioned. Under changing conditions of social life and labor the ideas and conceptions of people also change. In my view it is just as impermissible to foist upon preclass peoples the ideas and conceptions of class society—including the Christian-class idea of egalitarianism—as it is to foist upon them the Christian-class institutions of the family, private property and the state. To do so is completely non-materialistic and unhistorical.

But it is not Evelyn Reed who has "foisted" modern ideas or institutions upon the peoples of the past; it is the bourgeois anti-Marxist anthropologists who have done so. They contend that the family, private property and the state have always existed which, of course, means that egalitarianism never existed. They throw out the mass of evidence that proves the reality of the hidden history of humankind—that society was originally communistic.

Comrade Garrett stands on the side of these anti-Marxist anthropologists who deny the priority of primitive communism before class society came into existence. He also stands with them on their rejection of the priority of the matriarchy. Once the social order of primitive communism is brought down it is but a short step toward levelling the matriarchy, since the two are inextricably intertwined. Comrade Garrett rolls his bulldozer from the one demolition job to the other.

Although in the first paragraph of his article Comrade Garrett declares that he does not find fault with my "belief" that there was a primitive matriarchy, he soon forsakes that stance. He takes exception to my statement that preclass society was matriarchal as well as egalitarian. That cannot be, he says, since the matriarchy "was gynarchical—that is women ruled." Evelyn Reed, he adds, "tries to combine the two . . . which are logically incompatible" (p. 7).

As I have previously pointed out, some anthropologists have misunderstood the meaning of the term "matriarchy." They have viewed it as a period of "rule by women," a kind of mirror image of the "rule by men" which is characteristic of patriarchal class society today. But I am not one of those who have held this position. On the contrary, I have criticized it as schematic; it fails to take into account that the matriarchy represents a classless system of primitive communism while the patriarchy is

a system of class rulership, which means rulership by coercion and force.

I have emphasized that it was precisely because primitive society was communist, that is, economically and socially egalitarian, there could be no coercive rule by one class over another, one race over another or one sex over another. Although women held a high and influential place in the period of the matriarchy, which is sometimes described as "woman power" or "rule by women," this does not mean they applied any coercive or oppressive means to achieve their preeminence. The deference and respect accorded primitive women came about as the result of the leading place they occupied in production and of the cooperative social system they had established which was as beneficial for men as for women.

Therefore, contrary to Garrett's contention, when I say that primitive society was matriarchal as well as egalitarian I am not combining "incompatibles." On the contrary, the high status of women and the social equality of men with women are twin distinctive features of primitive communism.

Irritated by my insistence upon these characteristics, Comrade Garrett then resorts to dishonesty. He writes that "Evelyn Reed's uniformly rosy picture of primitive society" is "inappropriate from a Marxist viewpoint" because it contains the implication "that humanity has only gone downhill since the heyday of the matriarchy." No, Comrade Garrett, that is not what I have said or implied. In fact, the reason that I have not used the term "Golden Age" is because such an implication might be read into it.

This is not because I think the term is entirely inappropriate. From the standpoint of their communal relations, their principles of liberty and equality for all, as well as the esteemed position of the women—the term "Golden Age" can apply. It is a picturesque description of the human relations enjoyed by our communistic ancestors, as contrasted with the deceptive, competitive, rat-race, jungle relations foisted upon us by a capitalist society. However, from the economic standpoint, savage society was on too low a level to qualify for the term "Golden Age." That is, from the standpoint of the material advances made in our productive forces, our scientific knowhow, and our higher culture and consciousness, we have gone uphill, not downhill.

However, we have paid a heavy price for this progress through the exploitations and oppressions of class and capitalist society. My "implication" is that this price has now been paid—and overpaid. It is time to stop paying tribute to a degenerated social system that has long completed its progressive role and to create a new social system of socialism.

That is why I said that we could *learn something* from a study of the matriarchal communistic society that preceded class society. Once the institutions of class rule are abolished through a socialist revolution, we can look forward to the demolition of all its oppressive features, including the degradation of women. A true understanding of the past not only gives us a prevision of the future but becomes an essential tool helping people toward molding that future and inspiring them to hasten its advent. On this point Garrett quotes me correctly: "If equality between the sexes could exist in the communal society of the past, cannot we achieve the same thing in a socialist future?" (P. 9.)

Comrade Garrett, however, is horrified by this quotation. To him it is "unambiguous" evidence that I am advocating a return to the period of savagery because it was matriarchal. He writes: "If we are to attain communism, we do it not as a revolution, built upon the positive supercession of private property and alienation, but as a counterrevolution, a return to a previously existing situation" (p. 9).

No, I am not advocating a return to the lowly economy and primitive life of the past. However much I appreciate my ancestresses of the matriarchal period, I am for going forward, not backward. I am advocating what other Marxists have advocated, *a return on a higher level*—the level of the socialist economy ahead of us, of the comradely relations of the past. As Engels summarized it in the concluding sentence of *Origin*, "Democracy in government, brotherhood in society, equality in rights and privileges, and universal education, foreshadow the next higher plane of society to which experience, intelligence and knowledge are steadily tending. *It will be a revival, in a higher form, of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes.*" (Pathfinder Press, 1972, p. 166.)

Comrade Garrett has other views on the subject. To him I have not only characterized a spurious form of communism as the Golden Age; I have committed the added crime of portraying a "female version" of the Rousseauian image of the "noble savage." How ridiculous to believe that mere savage women had equality with men! It is as absurd as believing that mere savage men had equality with one another!

He returns to this theme in another segment but in more disguised form. Referring to a comment made by Mary-Alice Waters at the last Socialist Activists and Educational Conference, he says she "correctly reminded us" not to impose our concepts of today upon those who lived in the past, even only 50 to 100 years ago, and judge them thereby. Yet here is Evelyn Reed who wants to "impose today's ideas of the socialist future upon our preliterate ancestors of 5000 or more years ago" (p. 8).

Obliterating the documented evidence on the prior existence of primitive communism, Comrade Garrett says that it is only my "ideas" plus some wishful thinking that has caused me to project the socialist future upon an imaginary past. Once again, how absurd of me to foist my ideas upon those preliterates as though they had been real communists! (If anyone wants to know what Comrade Waters' remark at the Socialist Activists and Educational Conference has to do with all this, the answer is—nothing. It has no more relevance than Marx's presumed warning to Engels not to go poking around in the past like "the political economist trying to clarify things.")

Comrade Garrett's arguments are often difficult to follow because he presents them in fugitive segments, or disguised forms, or through quotations torn out of context, or dishonest assertions. But perhaps his prize fabrication is the one that deals with my views on the source of the high position of women in the matriarchy. He attributes to Evelyn Reed "the contention that female power in all of preclass society" was due to "male ignorance of their role in reproduction" (p. 5). He is going to present a "counter-argument" in refutation of this statement attributed to me.

Nowhere, in any of my lectures and writings on the subject, have I said or implied that the high position

of women in primitive society was due to male ignorance of their role in reproduction. In this falsification of my position, Comrade Garrett is merely setting up a straw opponent that he can knock down with his "counterargument." What are the facts in the matter?

It has long been established that primitive peoples—women as well as men—were ignorant of the part played by sex and the male sex in initiating procreation. As some anthropologists have pointed out, in the prescientific era how could they know that a mere act of sexual intercourse would lead nine months later to a child? Indeed, they were not only ignorant of the facts of birth but also of death. They did not know there was such a thing as natural death; a person only lost his life when he was "killed." These biological facts of life and death became known only in a later, more scientific age.

When the high position of women in primitive society was discovered, it came as a shock because it stood in such sharp contrast to the degraded position of women in civilized society. In trying to explain this phenomenon, Bachofen, an early scholar, took into account this ignorance of the part played by sex in procreation. Since fathers were unknown, and mothers the only known parents of children, he thought this was the source of their high status in society.

However, I am not one of those who held this position on this question. In fact, I have criticized it. Women's procreative functions today do not give them even equality with men, much less a leading place in society. Why, then, should these functions by themselves have done so in primitive times? As against Bachofen, I counterposed Briffault's theory, since he too was concerned with this problem. Briffault correctly placed the emphasis upon the tremendous labor record of women and the leading role they played in organizing primitive society. Summing this up, the source of the high position of women was the fact that they were not simply the procreators of new life but, more decisively, the producers of the necessities and amenities of life. As producers-procreatix—I have often said—women were more than biological mothers; they were the social and communal "mother-governesses."

This raises the question: Why does Comrade Garrett resort to so blatant a falsification of my position on this subject? I can only conclude that he could find no other means for delivering his punch line—his "stunning blow" against the matriarchy and against me.

This begins with Comrade Garrett's rejection of the long-established fact that primitive peoples did not know the connection between sexual intercourse and the birth of children. Although reputable anthropologists have never tampered with the data on this important point, in recent years some anthropologists have denied that this was the case. Perhaps they feel humiliated or distressed in some way by the fact that men in ancient society were ignorant of their role in procreation. Whatever the reason, they declare that men throughout all history have been fully aware of their sexual role. On this question Comrade Garrett stands on the side of these revisionists.

His rejection of an anthropological fact, combined with his falsification of my position, enables Comrade Garrett to set up his straw opponent and, having set it up, to knock it down. In his view primitive men were not ignorant of their role in reproduction. That is only the wild idea of Evelyn Reed who uses it to buttress her position on the source of "female power" in the period of the matri-

archy. He then produces his counterargument.

Unfortunately for Comrade Garrett, the arguments he gives to prove his point prove just the opposite. His ruminations on "the occult causes which are attributed to virtually everything in preclass culture," and his admission that "if a woman is pregnant, it is because a 'spirit' . . . has entered into her" do not bear out his contention that the connection between sex and procreation has always been known. On the contrary, occult beliefs and beliefs in "spirit" impregnations of women confirm what the reputable anthropologists have said, that in the prescientific era the true facts about birth were unknown.

Despite this, Comrade Garrett draws from his own arguments refuting his own thesis the following conclusion, ". . . belief in a prescientific notion of the cause of pregnancy does not imply that the real cause was unknown." In other words, primitive peoples merely played around with a stork story about babies as we do today, but they knew all along the scientific facts of life.

This is the basis of Comrade Garrett's "stunning blow" against me. Since I am supposed to hold the position that the source of woman power in the matriarchy was due to "male ignorance of their role in reproduction" and since Garrett now has proven that men have always known this scientific fact, my whole construct of the matriarchy falls to the ground. As he puts it, "Thus, at least one of Reed's major arguments for universal matriarchy receives a rather stunning blow" (p. 8).

It is significant that Comrade Garrett cannot entirely escape from my real position—I have stated it so frequently—on the source of the preeminence of primitive women. Thus, in another segment, where he wanders all over the world, from Melanesia and the Americas to Asia and Africa, ruminating about the sexual division of labor in "more complex" and "less complex" regions, he winds up: "While it is a good guess that most technical developments in such societies were made by women, it is not provable" (p. 7).

In other words, somebody—maybe only Evelyn Reed—"guessed" the labor record of primitive women but there's no real documented proof of it. He dismisses not only the theoretical contributions by such prestigious scholars as Morgan, Tylor, Rivers, Hartland, Frazer, Gordon Childe, and others, but the carefully assembled compilations of data on the labor record of primitive women by Otis Tufton Mason and Robert Briffault.

* * *

It is clear from this discussion that there is a profound difference between Comrade Garrett and me in our approach not only to anthropology but, more importantly, to Marxism. I stand on the side of the historical-materialist method, the theoretical foundation of Marxism. Comrade Garrett does not, however much he may wish to disguise that fact.

He began his attack on this method in the realm of Marxist philosophy with his polemic against George Novack. (Discussion Bulletin Vol. 31, Nos. 2 and 8.) He has now extended it to the realm of anthropology, the science of prehistoric society, with his attack upon the method employed by Engels and Reed. I hold to the two most fundamental discoveries made about preclass society: that it was communistic and it was ma-

triarchal. Comrade Garrett rejects both propositions. Our positions therefore are irreconcilable.

* * *

Under these circumstances it may seem odd that Comrade Garrett criticizes me not only for what I have written but also for not publishing more. There are some unanswered questions that perplex him — as they do others. He is in a hurry for the book I have been working on for many years, to see if I answer these questions and whether these answers meet with his approval.

The questions are indeed valid ones that require answers. Among them are the following:

1. How did the first division of labor between the sexes arise and why in its peculiar form: men did the hunting and fighting while the women did "all else"?
2. How could primitive society, on so lowly an economic level, arise as a system of primitive communism?
3. How did women at the peak of their influence lose

their power and plummet to a rapid decline and fall? Or, to put the question another way, why did men win the power at the same time that class society displaced the matriarchal commune?

Obviously these are not problems to which "instant answers" can be given; they require developed treatments and not impressionistic speculations off the top of one's head.

Comrade Garrett's complaint is that I have not yet set forth my theory about the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy and have failed to bring forth my book. I, too, regret that there have been delays in this matter. The chief difficulty is that I failed to sufficiently "drug myself" with the *past*, to the degree that it would prevent me from participating in the *present*. When the women's liberation struggle came along I could not resist plunging into that work at least part of the time. This has created an unavoidable delay. But given Comrade Garrett's fetishism about the *present*, and his criticisms of Engels' poking around in the *past*, how can he complain?

June 19, 1973

THE "INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY" STEPS AWAY FROM THE PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION

by Fred Feldman, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

The Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency and the SWP stand on a proletarian orientation. That is, they hold that the main force in the overturn of capitalism and the construction of a socialist society is the working class. They believe that the party that leads the revolution must be proletarian in both its program and composition. Its primary base must be in the cities and it must have a strategy of bringing rural and petty-bourgeois movements under the leadership of the working class. The working class itself must have a revolutionary leadership. The overturn of capitalism will not be accomplished by students, farmers, or other intermediate layers although these sectors play a key part in a revolutionary strategy.

As defenders of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution and Lenin's conception of the party, the LTT and the SWP hold that this proletarian orientation ought to be applied in both the colonial and the imperialist nations.

Today the SWP is only the nucleus of the mass revolutionary party that we want to build and our opportunities to win the leadership of the working class on the basis of our program are limited by the uneven development of a radicalization that is still in its early stages. Nonetheless, all of our work — whether on the campuses, in the unions, the meat boycott, the women's movement, etc. — has a central aim: to lay the groundwork needed if the party is to win the leadership of radi-

calized workers.

In 1971, Comrades Massey, Shaffer, Smith, Garza, and other leaders of the "Internationalist Tendency" supported what was called the "Proletarian Orientation Tendency." To the majority of party members, that debate appeared to center more on *how* to carry out a proletarian orientation than on *whether* to carry out such an orientation. The minority supporters, however, asserted that the party saw students, not workers, as the main force in the revolution. They didn't have any evidence for this but it had a nice ring in debates so they repeated it often.

In fact, the party had and has not illusions that either the current radicalization or the party, with their present size and composition, is capable of overturning capitalism. The grip of the capitalist class on power cannot be decisively challenged until the working class itself, acting in its own name, surges to the head of the social struggles. There was no question in the majority's mind that the party's future lay in the inevitable mass radicalization of the American workers.

At the 1971 convention, then, it appeared that everyone (except a small countercultural grouping around Comrades Gebert and Trippett) supported a proletarian orientation, although the minority tended to adopt a sectarian and formalistic view of it.

Today, however, we confront the "Internationalist Ten-

dency" which, in the discussion around Latin America, has taken a step toward breaking with the proletarian orientation. The statement of the 19 IEC members and addendum, obliges this tendency to "reaffirm as being correct" the "orientation toward armed struggle in Latin America" which was embodied in the Ninth World Congress resolution on Latin America. It commits the tendency to uphold Livio Maitan's report to the IEC on Bolivia, in which the "guerrilla warfare" orientation is explicitly reiterated. It endorses "the general line" of Livio Maitan's report on Argentina to the IEC. And it endorses Ernest Germain's discussion contribution, "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," which energetically defends the Ninth World Congress resolution on Latin America. The resolutions on Latin America, Bolivia, and Argentina are line documents on this subject endorsed by the "Internationalist Tendency."

In her report on Latin America to the Brooklyn Branch, Comrade Hedda Garza honored her commitments by defending the Ninth World Congress resolution on Latin America.

In my opinion, the Ninth World Congress resolution on Latin America represents an important break with the proletarian orientation. There is nothing elliptical, synthetic, or vague about this resolution. It is clear and precise statement of a political line which must be accepted or rejected and not maneuvered with. It was written and voted for by leaders of the Fourth International who are serious political people who mean what they say, I assume, particularly with regard to basic programmatic questions.

The document states:

"In most of the countries the most probable variant is that for a rather long period the peasants will have to bear the main weight of the struggle and the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie in considerable measure will provide the cadres of the movement."

This is not, mind you, a description of the preliminary stages of a radicalization, such as we are going through in the United States. This is a description of the *prerevolutionary* situation which is said to exist throughout Latin America. It is a description of the composition of a movement which is presumed ready to launch an armed insurrection of a prolonged character aimed at creating a workers' state. In short, during most of this prerevolutionary and revolutionary situation in most Latin American countries, the main revolutionary force will be the peasants, not the workers. The party will be petty-bourgeois in composition. And the main location of the struggle will not be the streets and factories of the cities but the rural areas. Of course, urban armed actions, such as assassinations and kidnappings, are now also allowed in some situations. That is the "Trotskyist" perspective, according to the leaders who drafted this resolution. It is a continental exception to the proletarian orientation.

What will be the character of the small vanguard parties which attempt to carry out the overturn of capitalism in isolation from the working class, in the countryside or in armed urban guerrilla bands? These parties, setting prolonged peasant warfare as their primary activity, are expected to have a predominantly petty-bourgeois composition during most of the direct struggle for power. In order to avoid the conclusion that such a party would

inevitably become transformed into a petty-bourgeois party, the resolution stated the following:

"This means that the leading role of the proletariat can be exercised under diverse forms: either directly by the wage workers (industrial workers, miners or agricultural workers), participating at the head of revolutionary struggles, which will doubtless be the case in only a minority of Latin-American countries [that's in case you didn't get the point the first time! — FF]; or indirectly, the leadership of these struggles being in the hands of organizations, tendencies, or cadres issuing from the workers movement; or in the historic sense of the term, by means of the program and theories issuing from Marxism. The completion of the revolution is in any case inconceivable without the mobilization and very broad participation of the proletariat."

This concept rejects the necessity of the party striving to become proletarian in composition as well as program if it is to lead an insurrection against Latin American capitalism. It denies the necessity of the party winning the leadership of working-class movements in a pre-revolutionary situation. This is rendered virtually impossible in fact by removing cadres from the urban class struggle in order to carry out a rural or urban insurrection with whatever tiny vanguard forces are at hand. It falsely assumes that the party can substitute for the proletariat's leading role in the revolutionary overturn. The party, in effect, will represent the "spirit" or the "idea" of the working class in the absence of its flesh.

It is ironic that the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency, which often accuses the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency of relegating armed struggle to the final stage of the class struggle, views the participation of the working class as merely the final phase when their activity is needed for "the completion of the revolution." While the socialist transformation requires the participation of the working class, its participation in the smashing of the capitalist state is apparently optional.

In fact, the leading role of the proletariat in the socialist revolution means one thing and one thing only: the masses of workers themselves have moved into action against key aspects of the system. The task of the party is not to represent the class in its absence but to bring all social movements together into a single striking force directed against capitalism, with the working class as the spearhead. The radicalization of the working class is the central opportunity for which a Trotskyist party must prepare itself. The substitutionist conceptions of the Latin American resolution point in the opposite direction.

There have been examples of successful colonial revolutions in which the proletariat was not at the center of the action. Vietnam and China are two examples. Here the absence of the proletariat was due to the default of the Stalinists, such as Mao and Ho Chi Minh, who subordinated, sabotaged, and suppressed every workers' upsurge over a long period. As a result, these revolutions took an unnecessarily slow and costly course, and the outcome itself was distorted and deformed by bureaucratism. The Stalinists apologized for this by developing the theory of "people's war" to justify a strategy based exclusively on the peasantry.

Starstruck by the apparent successes won in these cases, Maitan, Frank, and Germain have adapted to this petty-bourgeois strategy as well as to Guevarism and applied

it to Latin America. They have attempted to adopt this military strategy without accepting the class-collaborationist political strategy that accompanied it—the conception of a "national-democratic" coalition with "progressive" bourgeois sectors. The participation of the Bolivian POR in the FRA which includes the pro-Torres sectors of the bourgeois army/party demonstrates that this artificial separation between military and political strategy is not easy to maintain.

The Latin American resolution passed by the world

Congress does not suffer merely from erroneous "formulations." It is a strategy for revolution based on fundamental errors of theory and orientation. Can such errors be limited to one continent? Are there not signs that the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency also considers Asia a similar exception to the proletarian orientation? Is it proper to brush off such errors, which have already claimed two sections of the Fourth International as their victims, as mere "elliptical and synthetic formulations"?

June 19, 1973

THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY AND THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

by Dave Jerome, Boston Branch

In the course of the SWP discussion on Latin America, a number of questions have been raised in regards to the Cuban revolution. I want to begin by restating our position on Cuba. We stated:

1) That a revolution took place. In establishing this we looked to the following criteria: (a) the smashing of bourgeois property relations; (b) the economy was nationalized; (c) a monopoly of foreign trade was established; (d) a planned economy was established; and, (e) a state committed to the preservation of these gains was established.

These points were by no means incidental or easy to come to agreement upon. As comrades know, a split took place in our movement which was centered on these questions.

2) We saw that the July 26 Movement began with a bourgeois-democratic program centered on, "For A Return to the Constitution of 1940" and, "Down With Batista!" The program also included the call for a basic land reform and it was after the fall of Batista that the leadership proclaimed the need to overturn capitalist property relations. The Cuban events were a striking confirmation of the theory of permanent revolution.

3) We also stated that the revolution was made without the leadership of a vanguard party.

* * *

The factors that made the revolution possible have been summarized by Peter Camejo in his often-quoted article in the November *ISR*. They are: (1) mass support to the July 26 Movement's central demand, "Down With Batista!"; (2) a substantial apparatus throughout Cuba, and in colonies of Cuban exiles, capable of raising large sums of money and providing supplies to the guerrillas; (3) demoralization of the army ranks and lower-ranking officers in response to popular hostility to the regime,

resulting in a hesitancy to enter combat; (4) semineutrality of U.S. imperialism and a divided national bourgeoisie; (5) the development of support among the peasantry of the Sierra Maestra and general peasant sympathy based on the demand for land reform; (6) the complete dismantling of the army and police after the triumph of the guerrilla army; (7) the use of government power after January 1, 1959, to mobilize, organize, and arm the masses, above all, the urban proletariat; and, (8) the existence of other workers states.

While many of these aspects will be repeated in other Latin American revolutions, one point in particular led us to state that the revolution was made under unique circumstances which could not be expected to occur again. That is point 4, the response of U.S. imperialism and the divided national bourgeoisie. Crucial mistakes were made by both and we cannot expect them to make the same mistakes again.

We also understood that the Cuban revolution would have an important impact on the future of Latin American politics. The fact that the revolution bypassed the Stalinist parties was bound to have a profound effect on the left throughout the world and particularly so in Latin America. This became further evidenced as the Stalinists too saw the dynamic of the Cuban revolution and made shifts in an attempt to channel the impact of the revolution into their parties.

Where the I. T. Goes Wrong

Now where does the Internationalist Tendency go wrong in the estimation of the Cuban events? Comrade Montello, a signer of the tendency declaration from Boston, asks the majority a simple question: "Should Castro not have made a revolution because he didn't have a party?"

That is *not* the question. The question is, can we base our strategy on what we consider to be exceptional circumstances? The I. T. answers, "yes!" In fact, they are

trying to "rewrite" Camejo's article on Cuba to make it sound like the SWP majority's analysis of Cuba falls completely within the Leninist norms that were established by the Russian revolution. In the process, they unleash a blistering attack on the heritage of the Trotskyist movement.

Again, our analysis of Cuba was that the revolution was made under unique circumstances, which cannot be expected to be repeated again. The most important of these was the reaction of U. S. imperialism and a divided national bourgeoisie, a section of which initially threw their support to the July 26 Movement. The I. T. claims that we have a "lack of understanding of the role of U. S. imperialism in Latin America" (I. T. report to the Boston branch). It is they who demonstrate their lack of understanding.

Comrade Montello stated, "Where is the semineutrality of U. S. imperialism that Camejo would like to find as he rewrites the history of Cuba, while forgetting Santo Domingo, the Bay of Pigs and Indochina, the role of U. S. counselors in the murder of Che. . . ."

It is precisely these events that make the Cuban revolution exceptional—they took place *after* the Cuban revolution and conclusively demonstrate that imperialism has learned the lessons of Cuba! It is precisely for this reason that isolated acts of guerrilla war, which lead to terrorism, are doomed to failure. What greater example can there be than the death of Che in Bolivia at the hands of imperialism?

United States imperialism intervenes in every country of Latin America every day. Carrying out guerrilla war apart from the masses, without the masses *themselves* participating in *any* form of armed struggle, makes it just that much easier for imperialism to intervene and further isolate the misguided revolutionists from the masses. One just has to witness the ease with which imperialism is currently intervening in Latin America and contrast that to the political cost of imperialism's intervention in Indochina and one should be able to draw the correct lessons.

Comrade Germain, in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" states that "Castro's growing popularity and support among the Cuban masses was not based on the 'use of democratic slogans,' but on his actual armed struggle against the dictatorship, as compared to the cowardly maneuvers, shameful capitulations and impotent declamations of the Stalinists, reformists, and other fake 'oppositionists.'"

You see, it wasn't the *politics* of the Stalinists, reformists and other fake "oppositionists" that led to their "cowardly maneuvers, shameful capitulations and impotent declamations"—it was their failure to use guerrilla warfare! Does that mean that our opposition to Stalinism is over a tactic, that if they employ guerrilla warfare we will find harmony with their politics?

Another question: if it was simply a matter of the tactical application of guerrilla warfare, why did Che fail to make a revolution in Bolivia? Didn't Che, the chief exponent of guerrilla war, carry out guerrilla war in Bolivia?

Comrade Germain also raises another question. "Indeed, if one follows Comrade Camejo's analysis, one is left with an insoluble mystery: why didn't the Cuban C. P., which at the outset had a much bigger mass in-

fluence and a much bigger apparatus than Fidel's July 26 Movement, lead a successful revolution in Cuba?"

Are we really to the point where we have to wonder why the Cuban C. P. did not lead a revolution in Cuba? Are there renewed questions on the nature of the Stalinist parties? Do we believe that the *political* differences can be overcome by the correct *tactical* maneuvers? Or, are we coming to the point where some comrades are putting tactics above strategy *and* political program?

* * *

Comrade Germain, utilizing a style that has become more and more his trademark, attempts to document his position by "showing" how Joseph Hansen advocated the "strategy" of guerrilla war at one time. In his lengthy document Comrade Germain states the following:

"So we can only state with force the position adopted in our November 1970 document. The need to take an unequivocal stand in favour of the 'method' of armed struggle, never minding whether it is a 'strategy' or a 'tactic,' or 'orientation,' in the present time and under specific circumstances in Latin America, arises out of the very needs of the class struggle and the experiences of the toiling masses themselves. To evade the issue by taking up a 'third position' does a disservice to the task of building Leninist combat parties, which Comrade Hansen correctly wants to place in the centre of attention of the Latin American vanguard.

"There was a time when Comrade Hansen himself understood this perfectly. In his article: 'The OLAS Conference—Tactics and Strategy of a Continental Revolution' (*ISR*, November-December 1967), he wrote:

"The question of armed struggle was thus taken at the OLAS conference as a decisive dividing line, separating the revolutionists from the reformists on a continental scale. In this respect it echoed the Bolshevik tradition."

Therefore, Comrade Hansen used to be in favor of taking the tactic of armed struggle and making it into a strategy to be followed on a continental scale. Right? Wrong!

Hansen's quote is actually part of an article that he wrote reporting on the OLAS conference. I will continue with Comrade Hansen's article so we can see what was fully meant:

"The question of armed struggle was thus taken at the OLAS conference as a decisive dividing line, separating the revolutionists from the reformists on a continental scale. In this respect it echoed the Bolshevik tradition." He continues, "Seeking to pin things down still more tightly, the Cubans insisted on the key importance of guerrilla war as a method of moving towards armed struggle. They likewise insisted on the priority of the countryside over the city in initiating the guerrilla nucleus and advancing it."

He was reporting on what was stated by the *Cubans*, whose whole conception was making a revolution through the method of guerrilla war without even considering the importance or necessity of a party! Their statement at the OLAS conference in regards to "method" ("never minding whether it is a 'strategy' or a 'tactic,' or 'orientation'") is the same that the I. T. and the Maitan-Mandel-Frank tendency are raising for Latin America today. It should make us uncomfortable when those who have

no need for a party raise the same strategy as some of those who proclaim the need for a revolutionary party.

One must wonder why Comrade Germain chose that particular sentence of Hansen's article to quote in his document. I would suggest another quote from the same article in which Comrade Hansen expresses *his* opinion: "The secret of success lies in the development of transitional slogans which in and of themselves are more realistic than the measures advocated by the reformists yet entail a logic that takes the masses along the road of revolution.

"All this is associated with the question of developing a homogeneous leadership [I assume he means one that meets more than every 5 years! —DJ] and organizational structure capable of giving correct guidance to the revolutionary struggle in all its aspects. This is what revolutionary Marxists mean when they talk about the necessity of building a party of action. At the OLAS conference this question was colored by the Cuban experience so that one heard such contradictory statements as 'the revolution will be made with or without a party' and 'the guerrilla constitutes the core of a party.' If the revolution can be made without a party, why advance the concept of a party being built around guerrillas or of guerrillas performing any political function at all? And while the possibility of making a revolution without a party was voiced, at the same time the necessity for absolute discipline in the struggle, the disciplined combination of the military and political aspects was insisted upon. This question obviously demands deep consideration, the elimination of misunderstandings arising from various sources, not the least of all the bad impression created by the Stalinist and Social Democratic record in Latin America. A study of the Bolshevik experience could possibly prove of unusual interest if it were undertaken with due consideration for the peculiarities to be found in Latin America." ("The OLAS Conference," November-December 1967 *ISR*.)

I am sure that Comrade Hansen had no idea that the lessons that the Trotskyist movement was trying to teach the new wave of revolutionists in Latin America in regards to the Cuban revolution would have to be repeated inside the Fourth International years later!

I raised this quote in particular because there seems

to be a lot of confusion on the role of the party, as expressed by Comrade Montello in his Latin American report for the Internationalist Tendency given to the Boston branch.

In his report, Comrade Montello goes one step further than Comrade Germain and brings the line adopted at the 9th World Congress to its logical conclusion. In the process he brings into question the *basic* orientation and programmatic basis of the Trotskyist movement.

He claims that we have a problem in seeing "ghosts." That we try to see the "ghost" of the Russian revolution everywhere we look. He states, "It is very reassuring and seemingly unattackable to evaluate every revolution in light of what the Russians did. But shouldn't we ask what happened in China, Yugoslavia, Vietnam and Cuba?" He states further, "*we should remember that 10 years after the Russian revolution the bureaucracy had been firmly installed on a monstrous scale without a counterpart in Cuba today.*" (My emphasis.)

Does that mean that the necessity of a revolutionary party is now in question? Does that mean that if you have a party you run the risk that it will become Stalinized and the best way around that problem is not to have a party at all?

To me, that is what is being raised. When the art of revolution becomes based on tactics—not on politics—the need for a party can logically be brought into question, as Comrade Hansen reported from the OLAS conference.

One cannot help but wonder if other supporters of the Internationalist Tendency around the country support the position of Comrade Montello, a signer of the tendency declaration. A logical question is, if some comrades aren't sure of the necessity of a party in Latin America, do we need a party in the United States or Europe?

To this attack on the need for a party we must answer that the way to combat Stalinism, the way to prepare the *masses* to defend themselves by any means necessary, the way to lead the working class to a successful revolution is to build a party based on the programmatic agreement of Trotskyist politics, based on the Transitional Program. We can't avoid the problems of party building by simply avoiding the party—we must begin with party building as our basic strategic task.

June 18, 1973

A PROGRAM FOR BUILDING A PROLETARIAN PARTY:
IN OPPOSITION TO THE CENTRISM OF THE PARTY MAJORITY

by Gerald Clark, Oakland-Berkeley Branch

I. WHAT ARE OUR TASKS?

1. *A New Period Has Opened Up in the Worldwide Struggle Against Capitalism*

The major task facing the Trotskyist movement today is to begin the process of rooting its sections in the proletariat and to begin the construction of a democratic-centralist and proletarian International. The present historical conjuncture has opened up a new period in the worldwide struggle against capitalism and offers revolutionary socialists excellent opportunities to do work in the working class and trade unions.

Capitalism is entering into a period of decline characterized by instability and ever-increasing international competition. This decline, which will not be sudden as it was in the 1930s, but more gradual, will be accompanied by uncontrolled inflation, increased protectionism, unemployment, and various attempts to control wages and enforce speed-ups. The reemergence of the U. S.'s onetime rivals, Japan and Germany, marks an important change in the relationship of forces between capitalist nations, and between capitalist nations and the workers states, *which can only lead to further instability*. The recent recovery of international capitalism from its three-year recession does not in any way lessen these tendencies.

The prospects for interimperialist war are not likely to occur in the next period either. Unlike the period leading up to World War II, when the main danger facing capitalism was revolutionary workers movements, thereby forcing important sections of the bourgeoisie to throw their support behind fascism as the only way to *maintain* capitalist rule, the present period lacks such immediate dangers. This can be shown by the absence of any mass-supported fascist movements (except maybe in Italy) or governments in the world. (This does not deny the existence of dictatorships which use *fascist methods* to control the population and repress the trade unions. The worst examples can be found in South Africa, Spain, Brazil, Indonesia, the Philippines, Greece, Haiti, South Vietnam, etc.)

But the main reason is the willingness of the two largest workers governments to fully cooperate with imperialism's goals of maintaining the status quo and reaching a new stability *in the interests of capitalism and their own bureaucracies*. This factor, more than any other, will determine the degree to which the imperialist powers will be forced to resort to "other means" to accomplish their nationalist aims. So long as China and the USSR are willing to cooperate, *and can continue to control their working classes*, the imperialist powers will see no reason to resort to military methods against each other — which would weaken them vis-a-vis the workers states — to achieve their aims. Temporary international agreements will continue to be the most likely method used to forestall any sudden collapses.

What this means for the Trotskyist vanguard in the United States is the opportunity to begin the serious work

of penetrating the working class and building a base in the trade unions. The attacks upon labor initiated by Nixon in 1971 with the institution of the wage freeze, signaled the beginning of a real crisis for the American bourgeoisie. This attack, which has yet to be pushed back, is continuing today and promises to lead to confrontations with the unions this year. Of immediate concern to the workers are the rising cost of living, unemployment, and cutbacks in social programs. All of these problems are the result of capitalism's decreasing ability to meet the needs of an advanced industrial society, and in particular, American capitalism's declining competitiveness in the international marketplace.

All of this comes on the heels of American capitalism's disastrous and costly intervention into the Vietnam war, the main cause of the present crisis. But the Vietnam war did more than just create a deficit in the balance of payments. It radicalized and politicized a whole layer of people in this country as to the nature of imperialism and the real interests of American foreign policy. It polarized the population in every major institution in the country: one was either for the war or against the war; and by 1968, a majority were against. The majority of American people no longer believe that "communism" must be stopped everywhere, at their cost, and in the interest of only a few rich capitalists. This indicates an important change in the consciousness of many working people.

It is the responsibility of the revolutionary vanguard to take advantage of this change. A strong and united defense of past gains in the workers movement and a fight against inflation, combined with a revolutionary perspective, could effectively *alter* the entire strategy of the American bourgeoisie in its efforts to stabilize the economy and the dollar. And by upsetting the plans of the American bourgeoisie, the plans of other capitalist states will also be affected, which could contribute to working-class struggles in those countries. And vice-versa.

But no ostensibly revolutionary organization can accomplish these tasks *outside* the main body of organized workers. Nor will it be possible to carry out these tasks with a partial or incomplete program. Sloganeering from without about a Congress of Labor cannot suffice either. *We must be prepared to carry them out ourselves!* And for that we must be inside the workers organizations providing political leadership. There is no other way.

The continued turn of the party away from the working class — a turn which began during the 1950s — has developed since 1963 into a clearly revisionist tendency which can be characterized by an adaptation to non-proletarian milieus. This tendency, which reflects a right-centrist deviation, is manifested in the party's adaptation to petty-bourgeois movements and leaderships, in particular, the student movement. In the international arena, the party rejects any call for a proletarian orientation in Europe; refuses to break with Castroism; supports the LSA/LSO's tail-ending of the NDP in Canada; supports uncritically the PST's turn toward electoralism in Argentina,

and, in fact, offers the revolutionary movement the world over a single panacea: turn toward the radicalized students.

In this document I want to take up specifically the question of what program is necessary to make a socialist revolution in this country. In so doing, I will proceed from an objective analysis of the present conjuncture and tie it to a critique of the party's program and strategy, and counterpose the following program as a revolutionary alternative for the working class.

However, any critique of the party's *present* program and practices must begin with a review of the party's *past* program and practices. Throughout this document I try to do just that. By counterposing the party's past program to the present, I try to show *where* and *when* the party went wrong, and in this way, it will help us understand *why* it went wrong. But that's not enough. An analysis must also be made of the present conjuncture, that is, what is new and what has changed over the last few years. By combining these two elements—our past mistakes with our present tasks—we will be in a better position to outline a clear perspective for the road ahead.

To start with, let's turn our attention to the party's analysis of the "new radicalization" and the turn toward the students.

2. A Permanent Orientation?

The party's strategy toward the students is based on the "Worldwide Youth Radicalization" document approved by both the IEC and SWP in 1969. This document outlined a long-range *strategical* orientation toward the radicalized students as the best method of building the vanguard party in this period. Such an orientation was justified by the following arguments:

1. "The political character of the radicalization of the new generation is rooted on the one hand in the crisis of imperialism and on the other in the correlative crises of Stalinism and the Social Democracy—the historically bankrupt major tendencies in the workers movement. . . ."

2. "The powerful student radicalization has shown its capacity to serve as a transmission belt speeding the development of a radical political consciousness among other social layers of the same generation. In several countries it has triggered mass action by the working class as a whole."

3. "The student radicals exhibit a broad spectrum of ideological tendencies and political positions. For the most part, they disdain the Stalinism of the Moscow school [and what about the Mao school?] and the reformism of the Social Democracy."

4. "Social distinctions and stratifications within the student body are not so sharply defined as they were twenty or thirty years ago. . . . Under today's advanced technology, a college graduate will more likely become a highly-paid technician or a skilled worker in the productive apparatus. He [sic] has nothing to sell but his more qualified labor-power and no perspective of escaping the essential condition of a wage worker. *These circumstances tend to link him more closely to the industrial working class. . . .*"

5. "The *ultimate* objective of the Fourth International is to link the student struggles with the struggles of the workers and national minorities *at their present levels of de-*

velopment and to orient them toward a combined drive for state power, bringing into the struggle all the forces opposed to the capitalist or bureaucratic regimes."

6. "The international interdependence of political ideas and experiences is key to understanding the current student radicalization as a world phenomenon, despite the variations determined by national particularities. Given the various social and political factors outlined above and the explosive character of our epoch, the current student radicalization is not just a conjunctural phenomenon, but a *permanent* one that will be of *continual* concern to the revolutionary movement from now on." ("Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International," 1969, all my emphasis.)

I think these six quotes point out quite clearly the essence of the party's revisionist approach to the student movement and its retreat from the working class. In the first place, a student movement or student radicalization should never be *the* basis for building a revolutionary vanguard party for a whole period. The reasons are simple: student upsurges are generally of short duration and suffer from ebbs and flows, vacillations, etc. And their social composition, social weight and influence disqualifies them from having anything but a minimal effect on revolutionary processes. Even in France, where in 1968 their activities "sparked" a general strike of the working class, after the workers came on the scene, the students played only a minimal role in the events which followed. This was true everywhere else that the workers entered into struggle in conjunction with student struggles.

It's only when students *become* workers or join a revolutionary working-class party rooted in the working class that they can be considered to have enough social weight and power to overthrow capitalism, i.e., play a revolutionary role. This is so because social weight and power is relative to one's relationship to the means of production. Students as students, are divorced from the means of production.

Secondly, to base one's party building for a whole period on radicalized students indicates that the party must be isolated from the working class and doesn't really mind it. After all, a revolutionary workers party would *prefer* work in the class to work on the campuses. This is true because the vanguard party knows it must root itself in the working class if it is going to win over the majority of workers (primarily the industrial workers, including transportation and communications). And by recruiting from an alien class milieu—the campuses—the party opens itself up to a tremendous amount of bourgeois pressure, transmitted to it through the students; such is the material upon which degeneration is based.

Thirdly, a strategic turn toward the students shows a real misunderstanding of the relationship between *student work* and an overall *proletarian* orientation. Student work, unlike a long-range student orientation, has been a consistent and important part of revolutionary work for many, many years. Revolutionary parties have always paid close attention to the students and recruited from them valuable cadre. *But always on the basis of a working class program; and always with the goal of strengthening its forces and influence in the workers movement.*

But for the SWP majority the reverse is true. As the POT comrades put it two years ago, everything is turned up-

side down. The students have become a "new revolutionary force" ("new mass vanguard"?) possessing a "new social weight" unrelated to their real social and political physiognomy. The party envisages the student movement getting bigger and bigger, encompassing the high schools and grade schools, and finally overflowing into the streets of society as a whole. In this way, the working class will be drawn into the struggle, become radicalized, and help the students and the other "mass" movements make the socialist revolution.

It's true, the party's scheme does not leave out the essential role of the proletariat in overthrowing capitalism. But it does leave out the essential *vanguard* role of the party as leader of the proletariat! Not only that, it also relegates to a subordinate role *the mass-based trade unions*, which becomes necessary if one's scheme calls for the "mass" movements to play the primary role in overthrowing capitalism. By subordinating the vanguard party to the "mass" movements, and the vanguard role of the proletariat to petty-bourgeois movements and leaderships, the SWP leadership has adopted a form of Pabloist liquidationism.

To give one example of what I mean, let me quote from a document ("The Challenge to Our Orientation") by Comrade Hansen, written in 1953 during the Cochran-Bartell fight. In arguing against Cochran and Bartell's liquidationist line, Hansen quotes Bartell as saying: "If it should so happen that a significant radicalization develops on the campus while the labor movement remains temporarily passive and dormant, we should head straight into this current, even give it our main attention for a while, without worrying as to whether it is third, fourth, or seventeenth in our order of priority." Hansen then proceeded to characterize this as "nonsensical," "revisionist," etc. But today, the SWP majority, including Hansen, has adopted this very "revisionist" line expounded by Bartell 20 years ago! No wonder Bartell asked to be readmitted to the party!!

Pabloism is the tendency within the Trotskyist movement to adapt to bourgeois public opinion and empiricism by liquidating the revolutionary program into reformist or petty-bourgeois currents inside *or outside* the workers movement. This liquidation usually takes the form of adaptation to reformist currents in the trade unions (the Stalinists, Social Democrats, labor bureaucrats, etc.). But not always. Today our comrades in Latin America are liquidating into guerrillaism, a petty-bourgeois movement. And the SWP majority is liquidating into the "mass" movements, again, petty-bourgeois movements.

This schema flows from the majority's false conception of the permanent revolution, which can be summarized as follows: In the age of imperialism, mass struggles for democratic rights take on a revolutionary dynamic. Therefore, the role of the Leninist party as the vanguard of the working class and provider of leadership around a *revolutionary socialist program*, is no longer necessary. What's wrong with this conception?

First, it implies that such a process occurs *automatically*; that all revolutionaries have to do is push the struggle for democracy to its logical conclusion, i.e., socialism. In fact, it goes one step further (because it must!): it advocates that revolutionaries should be in the forefront of democratic struggles—which is correct—*on the basis of*

their democratic programs!—which is not correct. We have seen examples of this in the antiwar and women's movements.

Secondly, it leaves out the central thesis of the permanent revolution, namely, that only the proletariat is capable of leading to completion the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and then, only on the basis of a *proletarian program*.

And thirdly, it makes no distinction between semicolonial and colonial countries and advanced capitalist countries. That is, such a conception can apply anywhere, even in the United States and Europe, whose bourgeois revolutions were completed centuries ago. By making such a universal application of this conception, the party leadership is suggesting that all that's necessary to make the socialist revolution is a consistent fight for democratic rights, since the logic of such a struggle automatically takes on a revolutionary dynamic.

But this conception of the permanent revolution held by the party leaders is not abstract: *the party has already attempted to put it into practice!* We can find examples of this in every area of the party's work: women's liberation, and the struggle for abortion reform; Black and Chicano work, and the democratic struggle for self-determination and community control; antiwar work, and the democratic fight to bring all the troops home; gay liberation, and the democratic struggle for gay rights; trade union work, and the democratic fight to vote on contracts and support strikes; defense work, GI work, etc., it's all the same.

All the action demands raised by the party in the "mass" movements were democratic demands. The only time the party raised transitional demands was in a strictly propagandistic fashion. These demands were never put on leaflets or raised at mass meetings and demonstrations for fear of being labeled sectarian. What this means is that the only way members of the SWP can become leaders of mass struggles for democratic rights is by adopting a democratic stance and program itself. And why not? Since these democratic struggles have a revolutionary logic to them already, all that's necessary is proper organizational leadership which the party is only too happy to provide. That in a nutshell is the conception the party leaders have of the role of a revolutionary party in the age of permanent revolution.

A strategy and orientation which places democratic rights and student work ahead of the struggle for transitional demands and a proletarian orientation *in an advanced capitalist nation* is a revision of Trotskyism and the permanent revolution. Only an orientation which puts student work and democratic rights in their proper place in an overall proletarian and revolutionary perspective can be considered correct in this period.

3. Into the Unions! The Road to the Workers

The "new radicalization" has yet to penetrate the working class to any appreciable degree in this country. In this important sense, it is *not qualitatively deeper* than the radicalization of the 1930s and '40s. In the latter cases, masses of workers went into action against the capitalist class and threatened to bring it down. In the beginning of the 1930s, the Communist and Socialist parties represented a threat to the stability of the capitalist

government. Many workers looked to these two parties (despite their rotten programs) which reflected a high political consciousness.

Today, however, most radicalized elements have turned toward bourgeois politics or dropped out altogether. Few look to the left parties and even fewer have joined them. And the workers continue to follow the Meanys, the Woodcocks, etc.

There are, of course, specific objective reasons for this. The lack of a mass working-class party; the relative prosperity of the working class; the wealth and power of the bourgeoisie and its ability to continue to grant reforms; the entrenched trade-union bureaucracy; and the social composition of the radicalized elements. All of these factors help prevent the "new radicalization" from penetrating the working class.

But there are also subjective factors involved. The leaderships of the various radical and civil rights movements are either reformists, pacifists, or liberal democrats. And since no revolutionary party has been able to win the leadership of any of these movements on the basis of a *revolutionary program*, the people who participate in these movements see no real alternative but to support the present misleaders and assortment of "radical" Congressmen and Congresswomen; either that, or "drop out." This has not, however, dampened their desire for radical solutions. It has simply coopted them for the time being.

Now, one might argue that there are other ways to judge the depth of a radicalization, and that is certainly true. But for revolutionaries, the key factor is the raising of the *political consciousness of the working class*. In the 1930s and '40s, particularly during the great sitdown strikes, the political consciousness of the working class was much higher than it is today; especially during those periods when there was mass support for a labor party, a real indicator of the political level of the working class. Another indicator is election results. In 1932, the combined vote for the CP and SP was one million! The 1972 elections came nowhere close to that figure.

Whether or not the radicalization is deeper today than ever before means little if the workers still remain stuck to the labor bureaucracy and the bourgeois parties. The task of the revolutionary party still remains a difficult one: break the rank-and-file worker away from the bureaucracy and the bourgeois parties in the direction of independent class action. This can be done by organizing a class-struggle left wing in the unions around the Transitional Program. Such a left wing should be based on rank-and-file caucuses struggling to one degree or another around demands ranging from wages and conditions to workers control. It would be the task of the revolutionary party to give leadership to these formations and solidify them around the Transitional Program.

Such a perspective of course implies war against the bureaucracy, and that's true. For the first time since the end of World World II the labor bureaucracy is going through a crisis which has weakened it considerably. The divisions within it over electoral strategy, over wage controls, over how to contain the ranks, over the farmworkers struggle, etc., offer revolutionaries many opportunities to intervene and weaken it further. Now more than ever, revolutionaries are able to get a hearing on the shop floor and on the union floor for their ideas.

One such idea is the demand for a labor party. A cam-

paign waged around the demand for a labor party would play a central part in any revolutionary program for trade unions today. More than ever, the working class needs its own party to protect its interests. A mass, national labor party would effectively destroy the hold of the Democratic and Republican parties over the workers and seriously undermine their influence in the unions. A mass, labor party could pose the question of who should rule the United States: the parties of capitalism or the party of workers? Under such conditions, the revolutionary vanguard party would be in a position to win the workers over to the Transitional Program and prepare them to overthrow the bourgeoisie.

A campaign around the labor party slogan could point the way forward for the workers out of the blind alley the labor bureaucracy has led it into for the past 25 years. In the last few years we have witnessed a number of third-party movements to the right and left of the Democrats and Republicans. Added to that is the tendency on the part of working people to abstain from electoral politics altogether. (Only about 55 percent of the registered voters cast their ballots in the 1972 general election.) These tendencies indicate a real dissatisfaction with the two-party system and its ability to solve everyday problems. Although for different reasons, the labor bureaucracy was confronted with a similar dilemma: either vote for McGovern or Nixon, or abstain. But because there was no mass pressure from the ranks for a labor party, the labor bureaucracy felt no compulsion to take any radical steps if it didn't have to.

But the dissatisfaction remains. In fact, the disillusionment of many people in the credibility of the government and the two parties has increased (viz. Watergate scandal, Pentagon Papers trial, the continuing war in Southeast Asia, etc.). This distrust in the system has led many people to seek radical solutions to social problems which provide a fertile field for getting our ideas accepted. A labor party campaign, if carried out in a revolutionary manner, could channel this distrust and discontent in an independent direction, and at the same time, help undermine the labor bureaucracy's ties with the bourgeois parties.

A propaganda campaign for a labor party would also lay the groundwork for the establishment of more permanent bodies or caucuses in the unions around our complete program. Our work in this behalf would put us in touch with the many left-wing groups and organizations now operating inside the unions and offer us opportunities to form united fronts around specific issues, such as the demand for a labor party. As a central focus of our trade union strategy, a campaign for a labor party has the potential of uniting the small but growing left wing of the union movement around our leadership and our program.

But, because we don't view the labor party demand as a panacea or even an historical necessity, any attempt to separate it from our *general revolutionary program for the whole working class* could lead to opportunism. The example of the Workers League is only too obvious. In all cases where we propagandize or agitate for a labor party we must explain that only our Transitional Program is capable of ensuring the independence of the party from the bourgeoisie, and consequently, its effectiveness

as an organ of working-class power.

While the labor party slogan would be at the center of our propaganda in the unions, we would also raise other demands and engage in struggles with our fellow workers around day-to-day issues. Most importantly, we would make it a point to seek out the most oppressed layers—the Blacks, Chicanos, women, etc.—and engage with them in struggles which affect them specifically. One example is the farmworkers struggle. In addition, any social or political struggles of importance which arise outside the trade unions should be brought into the locals and defended in a revolutionary manner.

Along with the demand for a labor party, other equally important demands should be raised when the situation warrants it. Demands such as equal pay for equal work; the sliding scale of wages and hours; free abortion on demand; free, 24-hour childcare centers; free medicine; end all forms of racial and sexual discrimination; etc., should be raised in conjunction with the demand for a labor party. This flows from the above analysis of the need to present our program as the program of a *revolutionary* labor party, and our understanding of the reactionary nature of the labor bureaucracy which will try to halt any independent movement of the workers away from the two capitalist parties; but if it can't, it will try to impose a *reformist, bourgeois* program upon the workers.

Needless to say, such a campaign and orientation implies that the workers need their own *government*, which opens them up to our demand for *workers control of production and for a workers government*. In this way, we can explain to the workers how they can *realize* their program, i.e., the Transitional Program, and establish the kind of society which will end all wars, racism, and exploitation. Any strategy calling itself revolutionary must include such a perspective toward the industrial proletariat if it is to be taken seriously. Any attempt to bypass the organized workers will prove to be futile.

II. DOES CONSISTENT NATIONALISM REALLY EQUAL INTERNATIONALISM?

I think it is necessary to review the traditional communist position on the national question again because of the great amount of miseducation which has been foisted upon young comrades in the party over the past ten years. A question of such importance to the making of the socialist revolution must be made as clear as possible for all workers and revolutionists to understand. But the present position of the party toward oppressed minorities represents at best a caricature of Lenin and Trotsky's views on the national question. Instead of trying to explain to the working class the national peculiarities of American society in Marxist terms, the party leaders have since 1963 adapted to those peculiarities and revised the Marxist program to make it fit.

This review will attempt to point out the essentials of a revolutionary Marxist position on the national question as it applies to this country and where the party has gone wrong. But because there can be no correct revolutionary practice without a correct theory, we owe it to ourselves to pay particular attention to this question and any criticisms comrades might have to make. The revolution may well depend upon it.

4. *Lenin On the National Question*

The heart of the Marxist position on the national question is the bourgeois-democratic demand of the right of nations to self-determination. According to Lenin ". . . self-determination means the political separation of [these] nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state." ("Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism," Moscow, 1970, p. 47.) That is all. Self-determination means the *political* separation of a nation from "alien national bodies" and the formation of an independent state.

Simple? Not really. The problem arises when we begin to define the Marxist position toward the bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation, which was one of the important differences separating Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg on this question. Lenin held that "The bourgeois nationalism of *any* oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed *against* oppression; and it is this content that we *unconditionally* support." (Ibid., p. 62, emphasis in original.) He went on to say, "But insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for *its own* bourgeois nationalism, we stand against." (Ibid., p. 62, emphasis in original.) Lenin stressed that the proletariat's policy on the national question "supports the bourgeoisie only in a certain direction, but it never coincides with the bourgeoisie's policy." Bourgeois nationalist demands he said "are subordinated to the interests of the class struggle." "That is why," he said, "the proletariat confines itself, so to speak, to the *negative* demand for recognition of the *right* to self-determination, and without giving guarantees to any nation, and without undertaking to give *anything* at the *expense* of another nation." (Ibid., p. 60, emphasis in original except the word "negative.")

Looking at the question in its historical context, which is the only way Marxists view social phenomena, Lenin supported the right to self-determination mainly because he felt the proletariat would be better able to develop its own independence and class consciousness under an independent national state. He felt the tendency of oppressed nations to form independent states was historically progressive and should be supported by Marxists.

Luxemburg, on the other hand, considered the Bolshevik position to be utopian and petty-bourgeois. She believed "that under the rule of capitalism there is no self-determination of peoples, that in a class society each class of the nation strives to 'determine itself' in a different fashion, and that, for the bourgeois classes, the standpoint of national freedom is fully subordinated to that of class rule." ("The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism?" Ann Arbor, 1970, p. 50-51.) Luxemburg viewed the Bolshevik position as a capitulation to bourgeois nationalism because the proletariat would have no way of expressing its will in a struggle for national independence. Separatism, she said, was a "bourgeois trap" which the bourgeoisie used to exploit the genuine struggle against oppression on the part of the broad masses.

In his polemic against her, Lenin insisted that the attitude of the proletariat of the *oppressor* nation toward the proletariat of the *oppressed* nation must be one of unity and solidarity, as a way of undercutting the masses for its own class interests. Lenin stated: ". . . we must strive to unite the workers of all nations as closely

as possible, strive to unite them for a joint struggle against all chauvinism, all national exclusiveness, against all nationalism." (Works, Vol. 20, p. 224, emphasis in original.) Again: "Class-conscious workers stand for full unity among the workers of all nations in every educational, trade union, political, etc., workers' organization." (Works, Vol. 19, p. 92, emphasis in original.)

International class solidarity; unity of workers of all nations, including organizational unity; a struggle against all chauvinism and nationalism; full equality for all nations; and international class struggle against the bourgeoisie. These were the principles upon which the Bolsheviks carried out their work.

5. And What About Trotsky?

Trotsky recognized that the bourgeois-democratic demand for national independence was the result of the "triumph of commodity exchange," uniting a nation with a common language, culture, and territory "as the most convenient, profitable and normal arena for the play of capitalist relations." Basing his analysis on the development of productive forces in Russia at the time, Trotsky theorized that only under the leadership of the proletarian party would it be possible to carry out even democratic tasks; but, once in power, the proletariat will be quickly confronted with tasks which only a socialist program is capable of solving.

In his theory of the permanent revolution, Trotsky emphasized that only through "an irreconcilable struggle against the influence of the national-liberal bourgeoisie" would it be possible to achieve "democracy and national emancipation" in the colonial and semicolonial countries. Trotsky believed even before Lenin that the national bourgeoisie of the underdeveloped countries was too weakened by imperialism to solve the democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution. This theory complemented the Bolshevik Party's position on self-determination by making more precise the proletariat's attitude toward the national bourgeoisie.

In his *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky explained with succinctness the Bolshevik position on the right of nations to self-determination:

"In this [the demand for self-determination] the Bolshevik Party did not by any means undertake an evangel of separation. It merely assumed an obligation to struggle implacably against every form of national oppression, including the forcible retention of this or that nationality within the boundaries of the general state. Only in this way could the Russian proletariat gradually win the confidence of the oppressed nationalities.

"But that was only one side of the matter. The policy of Bolshevism in the national sphere had also another side, apparently contradictory to the first but in reality supplementing it. Within the framework of the party, and of the workers' organizations in general, Bolshevism insisted upon a rigid centralism, implacably warring against every taint of nationalism which might set the workers one against the other or disunite them. While flatly refusing to the bourgeois states the right to impose compulsory citizenship, or even a state language, upon a national minority, Bolshevism at the same time made it a verily sacred task to unite as closely as possible, by

means of voluntary class discipline, the workers of different nationalities. Thus it flatly rejected the national-federation principle in building the party. A revolutionary organization is not the prototype of the future state, but merely the instrument for its creation." ("The Problem of Nationalities," Vol. III, p. 40-41, my emphasis.)

Further elaborating the Marxist attitude on the national question, Trotsky explained how the oppressed nationalities came to support the October revolution:

"In order to achieve liberation and a cultural lift, the oppressed nationalities were compelled to link their fate with that of the working class. And for this they had to free themselves from the leadership of their own bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties—they had to make a long spurt forward, that is, on the road of historic development." (Ibid., p. 55, my emphasis.)

"In order to achieve liberation," Trotsky said, "the oppressed nationalities were compelled to link their fate with that of the working class" and "free themselves from the leadership of their own bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties." And link their fate they did. In the October revolution both Lenin and Trotsky's theories on the "national question" were consummated with the establishment of the first multinational proletarian state in history.

6. The Black Question

The question of how to apply these theories to the United States has been debated by communists ever since the establishment of the Third International. And like all important theoretical questions being discussed at the time, the American communists looked to Moscow for guidance and leadership on the Black question right from the start. One of the first to speak out on the oppression of Blacks was Leon Trotsky. In a letter to the Black poet Claude McKay, written in 1923, Trotsky had the following to say about the relationship between communists and the Black masses:

"4. Therefore it is of the utmost importance today, immediately, to have a number of enlightened, young, self-sacrificing Negroes, however small their number, filled with enthusiasm for the raising of the material and moral level of the great mass of Negroes, and at the same time mentally capable of grasping the identity of interests and destiny of the Negro masses, with those of the masses of the whole world, and in the first place with the destiny of the European working class.

"The education of Negro propagandists is an exceedingly urgent and important revolutionary task at the present juncture.

"5. In North America the matter is further complicated by the abominable obtuseness and caste presumption of the privileged upper strata of the working class itself, who refuse to recognize fellow workers and fighting comrades in the Negroes. Gompers' policy is founded on the exploitation of such despicable prejudices, and is at the present time the most effective guarantee for the successful subjugation of white and colored workers alike. The fight against this policy must be taken up from different sides, and conducted on various lines. One of the most important branches of this conflict consists in enlightening the proletarian consciousness by awakening the feeling of human dignity, and of revolutionary protest, among the Negro slaves of American capitalism. As stated above, this work can only be carried out by self-sacrificing and

politically educated revolutionary Negroes.

"Needless to say, the work is not to be carried on in a spirit of Negro chauvinism, which would then merely form a counterpart of white chauvinism—but in a spirit of solidarity of all exploited without consideration of color." (*The First Five Years of the Comintern*, Vol. 2, New York, 1953, pp. 355-56, my emphasis.)

Here we find clearly expressed the traditional attitude of revolutionary Marxists on the national question applied to Blacks in the United States. While admitting ignorance on "the concrete conditions and possibilities" in the U.S., Trotsky advised the North American communists to take up the Blacks cause and fight against racism in the working class, "but in a spirit of solidarity of all exploited without consideration of color." This task, as we all know, has yet to be fulfilled despite all the work communists have done since the Russian revolution.

Again, in 1933, the revolutionary movement addressed itself to the Black question; and again it was Trotsky, the Bolshevik, providing the insight and leadership. This time it concerned the demand for self-determination which the CPUSA had adopted in 1928. The Trotskyists in the U.S. opposed the demand at the time. They felt that Blacks were not a national minority in the sense of having their own separate language, culture, and territory, but rather a racial minority which could be won over to the revolution "only on a class basis advancing also the racial slogans for the necessary intermediary stages of development." Trotsky agreed that the Blacks were not a nation but a race; then he added: "Nations grow out of the racial material under definite conditions." He felt the demand for self-determination was correct because it would push Black people toward the class struggle and serve at the same time to educate the white workers. But, he said: "An abstract criterion is not decisive in this question, but much more decisive is the historical consciousness [of Blacks], their feelings, their impulses."

In coming up with this position on self-determination for Blacks, Trotsky relied mostly on his own experiences in Russia with its many nationalities living a basically semi-feudal, peasant existence. "The Russian experiences," he said, "have shown to us that the groups who live on a peasant basis retain peculiarities, their customs, their language, etc., and given the opportunity they develop again." This was of course true of the Russian nationalities, but was it true of American Blacks?

Well, it was true that in 1930 almost 80 percent of all Black people lived in Southern and/or rural areas on farms; a basically peasant existence. And they were oppressed as a group. But there's where the similarity ends. Unlike almost every nationality, American Blacks, descendants of the most diverse African peoples, were kidnapped from their native environment, shipped off to a foreign land, and enslaved for a couple of hundred years. In addition, when they arrived, families were broken up, they were brutalized, and their offspring, if they survived, received no education. Under such conditions it would be very difficult for a nationality to retain its "peculiarities."

The SWP took cognizance of all this in its first resolution on the Black question, "The Right of Self-Determination and the Negro in the United States of North America" approved by the second national convention in 1939. It stated in part: "Cut off for centuries from

all contact with the continent and customs of his origin, the Negro is today an American citizen. In his daily work, language, religion and general culture, he differs not at all from his fellow workers in factory and field, except in the intensity of his exploitation, and the attendant brutal discrimination." ". . . the question of whether the Negroes in America are a national minority to which the slogan of self-determination applies will be solved in practice." The party at that time made a distinction between the advocacy of the *right* of self-determination and advancing the *slogan* of self-determination. Trotsky himself later recognized this very point when he criticized the CP for making "self-determination" an imperative slogan.

But from the point of view of building a mass, multi-national revolutionary party, it was imperative that the party begin serious work among the Black masses. Trotsky explained why: "Our party is not safe from degeneration if it remains a place for intellectuals, semi-intellectuals, skilled workers and Jewish workers who build a very close milieu which is almost isolated from the genuine masses. Under these conditions our party cannot develop—it will degenerate. . . . Our party is a part of the same milieu, not of the basic exploited masses of whom the Negroes are the most exploited."

Because of many factors, both objective and subjective, the party did not begin its Black work in earnest until 1944. But within two years it had recruited 350 Black members; and sold a majority of its new subscriptions—over 22,000 in 1946—in the Black community. The success of this work was documented in 1948 in the "Draft Resolution on the Negro Question." The resolution summed up the party's previous experiences in the following words: "Next to the emancipation of the working class from capitalism, the liberation of the Negro people from their degradation is the paramount problem of American society. These two social problems are integrally united. The only road to freedom for the workers, and to equality for the Negroes, is through their common struggle for the abolition of capitalism."

On the overall strategy for Black liberation, the resolution said: "The primary and ultimate necessity of the Negro movement is its unification with the revolutionary forces *under the leadership of the proletariat*. The guiding force of this unification is *and can only* be the revolutionary party." (My emphasis.) And the party's tasks: "But just as the Negro movement for all its revolutionary character depends upon the revolutionary proletariat for its final success and even for safeguarding it from defeat and destruction, so, too, the party's Negro work, important as it is, depends upon the general progress of the party in securing and extending its influence *in the organized labor movement*. Experience has shown that it is where the party possesses real strength in the labor movement that its activities among the Negro masses meet with the greatest response." (My emphasis.)

This essentially correct Marxist position on the Black question remained until 1963. In that year the party adopted a specifically pro-Black nationalist position on the Black question. The document, referred to as the "Freedom Now" document, represented a contradictory statement on the party's new approach (read: adaptation) to the changing nature of the Black struggle for equality. On the one hand, the party persisted in defining the Blacks

as "an oppressed minority without a clearly defined geographical, language or cultural basis for differentiation from their oppressors." On the other hand, it characterized "Negro Nationalism" as "progressive," and called for the formation of a Black party. How was this new position on a Black party to conform with the party's position on a labor party and the role of the vanguard party in providing leadership to the Black masses? Very simple. By liquidating itself. Here is what the document says: ". . . we believe that a Negro party, a socialist party [the SWP?], and a Labor party would find much in common from the very beginning, would work together for common ends, and would tend in the course of common activity to establish close organizational ties or *even merge into a single or federated party.*" (My emphasis.) If you don't believe me, read it yourself.

This basically liquidationist position on the national question, i.e., that the socialist revolution can be made through a coalition of nationalist, reformist, and revolutionary parties, is the antithesis of Marxism-Leninism. It clearly undermines the Leninist position of the necessity of the vanguard party to provide leadership in revolutionary struggles. It also implies that there can be many "vanguards" of the proletariat, with differing programs and class bases, united in a federation and all acting in the historical interests of the working class!

7. Community Control of What?

The above revisionist position on the national question was extended even further to include support for the concept of "community control." This demand is supposed to be the equivalent to the nationalist demand for an independent Black state. That is, since the "Black nation" is spread out all over the "white oppressor nation" into communities or ghettos, the demand for control over these communities serves the same purpose as demanding a separate Black state, e.g., winning the right to self-determination.

But the problem arises when you begin to define the community control demand as one in which an oppressed national minority struggles to achieve national liberation, as the SWP has. If we make this comparison, we must ask ourselves the following questions: (1) Does community control mean just *political* control, in the same sense as the demand for self-determination does? (2) If it does, wouldn't we have to conclude that Blacks already control their communities in Newark, Gary, and now Los Angeles? And the Chicanos already control Crystal City? (3) If not, if we also mean by community control, *economic* control, aren't we falling into the same trap as Rosa Luxemburg in defining self-determination as meaning economic as well as political independence—a position she held in *opposition* to Lenin's? (4) Therefore, if we conclude that community control means only political control (in the same sense as the many African nations achieved their self-determination following World War II) and accept the fact that Blacks control certain governments or communities, shouldn't we also conclude from this that the demand can be met under capitalism, and moreover, represents not an advance for the Black workers but a "bourgeois trap"?

But revolutionaries are supposed to raise demands which reflect the interests of the working class, Black and white; especially in an advanced imperialist nation. But even

in colonial countries like Palestine, we should not fail to raise socialist and class demands (for a united, socialist Middle East, for soviets, for general strikes, for armed struggle, etc.). The demand for community control is a demand which has been met by the bourgeoisie in such places as Newark, Cleveland, and Crystal City, where Black and Chicano leaders were allowed to take "power" after an election victory without the resort to armed struggle. What this proves is that bourgeois democracy is still capable of reforms (e.g., India, Bangladesh, Algeria, etc.).

But let's ask ourselves if it is possible to have "real" community control in just Black and Chicano communities. If we use the party's analysis of what "real" community control means, we are of course talking about a bourgeois-democratic revolution in just Black and Chicano communities. But how is it possible to have such a revolution *only* in Black and Chicano communities? Will there also be risings in the white communities simultaneously with those in the Black and Chicano communities? If so, aren't we really talking about a *nationwide* proletarian revolution against the entire bourgeoisie in *every* community? If not, what will the white workers be doing while the Black and Chicano masses are rising up? I'll give you one guess.

Let's suppose such a situation does arise. Who will be leading the Black and Chicano masses in struggle against the bourgeoisie? The petty bourgeoisie? Or maybe the Black and Chicano Trotskyists? If the Trotskyists are leading them, what should our program be for the white working class? Should we call for unity of the white, Black, and Chicano workers, or should we call for complete separation? If we adopted the latter position, how long would these separate communities (nations?) last surrounded by a hostile white nation still in control of the most important means of production and militarily powerful?

And what of white revolutionaries? How should they behave toward the "white" communities? Should they try to win the white workers over to the demand for Black and Chicano control over their communities? Or should they try to unite the white, Black, and Chicano workers against the ruling class? If white revolutionaries are successful in carrying out the latter program, aren't we again talking about a nationwide proletarian revolution?

In its document, "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation," the party clearly reveals its confusion on the community control question. On page 7 it states: "The realization of this aim [Black control of the Black community] can build black fortresses which will be centers of black counterpower to the white power structure in the principal cities of the United States." Aside from the fact that this statement leaves out which class will control these "black fortresses," it leaves unanswered the role of the white workers in the "principal cities of the United States" where many still live. Posing the question this way precludes a working alliance between Black and white workers in factory committees and individual trade unions located in the Black communities.

This idea is reinforced on page 10 of the document where we learn who the "enemy forces" are: "Since Afro-Americans constitute a minority of the population in the United States, it will be necessary to find ways and means to take advantage of potential social divisions *among*

the whites and thereby reduce the original unfavorable odds." (My emphasis.) "This can be done," the document goes on to state, "by drawing one part of the poor and working class whites, as well as sympathetic students and intellectuals, into an alliance of action while some other sections of the white population [which ones?] are neutralized. . . ."

And lastly, the document describes the demand for Black control of the Black community as "profoundly revolutionary, because it poses the question of *who* will have decision-making power over black people: themselves or the capitalist rulers. . . ." (My emphasis.) Really? I have already shown where the demand for community control has been met by capitalism (viz., Newark, Gary, Crystal City, etc.). Does the party believe that Blacks and Chicanos in those cities have control over the lives? Certainly not. But even so, the demand does not, and cannot, pose the question of what *class* will rule, which from a Marxist point of view is the crucial question.

The party is forced to admit this when it states in the above-quoted document, "Without the white workers, the movement for black liberation cannot realistically pose an immediate struggle for government power. . . ." Then why build "black fortresses" if Black people cannot expect to win government power without the white workers? Why not begin *now* to build the kind of class unity between Black and white workers which is "indispensable to combat and overthrow capitalism"?

The present leaders of the party cannot do this because their basic approach to the national question is based on bourgeois concepts: the struggle for democratic rights, support for national chauvinism, raising self-determination above the class question, calling for the formation of nationalist parties, calling for and creating "separate" programs for national minorities, and supporting the idea of a "federated party" consisting of nationalist parties and workers parties as the potential vanguard of the proletariat.

No longer does the party take cognizance of the continuing process of proletarianization (and lumpenization) of Black people, a process begun during World War II and recognized by our movement even then. This process has resulted in a qualitative change in the social composition of the Black population. Today the overwhelming majority of Black people live in urban cities and have become integrated into industry and public service fields; and many, perhaps 15 percent of the Black workforce, are members of trade unions. The byproduct of this whole process has been the creation of a small but growing urban Black petty bourgeoisie, the material out of which any future bourgeoisie would be formed.

While it is true that there is no significant Black bourgeoisie in this country to speak of, neither was there one in Bangladesh, which didn't stop the Awami League from setting up a bourgeois nation there.

These changes have given rise to a developing class and race consciousness among the Black masses, best exemplified by the civil rights and Black power movements. In all the mass struggles led by Blacks since World War II, invariably, the demands raised were for complete equality: in the army, in the schools, on the job, in government, in unions, etc. Now, much more so than in 1939 when the majority of Blacks lived off the land and the possibility of repeating the "Russian experience"

was theoretically possible, Black people are demanding full and complete equality and not separation. Today, when the demand for self-determination finds almost no echo in the Black movement, the SWP makes an "evangel of separation." Does this indicate that the SWP has "correctly understood" the national question in the United States? I think not.

Our task remains to find the road to the Black worker. But this can best be done by carrying out a working class line in all our relations with Black workers and organizations. This includes an uncompromising hostility toward all forms of racism on the part of white workers.

The call for solidarity with Blacks and all oppressed people struggling against racial discrimination and for equal rights; including solidarity with colonial and semi-colonial nations fighting against imperialism, particularly in Africa. The demand for a labor party, 30-for-40, free medical care, free abortions, free tuition, and workers control over industry leading to the formation of a workers government, all meet the needs of the Black and white workers alike.

The solution to Black oppression is socialism. We must state this frankly whenever we get a forum before Black people. Racism, like all the sociological and psychological evils of capitalism, will be finally rooted out of society only under the direction of a workers state composed of all sections of the working class. To raise the socialist and class consciousness of Black and white working people, that is the shortest road to an end to all discrimination.

8. *The Struggle for Chicano Liberation*

The struggle for Chicano liberation represents a genuine example of the national question in the United States. As an oppressed minority with its own separate language and culture, the Chicano struggle against capitalist oppression could lead in the direction of establishing a separate state or toward "reunification" with the Mexican nation, which revolutionaries would have to support. However, because the Chicanos lack a clearly defined national territory, with an integrated economy, the establishment of a separate "Aztlán" within the borders of the United States is highly unlikely. Such a move would probably require the expulsion of most of the non-Chicano inhabitants presently living in those areas of the Southwest where Chicanos constitute a majority.

But even this is changing. Over the last few years, thousands of Chicanos have migrated north to take up residence in the large cities in search of jobs and better living conditions. This process has had a dual effect: on the one hand, it has led to the proletarianization of many Chicanos who found jobs in industry and public service fields; on the other hand, because of the special oppression they suffer as Chicanos, it has increased their "nationalist" consciousness and forced them to struggle against this oppression as a *group*.

But, unlike the Blacks, who are not a national minority, the nationalist character of the Chicano movement has led to the creation of more *permanent*, nationalist political organizations of struggle (viz., La Raza Unida Party), which can lay the basis for a mass separatist movement. In addition, many Chicano people identify to a great extent with Mexico and Latin America, and to a lesser extent with Cuba, and view these areas—with

the exception of Cuba—as exploited areas, dominated by U.S. economic interests, the same interests who exploit them.

However, this affinity for Mexico is not all positive. Since Mexico is a bourgeois nation which exploits "its" own working class and shoots down students in cold blood, in the same manner as any other bourgeois ruling class acts to defend its interests, we in the Trotskyist movement must explain to the Chicano people the necessity of overthrowing *all* bourgeois rule, whether it speaks Spanish or English!

But the tendency within the Chicano movement toward separation is constantly being undermined by the process of proletarianization mentioned above, and the lack of any desire on the part of the masses to unite with Mexico, a country which has not been able to solve the problems of the Mexican people, problems which are similar to the ones Chicanos face here. This process of proletarianization of Chicanos—symbolized by the organization of 70,000 agricultural workers into the United Farm Workers Union—is forcing many Chicano workers in the industrial cities to seek alliances with other workers around class-struggle issues. The strike of the Farah workers—most of whom are Chicana women—is a striking example of this solidarity.

These factors, combined with the fact that many young Chicanos have become politicized over the last few years around important social issues (the war, racism, education, etc.), gives the Chicano struggle an explosive character which could lead to mass expressions of anticapitalist activity. We have seen examples of this already with the demonstrations organized by the Chicano Moratorium Committee in 1970 and the demonstrations organized by Chavez in defense of the farmworkers.

But this tendency toward class struggle must be encouraged and given proper leadership. Revolutionaries engaging in mass work with Chicanos must constantly press for a class analysis of Chicano oppression and a class program for its solution. While understanding completely the material and historical reasons for Chicano nationalism, its tendencies toward national exclusiveness and separation, revolutionaries should not advocate such ideas as if they represent answers to Chicano oppression. The special oppression of Chicanos is a problem for the proletariat to solve. The reinforcing of nationalist ideology which leads to the subordination of the class struggle is not *our* task.

We of course support and advocate democratic demands raised specifically by Chicano people for Chicano people (all language rights, free education including studies in Chicano history, for more Chicano teachers, an end to discriminatory immigration laws, etc.). But any demands which cannot advance the class struggle or the social position of Chicanos should be rejected. These are demands which either divide the working class or raise reformist illusions regarding the way forward for liberation (community control, preferential hiring, independent nationalist parties, etc.). As Trotsky explained in his *History*, the Russian nationalities "were compelled to link their fate with that of the working class. And for this they had to free themselves from the leadership of their own bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties. . . ."

The most significant example of working-class struggle

by Chicano people is the struggle of farmworkers for unionization continuing today throughout the Southwest and California. This struggle, which has involved many different races and nationalities, is a real *social* movement led by Chicanos to establish unions and significantly raise the standard of living of farmworkers. It's similar to the struggle waged by the CIO to establish industrial unions in this country in the 1930s. But it comes in a period when the unions are on the defensive against the attacks of both government and employer; and in the case of the farmworkers, against another union—the Teamsters! But there's another important difference: the fiercest struggle for unionization going on in this country today is being led by an *oppressed minority!*

With the involvement of the Teamsters union in signing sweetheart contracts with the growers behind the backs of the workers, new divisions have opened up inside the Teamsters union between pro-UFWOC and anti-UFWOC forces. These divisions offer good opportunities for revolutionaries to raise their ideas on a number of important questions and even to begin organizing around them.

A correct revolutionary attitude toward the farmworkers struggle would have to include sending comrades into the fields to participate in one way or another. Up until now, the party leadership has taken this struggle too lightly. The opportunities to raise political questions are not as limited as one might think. Questions such as the labor party, workers control, equal pay for equal work, free medical care provided by the government, racism, and yes, even socialism, could be raised with the farmworkers without much difficulty. Because of the tense situation in the fields today, any little mishap could cause a serious crisis in the nation; just look at how carefully the government approached the takeover of Wounded Knee, which was relatively isolated from the radical movement. Consequently, revolutionaries want to be in a position to give leadership should such a crisis develop.

On the college and high school campuses that contain the most Chicano students, our comrades should engage in propaganda around a class-struggle approach to liberation. All utopian notions about "student power" or "community control" should be fought as obstacles to the raising of a class consciousness among Chicano students.

The best refutation of the "revolutionary dynamic" of the community control slogan can be found in Crystal City, Texas. (Interestingly enough, one reads almost nothing about Crystal City in *The Militant* anymore. Once hailed as the best example of what can be accomplished by winning community control, the supporters of the Crystal City road to liberation have suddenly lost their sense of direction!) In this small Texas town, the birthplace of the La Raza Unida Party, a campaign was launched in 1970 to win control over the school board and city council under the leadership of LRUP. This election campaign was successful, and immediate changes were instituted which have greatly benefited the Chicano majority living there.

But that is all that has been done there. No revolutionary transformations; no soviets; no independent nation; no arming of the masses; no abolition of the bourgeois institutions; nothing except a series of reforms, which are, of course, important. A reformist party took control

of the community and instituted reforms. What else could anyone expect? The SWP was belatedly forced to see this when it stated in its 1971 document, "The Struggle For Chicano Liberation," that "Controlling the city hall and the school board in a small city like Crystal City has strict limitations. . . ." Strict limitation indeed! The limitations become even more imposing when one's program is based on reforms and not revolution. The SWP admits this too in the same document and same page (13): "While they [independent Texas formations] see the need to fight for attainable reforms that would improve their conditions, they don't necessarily pose the question of the need for more fundamental changes in society. . . ." (My emphasis.)

It is true the Texas LRUP does not "pose the question" of power in Crystal City or anywhere else and for good reasons: it does not consider itself a revolutionary vanguard party; it has no program to confiscate the land in South Texas; it has no program to prepare the Chicanos for armed struggle; it has no program to unite the entire working class in the United States for the overthrowing of capitalism; it has no program for nationalizations, workers control, etc. That's a revolutionary program, and that's the program we must bring to the Chicanos and the working class in general. Not a program for more Crystal Cities, but a program for more Paris Communes!

III. THE STRUGGLE TO EMANCIPATE WOMEN IS A CLASS STRUGGLE

Just as the struggle to end national and racial oppression has been indelibly written into the communist program of revolution, so too has the struggle to end female oppression. For as it states in *ABC of Communism*, "Without the aid of the women of the proletariat, it is idle to dream of a general victory, it is idle to dream of the 'freeing of labor.'"

But that's exactly what revolutionary Marxists are concerned with: the *freeing of labor*. To free labor—male and female—from the degradation of wage slavery requires us to take a class approach to the problem. That means, above all, basing our analysis of female oppression and how to end it, on Marxism, and subordinating all other petty-bourgeois theories to this materialist approach. However, this task cannot be carried out just by giving a few classes on Engels' monumental work, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. A Marxist and revolutionary approach to the woman question also requires that we put forth a *concrete program* of action and propaganda aimed primarily at the woman worker. In addition, a thorough education *within* the ranks of the communist movement on the woman question is mandatory if we expect to give leadership to this oppressed sector of society.

The most thorough examination and analysis to date of the revolutionary approach to women's liberation was accomplished by the Bolsheviks in the early years of the Soviet Republic. Not only did the party of Lenin and Trotsky turn its attention to solving some of the immediate social and political problems facing Russian women, worker and peasant, but the Third International itself spent many hours working out a program specially aimed

at struggling against women's oppression *internationally*. At the Third World Congress of the Comintern in 1921, a special Women's Secretariat was established to direct the work of Communist parties of all countries in their tasks aimed at ending women's oppression.

In the document, "Theses on Ways and Means of Work Among the Women of the Communist Party," adopted in 1921 by the Comintern, the Bolshevik position on the woman question was stated with absolute clarity. I quote from that document:

"What Communism offers to the women, the bourgeois women's movement will never afford her. So long as the power of capitalism and private property continue to exist, the emancipation of woman from subservience to her husband cannot proceed further than her right to dispose of her property and earnings, as she sees fit, and also to decide on equal terms with her husband, the destiny of their children.

"The most definite aim of the feminists—to grant the vote to the women—under the regime of bourgeois parliamentarism, does not solve the question of the actual equalization of women, especially of those of the dispossessed classes. This has been clearly demonstrated by the experience of the working women in those capitalist countries where the bourgeoisie has formally recognized the equality of the sexes. . . ."

"Only under Communism, not merely the formal, but the actual equalization of women will be achieved. Then women will be the rightful owner, on a par with all the members of the working class, of the means of production and distribution. She will participate in the management of industry and she will assume an equal responsibility for the well-being of society. . . ."

"But, Communism is also the final aim of the proletariat. Consequently, the struggle of the working women for this aim must be carried on in the interests of both, under a united leadership and control, as 'one and indivisible' to the entire world movement of the revolutionary proletariat.

"5. The Third Congress of the Comintern confirms the basic proposition of revolutionary Marxism, i.e., that there is no 'specific woman question' and no 'specific women's movement,' and, that every sort of alliance of working women with bourgeois feminism, as well as any support by the women workers of the treacherous tactics of the social-compromisers and opportunists leads to the undermining of the forces of the proletariat, delaying thereby the triumph of the social revolution and the advent of Communism, and thus also postponing the great hour of women's ultimate liberation." (My emphasis.)

The Bolshevik program went a long way in relieving women's oppression. The practical steps taken by the early Soviet Republic to abolish women's inferior position in society, a process since halted and reversed by the Stalinist bureaucracy, has given the revolutionary vanguard of today important insights into what kind of program is necessary to struggle against capitalist oppression. The fight for equal pay for equal work and the need to draw more women into production, which would enable them to have a greater say in political matters; the demand for communal kitchens and laundries and free childcare centers; the right to divorce, abortion, and full educational opportunities; the need for protective

legislation for women and youth, guaranteeing the former full pay during pregnancy leave; the struggle against prostitution by means of guaranteeing jobs for all at livable wages. These and many other steps were taken by the early Bolsheviks to end female oppression in the Soviet Union.

In addition, the Bolshevik Party created women's organizations in the party and state institutions to make sure its program was carried out in practice.

But most importantly, the early Bolsheviks fought in their propaganda and agitation for *class unity* between male and female workers. They criticized "feminism" as a bourgeois ideology aimed at dividing the working class along sex lines. Bourgeois feminism was viewed as alien to the proletarian struggle for socialism. The early female Bolsheviks and revolutionaries like Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg were well aware of the effects of feminism in the struggle for women's liberation. Not for nothing did they *counterpose* communist ideology and working-class organizations to feminist ideology and multiclass formations.

"While participating in the legislative, municipal and other organizations of bourgeois States, Communist women should strictly adhere to the tactics of the party, not concerning themselves so much with the realisation of reforms within the limits of the bourgeois world order, *as taking advantage of every live question and demand of the working women*, as watchwords by which to lead the women into the active mass struggle for these demands, *through the dictatorship of the proletariat*." (From the Theses on Work Among Women, Third World Congress of the Comintern, 1921, my emphasis.)

The orientation of the Bolsheviks was always proletarian class struggle, whether they were working with women workers, housewives, women students, or peasant women. And a great deal of emphasis was placed on work in the trade unions which women were encouraged to join and get elected to office. Through such work, women's role in production would be enhanced, and as a result, her role in society would change from one having almost no control over her affairs to one in which she, as a producer, would share in the control of the means of production.

9. *The Reformist Logic of the "Second Wave"*

The struggle to emancipate women cannot be separated from the struggle to emancipate all labor. That is the lesson of the past century of struggle against women's oppression, including the present so-called "second wave." Without a proletarian class content, the "new" women's movement is destined to remain within the limits of bourgeois democracy. While it's true certain important reforms can be won by the feminist movement, the right to vote for example, such movements cannot be the vehicle for the complete emancipation of all women, a task which only the proletariat is capable of fulfilling.

The example of the abortion movement is only too clear and fresh in our minds. The party engaged in this struggle with the idea that the abortion issue was capable of mobilizing millions of women in the streets and could, if successful, help raise the whole movement to a higher level. In fact, the party concentrated most of its resources in the women's movement on the abortion fight and build-

ing WONAAC.

Well, we all know what happened. This movement, which the party claimed had a "revolutionary logic" to it, was coopted by a group of MCPs sitting on the Supreme Court — a bastion of reaction and defender of capitalist institutions! Suddenly, WONAAC became a hollow shell and the abortion movement lost its "revolutionary logic." The lesson couldn't be any clearer.

Our task as vanguard revolutionists, in addition to supporting such demands as the right to vote and to receive abortions, etc., is to propagandize and agitate for the *communist* solution to the woman question, e. g., that "women as women" cannot "liberate themselves"; that only by waging a determined struggle against capitalist oppression *along with* proletarian men can the working class *as a whole* liberate itself; and that in order to achieve this unity in action, communist women must organize among working women on the basis of a *complete* revolutionary program.

What would that program look like? For the most part, it would include demands which most revolutionaries are already familiar with, such as: (1) Equal pay for equal work; (2) Free, 24-hour childcare centers under workers control, the cost to be paid by the employer or the state; (3) Free health care, including free abortion on demand, no forced sterilization, free access to birth-control information, and paid maternity leave; (4) No job discrimination based on sex, race, or age; (5) For a shorter work week with no loss in pay (30-for-40), for unlimited cost-of-living escalator clauses in all contracts; (6) Equal legal rights for all, extend protective legislation to cover all workers; (7) For a labor party based on the trade unions; (8) For immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U. S. troops and material from all Southeast Asia; (9) For a workers government.

Let me stress: demands *alone* cannot make a revolution, no matter how correct they may be. The essential ingredient is to mobilize the working class in struggle around these demands. This, of course, requires a perspective toward the working class.

But the program being carried out by the party leadership in the women's movement today does not have a perspective toward the working class nor is it revolutionary. The content of that program—"Sisterhood is Powerful," "Repeal All Abortion Laws," "The Right to Control Our Bodies," "Support the ERA," "The War Will End When Women Want (?) it to End," "Gay Power," "Gay is Good," etc.—indicate a complete adaptation to petty-bourgeois radicalism and feminism. The party has done exactly what the Third World Congress of the Comintern warned against, it has concerned itself "so much with the realisation of reforms within the limits of the bourgeois world order. . . ." By separating the woman question from the class question, on the basis of adopting a *reformist* single-issue approach to women's oppression, the party has in effect *subordinated* the struggle to liberate women from the shackles of capitalist exploitation, to the narrow petty-bourgeois desires of a few politically active bourgeois feminists intent only upon advancing their own personal careers.

The adoption of "single-issue, nonexclusion" as a Leninist organizational principle upon which SWP comrades are supposed to carry out their work in the women's move-

ment, shows nothing but contempt for Leninism. Marxists have always endeavored to establish multi-issue, class-exclusionist organizations for one simple reason: they are the only kind of organizations capable of overthrowing capitalism and defending socialism. Examples are numerous: trade unions, soviets, labor and socialist parties, factory committees, working-class united fronts, workers militias, Communist Women's Groups, and of course, workers governments. A more specific example was the meeting of the International Socialist Women's Bureau of the Second International, led and called by Clara Zetkin in 1914 in opposition to the first imperialist war.

10. *Is a Proletarian Orientation Enough?*

At the last convention of the Socialist Workers Party in 1971, the supporters of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency put forth a counterline document on women's liberation. In this document, "Toward a Marxist Approach To The Women's Liberation Movement," the authors correctly criticized the leadership's line as leading "away from the working class and a class analysis." In attempting to prove their case, the document's authors cite favorably Evelyn Reed's article, "The Woman Question and the Marxist Method," written in 1954. In the article, Comrade Reed made the point that "The Woman Question cannot be divorced from the class question," a position which the authors explicitly agreed with. However, while putting forth an essentially correct *class analysis* of women's oppression, the authors failed to put forth a correct class approach to work among working women.

While it is true, they did call for a "primary focus" toward working-class women, and Third World women in particular, the authors remained partisans of the leadership's *organizational-political* approach to women's liberation, including their belief in "revolutionary feminism." On page 18, they stated: "We must help fight to keep the women's liberation movement *non-exclusionary*, democratically-run, and open to *all* women who support and wish to participate in action." (My emphasis.) And further, on page 21, they stated: "Our role in the women's liberation movement should be to see that the struggles are *linked up* with Third World and working women, by going into the factories and other workplaces of the masses of women, and by educating the campus groups, especially those in the high schools and the junior colleges, of the necessity to link up with their *sisters* in struggle." (My emphasis.)

In these two quotes we see the same theoretical weaknesses contained in the leadership's line. The idea of trying to "link up" multi-class, nonexclusionary, campus-based feminist groups with the working-class struggle against capitalist exploitation on the basis of uniting "all women who support and wish to participate" is *not* a "Marxist approach to women's liberation"! Apparently, Evelyn Reed's admonitions about "class against class" and "the interests of the workers as a class are identical; and not the interests of all women as a sex," did not sink in far enough. This became clear when the document's authors transferred their weaknesses onto the Black and Chicano movements by supporting the party's demand for "separate" Third World women's groups, further dividing the working class along *sex* and *national* lines.

Going to the workers with this kind of approach and strategy, even if the demands are correct, will only turn

the most advanced ones against Marxism. A revolutionary approach to women's work would include bringing women into active participation in workers organization (trade unions, parties, strike committees, etc.) around demands which affect them as women, but which also reflect the interests of the whole class. Where no workers organizations exist, our comrades would raise general political questions and attempt to involve women in mass actions around our demands. In the unions, our task would be to unite men and women, Black, Chicano, and white, into caucuses based on the Transitional Program. When spontaneous organizations arise, such as consumer boycott committees, our comrades would enter them and put forth a perspective of uniting workers, the unemployed, and consumers in a struggle against the capitalist class.

The "lineup of working men and women against the ruling men and women" in class organizations, with a class struggle program and leadership, is the only way to emancipate women and ensure "a general victory" and lay the basis for the complete emancipation of all laboring humanity.

IV. *WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR*

The struggle against imperialist war by the working class in this century has been beset with defeats encompassing the deaths of millions of people. In most cases, however, these defeats were unnecessary. If a correct Marxist theory had been applied in practice by the then existing working-class organizations, these defeats could have been avoided. But, as we know, the leaders of the working class during the past 70 years were not always correct or even Marxist. And it was during periods of war that the leaders of the working class showed their strengths and weaknesses the most clearly.

On the other hand, the working class did experience some success in its struggle against imperialist wars. The best example of this was the Russian revolution, led by Lenin and Trotsky. One of the most important lessons of that revolution, so carefully documented for us in Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution*, is that the only way to struggle against imperialist war is to struggle against the makers of war—the capitalist class. Although the slogan raised by the Bolsheviks against the war was "Peace," the actual content of their struggle was *against the state*. Lenin and Trotsky's "multi-issue" approach to the Russian antiwar movement (a social movement) was based on their understanding of the nature of imperialist war. They argued that only by overthrowing the war-makers (Nicholas, Kerensky, etc.) and establishing workers power would it be possible to end the war; and end the war they did. In the words of Lenin, ". . . the war which was started by the capitalist government can be brought to an end only by a workers' revolution." That's the way the Bolsheviks viewed the question of imperialist war.

Contrary to this position, the Stalinist usurpers put forth a Menshevik, non-class position on war. The Stalinist approach to imperialist war was (and is) based on a narrow, nationalistic theory of building socialism in one country. On the basis of this false theory, the Leninist position of revolutionary defeatism toward one's "own" bourgeoisie gave way to support to the "progressive,"

"democratic" bourgeoisie in World War II. In the colonial countries this meant giving support to the national bourgeoisie as opposed to the imperialist bourgeoisie without regard for the need to maintain the independence of the proletariat. In China, this meant liquidating into the Kuomintang, a bourgeois nationalist party. In Spain and France, forming Popular Fronts with "progressive" capitalists against fascism. In the United States it meant giving support to Roosevelt, and attacking the Trotskyists as supporters of fascism.

In opposition to this counterrevolutionary line, the continuators of genuine Marxism-Leninism, the Fourth International, issued a manifesto on "Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution" in 1940. In this manifesto was summed up all the previous experiences, defeats, and victories of the proletariat in its struggle against war and for the socialist revolution. In the concluding section, entitled "This Is Not Our War!" the Fourth International explained what a revolutionary antiwar line should look like: "Independently of the course of the war, we fulfill our basic task: we explain to the workers the irreconcilability between their interests and the interests of bloodthirsty capitalism; we mobilize the toilers against imperialism; we propagate the unity of the workers in all warring and neutral countries; we call for the fraternization of workers and soldiers within each country, and of soldiers with soldiers on the opposite side of the battle front; we mobilize the women and youth against the war; we carry on constant, persistent, tireless preparation of the revolution—in the factories, in the mills, in the villages, in the barracks, at the front and in the fleet" (p. 46).

Of course this program was not realized. But the main line of the program is still valid for today's struggles against imperialist wars. One might argue that the manifesto was intended for *interimperialist* wars and so it doesn't apply to wars for national liberation, or wars in which imperialism intervenes on one side of a colonial civil war. Nothing could be further from the truth. The program of proletarian revolution applies even more so in the case of imperialist aggression against a colonial revolution. With regards to the Vietnamese revolution, it is our duty to explain to the American workers "the irreconcilability between their interests and the interests of bloodthirsty American capitalism"; to "mobilize" against imperialism; to "propagate unity of the workers" at home with the workers and peasants in Vietnam; the need of GIs to fraternize with the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers; to "mobilize the women and youth against the war"; and to "carry on constant, persistent, tireless preparation of the revolution—in the factories, in the mills, in the villages, in the barracks, at the front and in the fleet." Independently of the course of the war in Vietnam—nay, in all Southeast Asia—we should fulfill this basic task.

11. Vietnam: Did We Pass the Test?

But was this the program of the ostensible continuators of Trotskyism in this country—the Socialist Workers Party? No! The party's position on the Vietnam war, while on paper opposing imperialism, in practice was reformist and pacifist. By limiting its activity to simply putting pressure on the bourgeoisie to "Bring All The Troops Home Now," the party failed to intervene with a rev-

olutionary line. By characterizing the antiwar movement as a "single-issue" movement to end U. S. involvement in Vietnam, the party failed to draw the necessary connections between imperialist war and capitalism, and between war and revolution.

In World War II, the party combined a position of revolutionary defeatism with political slogans aimed at mobilizing the working class—the only "sector" capable of ending imperialism and its bloody wars. The party's policy then, called "Proletarian Military Policy," was aimed at undermining the bourgeoisie's attempt to militarize the people behind its war efforts. The PMP called upon the workers and unions to take control over war preparations and training, the draft, the war industries, etc. Our comrades were urged not to refuse the draft if a majority of the proletariat supported it. Regarding work in the armed forces, our comrades were urged to obey military discipline and were even advised not to "create insubordination in the ranks of the armed forces." Also, the PMP advocated civil rights for GIs, the right of soldiers to elect field officers, and the right to elect grievance committees. The party also demanded equal rights for Blacks in the armed forces.

Right in the middle of the war, in 1943, the party initiated a campaign for a labor party in the unions. During the campaign the party wrote and circulated a pamphlet for the purpose of propagandizing for a labor party, which included an attack upon the government's imperialist war aims. The party saw no contradiction in this because its main purpose was to mobilize the working class against the war.

When the Korean war began, the party initially adopted a "third-camp" position, but it was quickly corrected. The main slogans were "Bring All The Troops Home Now!" "Self-determination for the Korean People," "For a Labor Party," and "For a Workers and Farmers Government." The main arenas for the party's antiwar work were in the unions and during election campaigns. Because there was no real movement in this country against the war, most of the party's work was propagandistic. In the press, the party concentrated most of its fire on U. S. imperialist policies with criticisms also directed at the reformists and Stalinists.

But with the new rise of the Vietnamese struggle, and the advent of a mass movement against U. S. involvement there, the party was in a position to put into practice a revolutionary line on imperialist war. But by 1966 it was a little too late. The party had already adopted centrist positions on Cuba and Black nationalism. These revisions could have been corrected however if the party leaders had intervened with a correct Marxist position on the crucial question of imperialist war. As was mentioned earlier, the question of war sharpens the crisis of leadership of the proletariat and puts to the test the vanguard's revolutionary capabilities. *In this test, the leaders of the SWP failed miserably.*

The party's isolation from the class had already taken its toll. While initially calling for the creation of an "anti-imperialist" antiwar movement in one of its first documents, the party quickly adopted a non-revolutionary line in the antiwar movement around the central slogan "Immediate and Unconditional Withdrawal of All U. S. Troops." While principled, the demand could not suffice as a program for revolutionary antiwar struggle. Instead

of broadening our demands to include *political and transitional demands*, as revolutionary Marxists had done in the past, the party *narrowed* its approach by trying to create something never attempted by revolutionaries previously: a multi-class, single-issue, united front against imperialist war!

Of course, no such organism exists except maybe in the minds of some party members. In the first place, no united front, i.e., a coalition of working-class organizations, can include representatives of the bourgeoisie as NPAC does. And secondly, no movement against imperialism—either in colonial countries or the advanced capitalist countries—can be single-issue. Any attempt to separate struggle against war from struggle against the capitalist state is denying the validity of class struggle itself. During the Russian revolution, the Bolsheviks demanded "Land, Peace, and Bread"; during World War II, we demanded "Workers Control over War Industries," "For a Labor Party," etc.; during the Korean war, we demanded a "Workers and Farmers Government," etc.

The reason we take this position is because imperialist war is a manifestation of crisis in the bourgeois camp. The bourgeoisie only goes to war when it feels capitalism is being jeopardized; this includes wars against weaker capitalist nations. War means mobilization of people; higher taxes; inflation and debts; and of course antiwar movements and even revolutions. All of these things the bourgeoisie would rather avoid if it had a choice. *But it doesn't have a choice*; and it's for those moments in history that revolutionaries prepare to intervene with a program for socialist revolution. Not for "peace," or to "end the war now," but for the complete transformation of society on a new class basis as the only way to end all wars.

The duty of revolutionaries then is to intervene in mass movements against imperialist wars on the basis of our program, attempt to win over the leadership of them, and transform them into social movements aimed at the destruction of the capitalist state, i.e., the warmakers themselves. Our main attention would be toward the working class and GIs since they represent the forces capable of ending imperialist wars. We should not take responsibility for any multi-class antiwar coalitions such as NPAC. We would strive constantly to draw the interconnection between imperialist wars and capitalism in all our propaganda. A revolutionary position on the Vietnam war would have called for the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, and victory to the Vietnamese revolution or the NLF.

After seven years of antiwar struggle in this country, the results of the party's antiwar policies are all too clear. Not only did the party fail to try to mobilize the working class around anticapitalist and anti-imperialist demands, which meant that the antiwar movement could not develop into a general social struggle against capitalism (the warmakers), but the main demand, "Bring All The Troops Home Now," was finally coopted by the government itself! That fact alone should be proof enough that one demand, however "objectively" revolutionary, cannot be sufficient to struggle against imperialist war. When the movement got larger and the people were ready to listen to more radical ideas, the party stuck to its single democratic demand of bring the troops home now. And when others began to mobilize large numbers of young

people around anti-imperialist demands (Victory to the NLF; Down With U.S. Imperialism, Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution, etc.), the party labeled them "sectarians."

After Nixon brought all the troops home, the party adopted even more reformist demands, like "End the War Now," "Stop the Bombing," etc. And when the temporary cease-fire went into effect in Vietnam, the fighting continued in Laos and Cambodia but the SWP-led faction of the antiwar movement did nothing. A clearer case of capitulatory policies would be hard to find unless of course one were trying to make a case against the CPUSA.

12. *What Animal is NPAC?*

The party failed the test because it concentrated most of its resources in the antiwar movement on trying to do the impossible: to end the war in Vietnam without calling into question the powers who make war—the capitalist class and the state. Instead, it helped to create an obstacle to achieving that end—NPAC. NPAC, of course, couldn't accomplish the job without destroying itself. Since NPAC was not a revolutionary vanguard party, it could not make the connection between the war in Vietnam and the nature of the capitalist state carrying it out; and more importantly, it couldn't do anything about it except what it did—mobilize people around democratic and pacifist demands within the limits of bourgeois legality.

Mobilizing people in the streets is of course essential if we ever expect to make a revolution in this country. But most important are the *politics* of a mass movement. As we know, fascism is based on a mass movement as are other movements of a right-wing nature. Even the Stalinists are quite capable of mobilizing masses of people for their own reasons. And let us not forget that the bourgeoisie can (and has) also mobilize millions of people when it has to.

The politics of NPAC were reformist. If the working class had risen up against the war and organized a general strike, NPAC would have been torn asunder by internal conflicts. Vance Hartke and the rest of the liberals and pacifists who worked with NPAC would have opposed the workers strike, and we, supposedly, would have supported it. That is, class questions would have ripped NPAC into its original parts: sections of the Democratic Party, petty-bourgeois pacifists, priests, a few trade-union bureaucrats, students, and the SWP. The working class would have thrown up its own *class* organizations, e.g., real united fronts, and the war would have been over in a short period of time.

Another reason why the working class should oppose such formations as NPAC is the close identity it had with the Stalinist PCPJ. There were no *principled* differences between NPAC and PCPJ; in fact, on many occasions, they worked together. The main differences were over tactics: should the demonstration raise one demand or two; should the demand be "bring the troops home now" or "peace now"; who should be allowed to speak at demonstrations, Ron Dellums or Corky Gonzales; should the perspective be toward confrontations or mass, peaceful, and legal demonstrations, etc. What this means is that the SWP helped to create the same type of classless, programless organization as the Stalinists, whose main goal was to direct the masses' indignation into the Democratic

Party. While it is true, the party did not consciously lead the masses into the Democratic Party, the effect was the same. That is the *objective* role of such petty-bourgeois organizations as NPAC.

What the working class needs are class organizations led by revolutionary minded people based on a program for victory over capitalism. That does not mean we cannot do antiwar work because the workers are not ready to actively oppose the war. There are many things revolutionaries can do to oppose imperialist wars without going out and creating reformist antiwar coalitions with liberals and pacifists. If such formations are created, as they were during the Vietnam war, our task would be to intervene with our program without, however, taking any responsibility for them. In the meantime, we would continue to press for working-class action in the unions and on the job, including the demand for antiwar committees to be created in each local union; to support all mass actions against imperialism; to call for labor antiwar congresses and strikes against the war; and particularly, propagandize in the working class around the imperialist nature of the war and the need to overthrow capitalism as the only road to putting an end to all wars.

V. A CENTRIST LEADERSHIP CANNOT PRACTICE DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

Trotsky wrote many times in his lifetime that the revolutionary party is built through a process of internal struggle, splits, and fusions. This was so, he said, because classes, including the proletariat, ". . . are heterogeneous; they are torn by inner antagonisms, and arrive at the solution of common problems *no otherwise* than through an inner struggle of tendencies, groups and parties." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 267, my emphasis.) This dialectical approach to party building was verified in Russia by the split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, thereby allowing the Bolsheviks to develop independently into the vanguard party, and led to a fusion with Trotsky's group in 1917, which finally laid the basis for the first successful proletarian revolution.

But an understanding of this "law" is one of the hardest things for revolutionists to grasp, and is usually the first to go out the window when a revolutionary party begins to degenerate. Many times even before the program of the proletariat is given up piece-by-piece (or in some cases wholesale), this "law of party building" is tossed aside for some form of bureaucratic rulership which attempts to suppress it — out of fear.

This is the case today with the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party. While formally the party still guarantees minorities the right to organize and to representation on leading bodies, including editorial boards, the real substance of workers democracy has long since disappeared within the SWP. The clearest example of this is the party's present attitude toward building the International. Viewing the Fourth International as a collaborationist body with no powers of discipline or centralist control, the party leaders trample under the first principle of revolutionary Marxism: *internationalism*. For to repeat once again Lenin's maxim: "Unless the masses are organized, the proletariat is nothing. Organized — it is everything."

The party leaders have adopted a *nationalist* outlook toward solving revolutionary tasks. Seeing the International as politically *subordinate* to itself, the party functions as a separate entity carrying out work irrespective of international considerations or of revolutionary potentialities in other countries. This approach limits the working class to sideline commentaries and occasional meetings, without however possessing any power to intervene organizationally to effect changes in one or another nation. Without this power, the international proletariat is disarmed in the face of imperialist attack on revolutionary movements when they arise.

13. Party-Youth Relations

Another example of how the party leaders have revised democratic centralism *in practice* is with regards to party-youth relations. When the YSA was established in 1960, the party took a correct position toward it on paper. Basing itself on its own practice and on the practice of the Young Communist International under Lenin, the SWP adopted the following position toward youth work: (1) The youth organization should be *organizationally independent*, which meant the right of the youth group to determine its own internal life, select its own leaders, work out its own policies, etc. (2) But the youth organization should be politically *subordinate*, which meant the basic principles of revolutionary Marxism must be at the center of all youth work if it is to remain a part of the world Trotskyist movement. This was based on our understanding that only a revolutionary combat *party* is capable of leading the working class to power. (3) Party members working in the youth organization have the right to open and free discussion of all political questions. This position was taken because the party wanted to avoid *fractional* work within the youth, which the party did not consider an outside organization, and which could undermine the unity of party and non-party youth and affect its possibilities for future growth. It was felt then that discipline should be exercised over the youth *as a whole* rather than resort to it unilaterally, or to apply it only to certain comrades who had differences with the majority.

This latter position was not unprecedented in our movement. On two occasions, in 1938 and 1940, minorities in the party were allowed to raise political differences in the youth organization without any objections. In fact, this has always been the norm in Leninist organizations, exceptions being a rarity.

(4) Lastly, the YSA was founded on democratic principles — not democratic centralism — but principles of workers democracy (majority rule, immediate recall, regular conventions, the right of tendency, frequent elections, etc.). This position was taken because the youth organization is not a party and shouldn't act as if it is one. Democratic centralism requires disciplined cadre to make it work; people willing to commit themselves over a long period of time to revolutionary socialist ideas. But that's what the youth organization *is not*, which is the main difference between a party and a youth group.

The question of control over party members working in the youth organization has never been solved by applying discipline over them — except in rare cases. While

it is true that party members are under discipline to carry out the line of the majority at all times in outside arenas, the youth organization cannot in any way be considered an outside organization. And because the youth organization should not be democratic centralist, party members are subject to only *one* discipline, party discipline. But this discipline should not apply to political debate and discussion within the youth organization when differences of opinion exist in the party and are carried over into the youth sections. In fact, such differences should not be kept from the youth if we expect the young comrades to develop politically and theoretically into independent thinking Bolsheviks. Only by working out these questions themselves can young revolutionaries develop into working-class leaders. The youth organization must be an arena for free discussion of all important political questions which prepares young people for work in the vanguard party, the essential organ for revolutionary change.

14. *The 90 Day Lay-Away Plan*

In other ways, too, the party leaders have discarded Leninist norms of party building in favor of more expedient methods suited for a centrist party in retreat. One such practice is what I call the "90 Day Lay-Away Plan." This "Plan" allows for only 90 days of political discussion in the party every two years. During the remaining 21 months comrades are prohibited from raising political questions decided on by the previous convention even when objective events prove them wrong. In addition, when *new* events arise, such as what took place in Bolivia, Quebec, and Bangladesh over the last few years, comrades are not allowed to discuss these questions without special permission from the Political Committee. If comrades do raise these questions, they are charged with "reopening preconvention discussion" and "disruption" of party work.

But how can such policies be justified from a Leninist point of view? How could regular political discussions inside the party around all disputed questions be considered disruptive? How would "unity in action" be undermined by allowing comrades freedom of criticism within the party of the majority line? Or, for that matter, allowing a minority viewpoint to reach the pages of *The Militant*? The answer is that none of these things would conflict with the carrying out of the majority line, and that the present practices of the party leaders represent a retreat from Leninist norms of democratic centralism. *There can be no real unity in action without the full freedom to criticize.* The whole history of Bolshevism and Trotskyism attests to the correctness of the above position. The two most outstanding examples of such practices were the discussions in the Bolshevik Party in 1917

and the discussions in our party in 1940. Other examples one could cite would be the internal fights in the American CP in the 1920s and the work of the Trotskyist faction in the German CP before the fascist takeover in 1933.

Discipline—one of the most important features of a Leninist party—cannot guarantee unity in action unless party members are allowed the freedom to criticize the party's decisions and/or mistakes. Such criticisms should be made immediately, since that is the best way to learn from mistakes. The party would continue to put forth *one* line to the public but acts as a self-correcting machine internally. This procedure could not in any way hamper unity in action. On the contrary, it would only enhance that unity because all party members would feel they have contributed to the success (or failure) of actions called by the party and identify fully with them. (This procedure is even more important when comrades sell the party press and recruit members on a one-to-one basis.)

By limiting freedom of criticism to 90 days every two years, the party leaders do not create a disciplined party. What they do is stifle the natural growth and development of the vanguard party, encourage factionalism, and cause unnecessary splits and drop-outs. Such a party will not attract many workers and can only repel those of us who have joined it in sincerity.

Other un-Leninist practices one could cite are: the lack of minority viewpoints on the National Committee; the refusal on the part of the Political Committee to publish the documents of the Leninist Faction, a legal, open faction, when it requested it to do so; the discrimination against supporters of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency in terms of assignments; and the wholesale transfer of over 30 supporters of the majority line into Oakland-Berkeley right after the convention as a way of ensuring majority control there. All of these things add up to a clear case of revisionism of Leninist norms of democratic centralism. This method of party building puts organizational maneuvers before political clarity and political debate, and as such, reverses the previous practices of our party during the 1940s and 1950s.

The present leadership of the party, dominated for the most part by careerists and petty-bourgeois students and ex-students, with a handful of ex-trade-union militants possessing the only class-struggle experience, must be replaced with a leadership grounded in correct Marxist theory and experienced in working-class struggles. Such a leadership, however, has yet to be created. That task will be fulfilled slowly, as the Trotskyist movement begins to re-root itself in the working class and prepares to carry out its stated goal: to lead the successful conquest of power by the working class in this country.

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