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## A "MINIMAL" UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE OF DEMOCRATIC DEMANDS

by George Novack

One of the three major "theoretical deviations" from "the fundamental positions of Marxism" attributed to the SWP by the Internationalist Tendency's political resolution, "Two Lines in the International," is our alleged "minimalist theory of democratic and transitional demands, which invests all democratic struggles with a transitional content in the epoch of imperialism. . . ."

Let me first establish what the Trotskyist theory of the relations between democratic and transitional demands really is and what, in contrast, is the view of our critics. This should make it clear that our conception conforms to both the text and spirit of the Transitional Program as Trotsky drafted it while theirs departs from it.

In the expositions published in "The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution," Joseph Hansen and I point out that the program is composed of three distinct elements: immediate demands, democratic ones and transitional demands. The synthesis comes after this analysis. What relations do these components have to one another?

The answer is given in the Transitional Program as follows: "Democratic slogans, transitional demands and the problems of the socialist revolution are not divided into separate historical epochs in this struggle, but stem directly from one another." This generalization is not limited to the colonial and semicolonial countries but applies to the imperialist giants as well as to the bureaucratized workers states, even though the relative weight of the different kinds of demands varies according to specific conditions.

Similarly, the seventh of the fundamental principles of the International Left Opposition adopted early in 1933 stated: "Recognition of the necessity to mobilize the masses under *transitional* slogans corresponding to the concrete situation in each country, and particularly under *democratic slogans* insofar as it is a question of struggle against feudal relations, national oppression, or different varieties of openly imperialistic dictatorship (fascism, Bonapartism, etc.)." (*Documents of the Fourth International*, p. 24, emphasis in original.)

The three categories of demands are actually intertwined with one another. It is incorrect in theory and harmful in practice to try and put them in separate, airtight, self-contained compartments, as though the struggle for immediate and democratic demands has no connection with the transitional ones and has no significant effects upon the mobilization of the masses on the road to power. This is a sterile sectarian approach.

The intimate association of the three types of demands can be manifested in any serious class combat. If union leaders and militants are framed-up and jailed in a strike for higher wages, then the fight for their rights and freedom can become one of the principal issues in the struggle and its settlement.

In disregard of the clearly expressed injunction of the Transitional Program, the Internationalist Tendency rejects the intermeshing of the three types of demands. This

is the crux of their wrong position. They set democratic slogans against transitional ones in a rigidly categorical manner. "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."

In their eyes transitional demands alone have an unalloyed proletarian and revolutionary content leading to the conquest of power by the workers whereas democratic ones are petty-bourgeois, reformist and liberalistic. Instead of promoting the anticapitalist moods and movements of the masses, democratic slogans divert and impede them, they believe. That is why these "maximalists" deprecate the fight for democratic demands as "minimalist."

To them the struggles for democratic rights in the era of imperialism have a strictly limited character and consequences. For example, they assert that the slogan of Black control of the Black community "represents a very limited democratic reform, with little impact on the relationship of forces between classes." How unrealistic to think that any sustained, large-scale offensive by millions of Black proletarians for control of their communities in the main cities of the United States, and even more its realization, would have "little impact on the relationship of class forces." It would entail a colossal social upheaval and a fundamental shift in the class relationship of forces, to say the least about it.

Intrinsic to our line of supporting struggles for democratic rights is that we carry out such struggles with proletarian methods. We look to extraparliamentary mass action as the central method of struggle and place no confidence in the bourgeois liberals. This, too, imbues such struggles with the potential for going far beyond any "minimalist" demands that might be raised at the outset.

While democratic demands are crucial for the colonial countries, they contend that these play a different role in the imperialist ones. Here they are insignificant compared to what they consider working-class demands as such. Any "emphasis upon the democratic demands of the individual" or the people, ". . . leads to the liquidation of the specific role of the revolutionary party in injecting class consciousness into the proletariat." That is to say, the struggle for democracy leads away from the tasks and objectives of the proletarian struggle for power.

Even if we should grant, for the sake of argument, that democratic reforms are essentially petty-bourgeois (which is not the case), how would that sociological definition deprive them of political importance? The Transitional Program states that in an epoch of decaying capitalism "every serious demand of the proletariat and even every serious demand of the petty bourgeoisie inevitably reaches beyond the limits of capitalist property relations and of the bourgeois state" (my emphasis). This means that the mobilization of the proletarian and plebeian masses in struggle around any one or several of the components of the Transitional Program acquires a momentum directed against the supports of the cap-

italist regime.

That held true of the central slogan of unconditional and immediate withdrawal of all U. S. troops from Vietnam advanced by the SWP for the mass antiwar movement. This demand had a threefold democratic content. It upheld the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination free of foreign interference. It called upon the American people (and not simply the workers) to exercise their democratic control over the imperialist warmakers by vetoing their use of the military in Southeast Asia. And it appealed to the desire of the draftees, their parents and kinfolk to pull out of the criminal overseas butchery.

Did this demand, backed by millions of Americans, have no effect upon the balance of class forces in the United States or have no transitional edge to it? Neither President Johnson, who was driven back to his Texas ranch, nor Nixon, who cowered in the White House, as the Watergate revelations disclose, thought so. They understood, much better than our sectarians, that when the masses come out in the streets of the national capital by the hundreds of thousands resolved to check and reverse the war plans of the capitalist rulers, that this kind of anti-imperialist mobilization under the "Out Now" slogan served to frustrate their predatory policies and enfeebled their monopoly of decision-making power.

The transitional character of this mass movement was evidenced in the withdrawal of the U. S. troops from Cambodia after the massive student strike of May 1970 and the deep-going effects the antiwar struggle has had upon the consciousness of the American people. They are incomparably less inclined to go along with any further armed interventions abroad and are far more distrustful of Washington. This changed psychology has become an important factor in the world relationship of class forces, especially in regard to the colonial and semicolonial countries.

The democratic slogans under which the antiwar struggle has been conducted were certainly in the interests of the working class, even though the unions did not take the lead in it. But it had a much broader scope. It began with the students and drew in the intellectuals, the middle classes, the oppressed nationalities, and eventually the majority of the population. This experience demonstrates how impossible it is in real political life to arbitrarily divide the struggle for democratic demands through mass action from the rest of the transitional process as these critics want to do.

They make a lame effort to buttress their position by allusions to the national past. They write: "It would be false to contend that the American bourgeois revolution was incomplete." This historical picture is itself incomplete and implies that the proletarian revolution has only socialist and no democratic tasks to perform.

This one-sided statement overlooks the fact that the presocialist revolutions that brought the bourgeoisie to power had a dual character. They were both bourgeois and democratic, the one side representing the interests of the big property owners, the other the demands of the plebeian sectors of the people to extend democratic rights beyond the male property owners. Such objectives as national independence and unification, agrarian reform, secularization, the creation of a constitutional republic, industrialization, and free public education were more thoroughly fulfilled through the two democratic rev-

olutions in the United States than in any other major capitalist country.

Their outcome was satisfactory to the capitalist rulers who got all that they needed to clinch their sovereignty over the nation and command of its resources. It was quite different for the plebeian participants.

The Blacks and the women, to mention no others, were cheated and their just rights were not realized. Neither the oppressed nationalities nor the oppressed sex secured equality either before the law or in everyday life. Their democratic demands have still to be fulfilled. These tasks left over from the bourgeois-democratic revolutionary era have been handed down to the forces aligned with the socialist revolution who will have to fight for and realize them. This set of historical tasks characterizes the coming American revolution. Its leaders and participants will not only have to carry through the struggles for popular democracy partially and stingily realized in the past but also satisfy all the demands for the extension of democratic rights raised by the progress of society and the heightened consciousness of various sectors of the oppressed from prisoners to gays since the end of the Civil War.

So much for the past and the future. What about the present? The reactionary nature of the imperialist bourgeoisie, which increasingly encroaches upon the rights of the American people, makes the defense of democracy a paramount task under the capitalist system. This is an indispensable necessity in the day-to-day work of the revolutionary party under the most liberal regime, not to speak of the stages of intensified class confrontation.

The writers of the resolution take exception to my statement that "the Trotskyist movement aspires to be the foremost protector and promoter of genuine democracy against all anti-democratic and authoritarian forces, institutions, laws and regimes." Well, doesn't it? A Marxist party that, as Lenin pointed out, must be the tribune of all the oppressed can be no less.

My 268-page book on *Democracy and Revolution* aimed to demonstrate, by studying three thousand years of history, that the promotion of democracy, from the Greeks to the workers states, is inseparable from the course of the class struggle, that the democratic freedoms we enjoy are the fruit of popular revolutions, and that only the struggle for the world socialist revolution can consummate this process of democratization. Yet the critics seek to ascribe to me and to the SWP the conception of "democracy in the abstract," "a pure or genuine democracy, understood as some form of freedom from the class struggle." That is, I am not a Marxist but really a liberal in masquerade, contaminating our movement with petty-bourgeois ideology. This sort of misrepresentation ought to be left to the Healyites and kept out of our debates.

We are not champions but opponents of bourgeois democracy or its institutions; we are revolutionary advocates of workers democracy. But we are defenders of democratic rights and fighters for their extension.

Are our critics balking against referring to democracy in general or in a favorable sense without specifying its class content in every instance? Then they will have to expurgate this usage of the word from the works of every eminent Marxist. They can start with the third paragraph of the Transitional Program itself which reads: "In the historically privileged countries . . . the bourgeoisie

can still for a certain period permit itself the luxury of democracy at the expense of national accumulations. . . ."

The resolution of the Internationalist Tendency acknowledges that "in the epoch of imperialism the bourgeoisie tends to withdraw some of the democratic rights it had previously granted." However, they do not draw correct and comprehensive conclusions from this fact.

The anti-democratic drive and direction of the monopolists and militarists have the most profound consequences for our epoch. It means that the tasks of protecting and promoting the elementary rights of all sections of the people, including its own, devolves upon the workers movement. This has become its historical responsibility. Self-preservation alone dictates the observance of this obligation. Under imperialist domination at home and abroad the struggle for democracy has become, not less, but more urgent and important.

This was explained in the February 1950 resolution of the SWP National Committee entitled "The Witchhunt and How to Fight It." (See Education for Socialists bulletin, "Defense Policies and Principles of the Socialist Workers Party.")

Its principal propositions remain completely valid twenty-three years later and continue to guide our movement. It emphasizes that the revolutionary socialist vanguard must be the best and most uncompromising fighters for the rights of the people and, yes, of the victimized individual. Much of the SWP activities from 1928 to 1973 have been devoted to such efforts. These campaigns have ranged from defending the rights of individuals and organizations, including our own, from attacks by the authorities, to campaigns for the extension of democratic rights (the right of 18-year-olds to vote, the right of abortion, high school rights). As class conflicts sharpen in the future, we shall have to invest still more energy in these activities.

Is all this "raising of democratic demands" and "emphasis on the democratic rights of individuals" wasted effort, unproletarian, opportunistic, as our critics imply? Which one of the hundreds of cases that we have initiated or participated in falls into this category?

Let our critics express their opinion on a single pertinent instance. From 1969 to 1973 our party and myself in particular expended considerable energy in combating the exclusion of Ernest Mandel from the United States. On the juridical side, his appeal was taken all

the way to the Supreme Court. It put emphasis on "the democratic rights of the individual" in order to test the constitutional right of Americans to hear all views. This civil liberties case did not directly involve "the democratic rights of the working class to unionize, put out its press, and hold meetings," as our critics prescribe. It more immediately concerned the academic and intellectual community, who provided the plaintiffs, than the labor movement at its present level of consciousness. In organizing the campaign around this issue, did we thereby take a "minimalist approach" deprived of class content and did we violate the mandate and method of the Transitional Program?

The untenability of the position of our critics on the place and importance of democratic demands in the imperialist countries can be highlighted by reference to the situation in the workers states. Democratic demands under certain circumstances have an explosive force not only in the mass struggles against imperialist rule but also in the movement against bureaucratic oppression. Numerous demands for such democratization are incorporated in the Fourth International proposals for the political revolution.

The Transitional Program states: "The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of Soviet democracy." Note how the fight for democratic rights and class demands are tightly tied into a single knot. And in fact during the Czechoslovakian democratization movement of 1968 the struggle against censorship, for free expression and free assembly, went hand in hand with the formation of factory committees and the regaining of independence of action by the unions.

Thus in all three sectors of the world revolution, the backward countries, the capitalist lands and the workers states, "democratic slogans, transitional demands and the problems of the socialist revolution . . . stem directly from one another." That is the teaching of the theory of the permanent revolution. That is the approach recommended by the Transitional Program of the Fourth International. That provides the guideline to the theory and practice of the SWP.

And that is what the Internationalist Tendency fails to understand and why their unfounded objections to our position must be firmly rejected.

July 12, 1973

## THE LIGUE COMMUNISTE, THE DEBRE STRUGGLES, AND THE EUROPEAN DOCUMENT

by Jane Roland, Boston Branch

[The French government's ban on the Ligue Communiste may well have some affect on the world discussion and the discussion within the SWP as well. It should be clear to everyone, however, that we must continue to debate the political issues in dispute at the same time we defend unquestionably the Ligue's right to exist.]

The subject of this contribution is the recent youth struggles that took place in France, and the tremendous work of our comrades in intervening in and leading these struggles. I want to discuss the relationship of this intervention to the line presented in the "Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" document. Our comrades' work in the youth struggles followed the line not of the European document under discussion, but the line projected by the United Secretariat document adopted prior to the 1969 world congress, "The Worldwide Youth Radicalization." The Ligue followed an orientation in the intervention that we of the SWP would recommend. However, the line followed in building these struggles in no way correlates to the projections laid out by the European document now under discussion. I want to go into the relationship of this intervention to the European document, and try to analyze the fact that the intervention proceeded, one might say, *despite* the European document, and also discuss how approval of this document can, by extension, lead to ignoring such struggles in the future.

Over the first few months of 1973—before, during, and after national elections—a major student and youth upsurge swept France. The upsurge was based on opposition to two new national "reforms" of concern to young people: the Debre laws, and the DEUG, a proposed two-year diploma.

The Debre law concerned the compulsory military service for all French males. In order to fulfill the regime's desire to lower the average age of soldiers, the law ruled that all male youth must enter military service before the end of their 21st year. The critical provision called for the abolition of all student deferments. The DEUG was a proposed diploma—the General University Studies Diploma—to be given after two years of study. The government called it a landmark in egalitarian and liberal education, but actually it was the government's response to the situation of too many students leaving university without degrees, and the degrees given not corresponding with the job situation. The purpose of the DEUG, and it was immediately seen as such by the masses of French students, was to produce semitrained labor for the ruling class.

The struggles began in the high schools against the Debre laws last February, and in the following months the high school students were joined by technical school students and by university students as the struggle against the DEUG intensified. The struggle spread beyond the student movement and drew in many working-class youth. There were massive student strikes—in mid-March 70-80 percent of all high schools were on strike—and huge demonstrations, including a massive nationally coordinated

action of over 300,000 throughout France, 100,000 in Paris alone. The Communist Party and Socialist Party-controlled trade-union leaderships were forced to relate to the struggles as support for the students grew in the working class, and the student and trade-union leaderships together called for May Day actions.

The Ligue Communiste was the recognized leadership of these massive struggles. Our comrades figures in many of the local student committees of action; and their intervention was no doubt largely responsible for the democratic organization of the strike committees, for the continuous mass mobilizations, and for the movement's reaching out to broaden participation and extend the struggles. *Le Monde* recognized the leadership of the Ligue in many articles; the French government clearly recognized the Ligue's leadership when it banned its existence; and the Communist Party recognized the leadership of the Ligue in its attempts first to ignore and then to subvert the growing struggles. The CP's fetish with electoral politics and its opposition to mass mobilizations in order to concentrate on the victory of the Union of the Left—which would then ostensibly repeal the Debre laws—revealed its miserable politics to the thousands and thousands of French youth (mostly below voting age) who were not interested in putting off their struggle to a later date. And they turned to the Ligue Communiste for leadership.

[The question can be thrown out at this point of what further gains might have been made were there an independent Trotskyist youth group in France. Many young people attracted to us by our leadership and action during the struggles would have joined such an organization, and very possibly the Ligue in the future. The Red Circles, which related to this growing youth periphery, held a conference recently that attracted over 400 high school students. At that conference, all but one of the workshops was led by a Political Bureau or Central Committee member of the Ligue—none of them high school students. It certainly testifies to their extreme interest on our movement that the bulk of the students stayed at a conference where the leadership was almost entirely in the hands of older political people.]

Careful reading of the United Secretariat majority European document makes it clear that intervention in the student movement is not a major task projected for the European parties—in fact, the document does not mention such interventions as being a task at all. But the youth struggles became a central focus of the Ligue over the last several months. In the "Preparatory Texts for the '71 Conference of the Leaderships of the European Sections," a basis for the European document on the building of revolutionary parties, Comrades Vergeat and Delphin maintain that the student movement is less and less an active political force. Although the ambiguity in the European documents makes it rather difficult to understand exactly what position the European leadership takes on such student struggles, the emphasis is that there will be no more "May '68s." And while no one expects another

situation identical to May '68, we do consider it to be a model in terms of a student movement growing and becoming a catalyst for the working class. And that corresponds to the potential shown by the Debre struggle.

If anyone still needed proof, the Debre struggles proved that the student movement isn't dead. Events have shown otherwise again and again throughout the world—objective factors led and may well lead again to students sparking a national upsurge by struggling over issues that affect them concretely, and those actions can take on an objectively anticapitalist role. That was true of the Debre struggles, and the intervention with the understanding of that dynamic most certainly helped to push the struggle to become the massive and influential movement it became. Had the Ligue considered these issues simply to, as the European document refers to student issues, "provide a ferment of agitation and organization . . . to radicalize the less politicized layers," much of the struggle would have been lost.

So, again trying to relate the line of the European document to their intervention, the Ligue did not abstain from building these struggles on the grounds that the student movement was dead. Did the Ligue intervene, then, as part of their plan to win hegemony within the mass vanguard? No—because those were not struggles of the mass vanguard. Their intervention was directly into the struggles of the masses—the masses of students, and the extension of the actions into the working class.

The European document outlines the central tasks for the European sections of the Fourth International on pp. 17-18, as mentioned above, and none of these tasks relate to activity in the student movement. Comrade Mary-Alice, in her contribution to the discussion, talks about intervention in the student movement, following the outlines set forth in the document "The Worldwide Youth Radicalization." Our major task here in the U. S. as well as for Trotskyists in Europe is recruiting and educating the basic nucleus of cadres who will be able to win a base in the working class and build a mass Trotskyist party. We recruit wherever we can find these cadres—certainly in high schools and universities. We can often win the leadership of struggles around questions and issues like those raised by students, orient them in a revolutionary direction, and link them up with working-class struggles. It is often through such channels that we begin to be looked upon as a significant political force and gain a hearing and initial recruits within the working class.

In fact, it seems to be with that orientation in mind that the Ligue Communiste intervened in this upsurge!—but—in contradiction to the European document, which clearly relegates all struggles except those around the demand for workers control to a decidedly secondary place.

The question remains: how can the Ligue Communiste's major role in this struggle be rationalized within the scope of the European document? The document does mention

what is referred to as the "special problem of increasing opportunities for comrades to win positions of leadership in youth organizations that are not specifically revolutionary." In each concrete case, the document states, it will be necessary to assess the opportunities for investing forces by weighing the gains that could be made against the gaps such a deployment of forces would create elsewhere. This discussion of possible interventions is one explicit—and very minor—reference in the European document which can cover intervention in the upsurge; there is one more such reference. In describing tasks and priorities, the document notes that it is "the job of . . . leadership . . . to set an order of priorities based on general perspectives and analysis." These priorities should be held to and not departed from "in an impressionistic way, under the pressure of new opportunities turning up in this or that sector." "Of course," the document continues, "this order of priorities must be periodically reviewed and revised." So, the leadership of the Ligue must have looked at the Debre struggle and decided to intervene directly.

The problem is that the European document is so amorphous that almost anything can be covered by it; almost anything, that is, except a concrete, well projected and planned program for intervention in the day-to-day struggles over the next period.

Through the course of the preconvention discussion it has become obvious that some people consider this document to have a proletarian orientation—it is on that ground that a couple of comrades in Boston have expressed for it. But a proletarian orientation does not mean simply calling for rooting in the working class; it means the arduous task of building a proletarian vanguard combat party, and building it out of the concrete situation that exists in reality today. Our comrades' intervention in the Debre struggles is an example of a proletarian orientation. The Ligue was in a perfect spot to intervene: about 50 percent of the Ligue is high school and university students, another 25 percent are teachers. By throwing these comrades into the struggle we played a major role in building mass demonstrations and strikes among high school, university, and technical school students, that gained the support of the working class and forced the Stalinist and reformist trade-union leaderships to deal with a leadership they knew was influenced by revolutionary Trotskyists.

That is a proletarian orientation. That is the kind of orientation that must be continued and expanded, and not as a by-the-by passing reference in a document which should be outlining the central tasks for the next period, but as a concrete projection and as a central priority. I would urge all comrades to reject the document on the building of European parties, which runs counter to the general line followed in building the Debre struggles, and to support the international minority tendency, and the SWP majority position.

July 12, 1973

## THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE AND THE 1973 LEGISLATIVE ELECTION IN FRANCE

by Tony Thomas, Lower Manhattan Branch,  
New York Local

During the discussion on the perspectives for Europe, a lively debate took place on the role of the League in the recent French elections. Supporters of the Internationalist Tendency in our branch defended the Communist League's election campaign as "exemplary" while supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (although the tendency has taken no position on this question) criticized some errors made by the Communist League in the elections.

In my report on this question to my branch, I pointed out that one of the main errors committed by the authors of the IEC majority resolution on Europe which is supported by the Internationalist Tendency and the Levitt-Stodola-Warren-Shane grouping in our party and by the Maitan-Mandel-Frank tendency internationally, is that it does not take any stand on our comrades' attitudes toward electoral politics or critical support to the mass reformist workers party in Europe. Not only is this question of vital objective importance for our European comrades, but within almost every European Trotskyist organization, a lively discussion on this question is taking place.

We have already seen in the discussion in the IMG how major errors have been made in regard to the British Labour Party. Now we can see that the Communist League appears to have made a major error in its attitude toward both rounds of the French legislative elections. A resolution on perspectives for Europe should state a clear attitude on these questions, rather than dodging the question as the current resolution does. In my opinion, the resolution dodges these questions because it reflects the ultraleftist pressure toward abstentionism from elections and also because it attempts to make an amalgam between the various comrades in Europe and elsewhere who have expressed major differences on this question.

An examination of the Communist League's errors will show why a correct line on these questions is of crucial importance to the European and worldwide Trotskyist movement. Within this context, it must be kept in mind that the League's decision to launch a vigorous first-round campaign and to launch a propaganda campaign around the second round was a positive step in regard to the abstentionism that seems to reign in the rest of our European groups (no other European section has run any election campaigns since the Ninth World Congress, to my knowledge).

### *First Round*

The manner in which the Communist League called for a first-round vote for Lutte Ouvriere and other "far-left" groups appears to have been a serious tactical error. Although it may have been possible and correct to give critical support to these currents on the basis of common agreement on a specific series of points, the basis which the Communist League called for a vote for Lutte Ouvriere and other "far-left" groups was incorrect.

The political resolution adopted at the most recent congress of the Communist League and published in the December 16, 1973, *Rouge* indicates that the League's aim in the first round was to achieve programmatic clarification. This would seem to indicate an attempt to clarify specific and concrete programmatic problems involving issues posed before the working-class movement in France and the general delineation of our revolutionary-socialist program as opposed to the program of opponent groups, including those groups falsely claiming to be "Trotskyist."

The same resolution states that in this vote, "Where the Communist League is not presenting candidates, we will primarily call for a vote for LO [Lutte Ouvriere]. Everywhere else, we will call for a vote on the first round for candidates of the far left, that is to say the candidates who reject the electoral and peaceful roads to socialism. . . ."

"This appeal for a far-left vote means that we can call for a vote for AJS [the youth organization of the Lambertists — Alliance des Jeunes Socialistes — Alliance of Young Socialists] candidates, certain PSU candidates or 'independents' (under the control of the Central Committee)."

In the March 2, 1973, issue of *Rouge*, the last published before the first round, an emphasized editorial by Comrade Henri Weber stated on the first round vote: "*Vote for the revolutionary candidates of the Communist League and Lutte Ouvriere.*"

"In districts where neither the League nor Lutte Ouvriere are presenting candidates, vote for the candidates who describe themselves as from the new far left, everywhere where such a vote constitutes an act of opposition to the regime and of defiance in regard to the Union of the Left." (Emphasis in original.)

The programmatic justifications for this policy, as stated by the League, tend to lead away from rather than toward programmatic clarification as described in the resolution.

The League's political resolution states that this vote is justified because these currents represent "the appearance of a force broken with the Union of the Left—even on the limited level of the electoral plane." In Comrade Weber's March 2 editorial he wrote that the far-left candidates represent "defiance of the Union of the Left."

If this vote is supposed to be for programmatic clarification, then we can take this definition to mean that these currents (Lutte Ouvriere, AJS-OCI and "left" candidates of the PSU) represent a positive programmatic alternative to the Union of the Left.

This is contradictory to the facts. The only point of agreement which these various groups shared was verbal opposition to the Union of the Left. A review of their positions toward the Union of the Left discloses that these tendencies were in complete disagreement.

Their programs are in no way a positive alternative to the Union of the Left's program or to that of the Com-

munist and Socialist parties, the components of the Union of the Left. The League itself was forced to criticize, usually correctly, these groups because of their opportunistic attitudes toward the Union of the Left and the reformist and Stalinist parties. And moreover, since there was no agreement among these groups or between these groups and the League on what attitude to take toward the Union of the Left, this tactic could only have confused people as to what attitude revolutionaries and the workers movement should take to the Union of the Left.

#### *"New Mass Vanguard" Shows the Way?*

The political resolution of the League and other statements and articles of the League on the election advanced another criterion for supporting the Lutte Ouvriere group and other "far-left" groups. That criterion is the assumption that the "far-left" groups propose a clear and positive program for revolutionary opposition to parliamentarism and even propose a clear way to the socialist revolution.

The political resolution defines the "far-left" as "candidates who refuse electoral and peaceful ways of passage to socialism." The Communist League-Lutte Ouvriere electoral "accord," published in the December 16, 1972, *Rouge*, states that the purposes of the CL-LO joint campaign was to show how "it is not elections, but the class struggle, that will put an end to the capitalist system," and to "defend the perspectives of socialist revolution."

Giving support to "far-left" candidates or Lutte Ouvriere on this basis can only lead to the misconception that these groups advance a program that shows how the class struggle can be victorious. It puts forward a view that we share a common program with these organizations which is the basis of revolutionary strategy for France.

The polemics between the Communist League and Lutte Ouvriere as well as with other "far-left" groups such as the OCI-AJS, indicate that the League has serious disagreements with them and does not think that these organizations have a Trotskyist program. Calling for support to these candidates based on their "defense of the perspectives of socialist revolution" clouds over rather than clarifies the differences between our program and theirs.

By defining these organizations as groups that have made a break with electoralism and the peaceful transition to socialism carries many dangers. It again implies that these organizations represent a positive programmatic alternative to the Communist and Socialist parties.

This gives rise to the conception that there is a minimal "far-left" program that we agree on and support which lies somewhere between the program of these "far-left," "vanguard" organizations and that of world Trotskyism. The programs of the organizations of the "new far left," the central component of the new mass vanguard as it is described in the IEC majority European resolution, are just as bad as those of the SP and the CP. We must counterpose our own program to all these programs as the only program that points the way to socialism or teaches how to break with parliamentarism.

While many workers and other radicalizing elements may have voted for the candidates of Lutte Ouvriere, OCI-AJS and other "far lefts" as an attempt to find an alternative to the Union of the Left and to the reformist

workers parties, we should not make the impressionistic error of identifying their mistaken concepts of what a real break with reformist politics entails.

By not pointing out that these organizations are programmatically bankrupt we are only lessening the type of gains we can make among these groups. We should make this clear in a non-sectarian fashion. One tool to do this is the tactic of critical support to candidates of these groups. But such support cannot be correct or effective if it makes the false statement that these groups have the correct perspectives on electoral strategy, the passage to socialism, or the perspectives of the socialist revolution.

#### *CP-SP on the First Round*

Statements made by the Communist League and its leaders, particularly Comrade Weber's January 13 article in *Rouge* attacking the Lambertists, gave the impression that the Communist League saw it as unprincipled to use the tactic of critical support to a reformist or Stalinist candidate who is opposed by a "far-left" candidate. This position can only give the impression that we are "more" in agreement with the sectarian and opportunistic programs of such "far-left" groups as the Lambertists than we are with the programs of the Communist and Socialist parties.

We should stand equally against both programs. The question of running our own candidates, supporting candidates of other working-class groups, or utilizing partial or complete abstention is a tactical and not a principled question. It would be a major error if we took the position that one tactical variant—such as support to "far-left" candidates on the first round—ruled out a flexible use of the many other approaches available. For example, in the first round, would not a consistent way of calling for a programmatic vote around *our* program have been to call for a vote for the Communist League candidates and abstention where we are not running. On the other hand, isn't it possible that some inroads into the large working-class base of the Stalinist and reformist parties could have been made by giving critical support to some of their candidates on the first round?

The errors of the League on the first round, in my opinion, flow from the erroneous line that is projected in the European resolution of the Maitan-Mandel-Frank tendency of "regrouping the vanguard." The draft resolution projects a point of view that can only lead one to believe—if you accept the document—that this vanguard in and of itself is a force that both objectively and subjectively is pointing the road to revolution and preparing the working class and other layers for the socialist revolution.

In fact the resolution states that this is decisive. It states, "Unless the potential of the vanguard to influence greater masses makes itself felt with increasing forcefulness, the upsurge in workers struggles will arrive at a dead-end, which in the long run will facilitate a decisive counter-offensive by the bourgeoisie." And in regard to the "new far left," supposedly a more and more dominant sector of the vanguard, it states "the revolutionary Marxists are deliberately trying to bridge the gap that developed in the preceding period between the far-left and the organized workers movement . . . to bring the weight of



the far left to bear in order to radicalize the organized workers movement." (Emphasis added.)

The errors the Communist League made in projecting a campaign of support to these "far-left," "vanguard" groupings as a positive programmatic alternative fits into the perspective of "bringing the weight of the far left to bear in order to radicalize the organized workers movement." Both the League's position on the first round and the IEC majority draft on Europe err because they overlook the qualitative programmatic deficiencies of the non-Trotskyist components of the vanguard, and in doing so lead away from the concept that only a Trotskyist party can show the correct perspective for socialist revolution.

### *Support to Union of the Left*

The position the Communist League took on the second round of the elections, calling for a vote for the Union of the Left, was a more serious error than the errors that they made in regard to the first round. The first-round errors were tactical errors within the bounds of our traditional view of electoral principle. The second round positions taken by the League, in my opinion, were not.

The final formulation of the League's call for a vote for the Union of the Left was made in a statement by the Central Committee of the Communist League dated March 5, 1973, published in the March 9 *Rouge*, which said "... without in the slightest suggesting support to the content of the common program or to the reformists, traitors and capitulators who express it, we call for a vote for the candidates of the Union of the Left on the second round as a means of fighting the URP [the Gaullist forces — TT]."

Only one qualification was made: "We will not call for a vote for candidates of the Union of the Left who agreed between the two rounds to make changes in the alliance in order to gain the support of the reformers [a liberal capitalist coalition opposed to the Union of the Left — TT]." As we understand it, after discussing this with Comrade Krivine of the League at the LSA/LSO convention in April, this means that candidates who violated the electoral discipline of the Union of the Left, mainly two of the eleven "Left-Radicals" who ran on the second round, were the only Union of the Left candidates not supported.

On the second round, the Union of the Left candidates included 166 Communist Party candidates, 146 Socialist Party candidates, and 22 candidates of the Left Radical Movement. The Union of the Left was a bloc to form a coalition government between the two mass workers parties, the SP and the CP, and the bourgeois formation, the Left Radical Movement, a split-off from the bourgeois Radical-Socialist Party. It was as such a variant of the multiclass electoral blocs based on modest reforms within the context of capitalism traditionally sought by the Social Democrats and Stalinists. Its openly stated dynamic was to appeal to a major section of the capitalist class to form a popular front government as a means of blocking the deepening radicalization in France.

Although the Communist League vigorously condemned the Union of the Left's strategy and program, it was inconsistent with their genuine opposition to the Union of

the Left's class collaborationism to call for a second-round vote for the Union of the Left as such.

The main question ruling out the vote for coalitions like the Union of the Left is our opposition to the programmatic basis for such blocs and to the class-collaborationist intent—to form a multiclass government—of these blocs.

It is certainly within principle and in fact a standard tactic in our Leninist arsenal to vote for working-class candidates within such blocs or even whole workers parties. This is a useful tactic in counterposing our concept that the workers organizations should take control of the government to the Stalinist and Social-Democratic concepts of popular frontism. This is also a means of counterposing our proletarian program to the petty-bourgeois programs and perspectives of these types of reformist parties.

In the case of the second-round elections in France, such a tactic would have meant giving critical support to the candidates of the CP and the SP as workers parties on the basis of their composition, control and historical perspective. This would be a class vote.

A vote for the very same candidates on the basis of their participation in the Union of the Left, however, cannot be seen as a class vote. Such a tactic is giving critical support to a governmental, electoral and parliamentary coalition formed on the perspective of initiating a popular front type government, that is on an anti-working-class basis.

The League's comprehensive denunciation of the program of the Union of the Left and of the politics of the Social-Democratic and Stalinist parties was weakened and could have been misconstrued in the context of the League's position of support to the Union of the Left on the second round. This tactic fostered the misconception that with a better program it would have been correct for workers organizations to engage in such multiclass governmental and electoral blocs.

This poses the question as to whether supporters of the Communist League's position on the second round would agree to oppose other multiclass blocs such as the Frente Amplio in Uruguay, the Unidad Popular in Chile and the Free Democrats-Social Democrats bloc in Germany?

### *OCI (Organization Communiste Internationalist—Internationalist Communist Organization)*

The position advanced by the OCI, an ultraleft sectarian organization which until recently had links with the U.S. Workers League, that the only thing wrong with the Union of the Left was the Left Radical group, is completely wrong. The Left Radicals are a symptom of the orientation of the Union of the Left toward including a section of the bourgeoisie in their coalition.

Without the Left Radicals—unless they had been excluded for being a bourgeois formation—the bloc would have had the same class-collaborationist character and would not have been prevented from attempting to find more bourgeois allies (perhaps by watering its "program" down more) when such a coalition seemed appropriate to sections of the bourgeoisie.

The League correctly pointed out that the Lambertists' claims about the Left Radicals being the only problem was

a result of the Lambertists' opportunist attitude toward the Stalinist and Social-Democratic bureaucrats.

However, the League's contention that it is principled to vote for Left Radical candidates as part of the Union of the Left is wrong. It is a long-standing principle in the Marxist movement not to support candidates of bourgeois formations no matter how big or how small, no matter what type of workers formation they are aligned with. Since the Communist League, the French Stalinists and Social Democrats and even the Left Radicals don't dispute that the Left Radical Movement is a liberal capitalist formation, the League's call for a vote for all but two of the Left Radicals on the second round is a clear violation of our traditional principles in regard to electoral party.

#### *Socialist Party*

The ambiguity of the Communist League's characterization of the Socialist Party raises further questions as to the Communist League's acceptance of the principle of refusing to vote for capitalist candidates. The political resolution passed at the December Communist League congress states that the "SP can be defined as neither a bourgeois party nor as a bourgeois workers party [the current French formulation for the Marxist concept of a reformist workers party] by the fact of the weakness of its working-class implantation." The only inference that can be gained from this analysis is that the Communist League believed at that time that the Socialist Party was a petty-bourgeois, non-working-class formation.

Comrade Henri Weber continued this analysis in a polemic against the Lambertists in the January 13, 1973, *Rouge* equating the SP with the Left Radical Movement.

Other statements by leaders of the League have referred to the SP as if it were a reformist workers party.

Our Marxist methodology demands that the League determine the class character of the Socialist Party before taking a position on its character. If the League did not see the SP as a workers party then it was obviously not observing our principle of voting only for working-class candidates.

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#### *Comradely Responsibility*

One of the errors made by the Internationalist Tendency is to act as uncritical supporters of every action taken by the sections and groups whose leaders supported the Maitan-Mandel-Frank tendency at the time of the last IEC. This attitude is both uncomradely and irresponsible.

Our attitude as responsible comrades and cothinkers of comrades such as the members of the former Ligue Communiste is not simply to praise them when they do well such as in their interventions in the Debre affair and the Overney affair, but to help them correct errors they have made. This flows from our concept of an international Trotskyist movement helping to map out common problems, sharing common experiences and a common program. This is the spirit of my comments on the Communist League's policies in the legislative elections.

In no sense can the Communist League be said to have adopted a popular frontist strategy on the second round. However, they committed an error in regard to calling for a Union of the Left vote that could in time lead toward popular frontism. Hopefully in reviewing their experience in the 1973 elections, or in charting new plans for electoral action, the Communist League itself will be able to correct these errors. It is our responsibility as Trotskyist cothinkers to raise our ideas on these questions.

The Maitan-Mandel-Frank document "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," however, represents an obstacle in the process of European comrades coming to grips with such problems. This is because the document makes no comment whatsoever on electoral strategy and tactics, and even to the extent of at least defending some of the abstentionist and sectarian concepts that appear to be widespread in some of our European sections. One of the reasons why the European perspectives document must be rejected by the world Trotskyist movement is that it refuses to draw out a line on questions like electoral strategy which are crucial to our comrades in the process of winning the European working class to Trotskyism.

July 13, 1973

ON COMRADE HALSTEAD'S NONSENSE:  
OR  
HOW HIS POLITICS GOT BURIED WITH THE COFFIN

by Gene Warren, Los Angeles Branch

AN OPEN LETTER RE: COMRADE HALSTEAD'S "CONTRIBUTION"

Comrade Halstead's "contribution" entitled "On Comrade Germain's Half-Truths: Or How the ERP Flag Got On the Coffin," was a refreshing respite for comrades who have been tirelessly pondering over crucial political questions during the past several months. Its total lack of any political content led a number of comrades to conclude that Halstead submitted this bit of blithesome frivolity for the express purpose of lightening our burden in these tedious times. I am, however, not one of these comrades. Nevertheless, when I first saw the title I was compelled to laugh out loud. Not so much from its "clever" wording but what it suggested was to follow, which, to me, was all too familiar.

Let me explain. I and the rest of the comrades in the Los Angeles branch were fortunate enough to get the "whole" truth on these seething issues, from Comrade Halstead in person, some two weeks before receiving the "document." I remember commenting to a couple of comrades after the meeting; "That's it? Is that all Halstead has to contribute after spending some three months in Argentina, officially representing the S. W. P. and presumably in the midst of the class struggle?" But, to my astonishment, when the discussion on Latin America in our branch ended, *that* was it, the only "contribution" to the oral discussion was his personal conversation with José Paez. At the time I was disgusted with the lack of politics, and particularly with his accusations against Comrade Germain which were somewhat stronger, to put it mildly. It is understandable then, when the document arrived some weeks later, my immediate response was laughter.

Now, comrades in the world movement must also wonder what it's all about, and in the event some comrades may have taken the comedy seriously, I think it necessary to see just what point Comrade Halstead is trying to make. Let's review his conversation with José Paez.

"*Question:* Was either the PRT(Verdad) or the PRT(Combatiente) represented in the leadership of SITRAC-SITRAM at the time of the class struggle caucus plenary sessions, held in Cordoba August 28-29, 1971, and September 22, 1971?"

"*Answer:* There were seven secretaries of SITRAC. These were the officers of the union. SITRAM had a similar arrangement. None of these officers were members of either PRT. In addition there were some 90 delegates representing different sections of the Concord plant, and half that many from the Materfer plant. None of these were members of the PRT(Verdad). A few were members of the PRT(Combatiente). None were elected to represent a political group. They represented the workers in sections of the plant."

Okay, so they weren't union officials, but Comrade Germain never said they were. But the PRT(Combatiente) members present were democratically elected by, and di-

rectly responsible to the different sections of the Concord and Materfer plants. Or is Comrade Halstead suggesting only union officials are leaders? If you read Comrade Germain's document, you will clearly see the main point he is making, that the PRT(Combatiente) members were not completely isolated from the masses as the balance sheet suggested, but were in fact doing trade-union work. Comrade Halstead has only succeeded in confirming this point.

"*Question:* How many members of the PRT(Verdad) and how many of the PRT(Combatiente) were present at the plenary sessions?"

"*Answer:* It is hard for me to say exactly because I wasn't a member of either group, and it was agreed beforehand that representatives would be from union or student groups, not political groups. But there were very few members of PRT(Combatiente) there. There were far more members of PRT(Verdad) representing union groups from Buenos Aires and elsewhere."

Since José Paez was not a member of either group, and it was decided beforehand no one would represent political groups, how did Paez know there were *any* members of the two organizations represented? I can only conclude that members of both groups were publicly known. As to the amount of members at the plenary sessions, are we reduced to playing a numbers game? To begin with Paez states he can't be sure, but then proceeds to say there were far more members from the PRT(Verdad) represented. Does he mean there were three more, ten more, thirty more? Since he can't be sure, is he guessing? I'm confused and can't be sure of just what José Paez is not sure of. What is sure is the PRT(Combatiente) was there as trade-union militants and therefore hardly isolated from the masses. Once again Comrade Halstead has confirmed the *main* point.

"*Question:* Did the members of PRT(Combatiente) or of PRT(Verdad) who were there, speak as members of these political groups?"

"*Answer:* There was an agreement beforehand that no one should speak on behalf of political groups. This agreement was violated only once, by a worker from Cordoba, who introduced himself as speaking for Espartaco (Spartacus), a political group, instead of introducing himself as from his workplace or union, union caucus, or some form of that sort. He was called out of order and repudiated by the entire plenary. Viejo Pedro was chairman of these plenaries and will verify that we did not want anyone speaking as from a political group, that members of groups had agreed to refrain from doing this, and that the only time it was done, the plenary repudiated it.

"*Question:* Did a compañera who was a member of PRT(Combatiente) speak? Was she well received? Did she speak as from her political group?"

"Answer: A compañera who was a member of PRT (Combatiente) spoke and was well received. She spoke as a delegate from a section of a plant, not as from a political group. She did not violate the agreement."

So what's the point? If a compañera from the PRT (Combatiente) spoke and was well received, and if José Paez was not a member of the PRT(Combatiente) how did he know she was a member? Again, I can only conclude the compañera was publicly known as a member of the PRT(Combatiente), and was well received as a trade-union activist, and not an isolated terrorist. If Comrade Germain was misinformed on exactly how the comrade introduced herself in the meeting, so what? The *main* point has again been confirmed by Comrade Halstead.

Now let's move on to the barricades, and the famous coffin.

"Question: During the second Cordobazo what did the ERP do?"

"Answer: They were one of the best-known armed groups, though the ordinary workers generally thought of all the armed groups as Montoneros. The ERP was there, as were all the groups, and all the revolutionary groups active at the university. They all put their flags and placards on the barricades. There were pictures of Lenin and Trotsky and Mao and lots of other stuff on the barricades. Any group that had something to put up did so. The ERP had people on motorcycles going around from barricade to barricade putting up banners. As far as I know there was one action carried out by the ERP itself. They took over a supermarket and invited the people in to sack it. They also fought in the streets as did all the other groups. The action was led by the union leadership of SITRAC-SITRAM and the 8,000 workers in the Fiat plants."

Again, what's the point? Is Comrade Halstead scolding Comrade Germain for not mentioning there were other banners on the barricades? In all insurrectionary situations there will be numerous banners present representing the various groups participating; that should be taken for granted. If Comrade Halstead read "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," he would see that the section he is referring to began with these words: "In order to criticise in a constructive way the orientation of the Argentinian section of the Fourth International, it is, however, necessary to clear up a whole series of distortions and misrepresentations of the PRT's activities presented in the minority document 'Argentina

and Bolivia—The Balance Sheet.'" In the Balance Sheet an attempt was made to portray the PRT(Combatiente) as hopelessly isolated from the masses and their struggles. The fact that the PRT (Combatiente) was visibly present during the second Cordobazo is the *main* point, which again has been confirmed by Comrade Halstead.

"Question: What happened at the funeral procession of the youth who was killed? Did the youth belong to a political group? What banner was on the coffin?"

"Answer: The youth who was killed was a 17-year-old construction worker, Adolpho Cepeda. He belonged to no political group. He was from the neighborhood. I knew him and his family. I was in charge of the funeral arrangements. His mother came to me, and said, people from the ERP had asked if they could put their banner on the coffin, out of respect for the lad. She asked me what she should tell them. I told her fine, anyone who wants to show respect for the martyr that's good. Another group Vanguardia Comunista, a Maoist group, also put its banner on the coffin. The Argentine flag was also on the coffin. If any other group had asked, they could have put a banner on the coffin too. The funeral procession was very large."

Again, what's the point? Is Comrade Halstead pointing out that José Paez is non-sectarian? The flag *was* on the coffin. Obviously no one wanted to disassociate themselves from the ERP. If Comrade Germain failed to mention or didn't know other flags were on the coffin, I can only say, shame on you comrade for being so careless. What has Comrade Halstead proved, that the PRT (Combatiente) did not singlehandedly lead the second Cordobazo and theirs wasn't the only flag on the coffin. So what! What has been confirmed once again is that the PRT (Combatiente) was there visibly, and were anything but isolated.

To conclude: In spite of the fact that Comrade Germain is halfway around the world from Argentina, he has contributed a highly political document and it must be viewed as such. Comrades in the world Trotskyist movement are grateful Comrade Halstead took the time to write a "document" appraising us of some important events. I, for one, am waiting for Comrade Halstead's political contribution. As I said before, he did spend three months in Argentina at the expense of the SWP. If his little chat with José is all we are going to get, I feel like demanding my money back.

July 6, 1973

ON GERALD CLARK'S "CARICATURE" OF THE LENINIST-TROTSKYIST POSITION ON BLACK NATIONALISM

by Ninure Saunders, Chicago Branch

*Introduction*

The document by Gerald Clark, "A Program for Building A Revolutionary Party: In Opposition to the Centrism of the Party Majority," contains so many distortions, fabrications, and downright lies, that it causes one to wonder just to whom does Comrade Clark think he is speaking? It causes one to wonder if he is really serious in putting forth his document as a "substitute" for the program of the party, i.e., the present program and the program outlined in the P.C. resolution to this convention.

(I mean if one carefully sifts through Gerald Clark's strange view and absurd criticisms of the party's program, one is unable to find anything resembling the so-called "Program for Building a Revolutionary Party." At one point Comrade Clark makes a very important point. He says, and I agree, ". . .the revolutionary approach to women's work *includes* bringing women into active participation in worker organizations (trade unions, parties, strike committees, etc.) around demands which affect them as women, but which also reflects the interests of the whole class. When no organizations exist, our comrades would raise general political questions, and attempt to involve women around our demands. In the unions our task would be to unite men and women, Black, Chicano and white. . . ." But this is hardly a program. Comrade Clark does not tell us how we can do the things he has outlined, *nor around what demands. What is to be done, Comrade Clark? Just where, oh where is your program? How would it be applied in the concrete?*)

A significant distortion that Comrade Clark makes in his document is on the Leninist-Trotskyist position on the national question, especially as it applies to the United States, i.e., American Blacks and Chicanos. Comrade Clark would have us believe that the present position of the party towards oppressed nationalities represents

"at best a caricature of Lenin's and Trotsky's view on the national question." However it is the position of Clark that represents "a caricature of Lenin and Trotsky's view on the national question."

In this present contribution I would like to deal primarily with Comrade Clark's caricature of Lenin's, Trotsky's, and the SWP's position on the national question.

*What Did Trotsky Really Say, or Are Blacks a Race, a Nation, or a National Minority? (One More Time)*

On whether Trotsky felt American Blacks to be a race, a nation, or national minority, Comrade Clark has the following to say: "Trotsky agreed that 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 would push Black people towards the class struggle and at the same time educate 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'" ("Program," p. 18).

Is that what Trotsky really said? No, I don't think so. And I'd like to prove this by putting the quotes from Trotsky in their proper context. Quote (1): "The Negroes are a race and not a nation. Nations grow out of the racial material under definite conditions. The Negroes in Africa are not yet a nation, but they are in the process of building a nation. The American Negroes are on a higher cultural level. But while they are under the pressure of the Americans they will become interested in the development of the Negroes in Africa. The American Negro will develop leaders for Africa, that one can say with some certainty and that in turn will influence the development of political consciousness in America." Quote (2): "But that alone does not decide the question of the Negro fate as such, the question of the 'nation,' etc. According to the arguments of the American comrades one could say for example that also Belgium has no right as a 'nation.' The Belgians are Catholic and a large section of them speak French. What if France were to annex them with such an argument? Also the Swiss people, through their historical connection, feel themselves, despite different languages and religion as one nation. An abstract criterion is not decisive in this question, but much more decisive is the historical consciousness, their feelings, and their impulses." (*Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*, Pathfinder Press, 1970, pp. 13-17.)

Yes, Trotsky did agree in the period 1933-1939 that Blacks were not a nation, but a race, but at the same time he did not rule out, as Comrade Clark would imply, the possibility of them moving towards becoming a nation or a national minority. "*In any case the suppression of the Negro pushes them toward a national and political unity.*" (Ibid., p. 13, emphasis added.)

Black Americans are still not a nation, but I think that if we look correctly at the development of the Black movement, if we look at the depth of Black nationalist consciousness in the Black community, if we look at the entire history of Blacks in America, we would be correct in saying that Blacks in America are a national minority. I don't see how anyone living in the real world could say otherwise.

*On the Questions of Self-Determination, Community Control and Organizations for National Minorities, or, "It Might Help to Read a Little Further, Comrade Clark"*

"The heart of the Marxist position on the national question is the bourgeois-democratic demand of the right of 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, p. 47) That is all. Self-determination means *political* separation of a nation from 'alien national bodies' and the formation of an independent national state." ("Program," p.

Well, if what Comrade Clark says is true, if his interpretation of Lenin is correct, then Trotsky must be guilty of the same crimes which Clark says the SWP has committed on the national question. Trotsky seemed to feel that self-determination meant a great deal more than just the creation of an independent national state, and he said so.

"Even on the national questions the proletariat defends the democratic demands to the hilt, declaring that it is ready to support by revolutionary means the right of national groups to self-determination, *even to the point of separation.*" (*The Spanish Revolution (1931-1939)*, Leon Trotsky, Pathfinder Press, 1973, p. 68, emphasis added.) And further, "The Bolsheviks fought for Russia always for the self-determination of national minorities *including the right of complete separation.*" (*L. Trotsky on Black Nationalism*, p. 19, emphasis added.)

Does that mean then that Trotsky was right and Lenin wrong? Not hardly; one can hardly say that Lenin and Trotsky were in disagreement on the national question I think another look at what Lenin said would clear this up. Lenin said that self-determination means "... the political separation of nations from alien national bodies *and the formation of an independent national state.*"

What did Lenin have to say about class solidarity, proletarian internationalism and the struggles for self-determination? "The proletariat demands freedom of political separation for the colonies and nations oppressed by 'their own' nation. If the reverse were true, the internationalism of the proletariat would be nothing but empty words; neither confidence or class solidarity between workers of the oppressed and oppressor nations . . ." (*Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism*, pp. 129-130). You don't build class solidarity by trying to hold back the national movements. You don't build proletarian internationalism by counterposing the struggles of nations, the struggles of national minorities to the struggles of the working class as a class. You don't build class unity by glossing over the special oppression of oppressed nations and national minorities.

Comrade Clark says that we, that is the party majority, equate the demands and the struggles around the demand for community control with the demand and struggle for self-determination. This is a distortion. The party sees, even as Lenin and Trotsky saw, the struggle for community control as one form of the struggle for self-determination. The fact that national minorities are not able to control their institutions increases their awareness of their oppression. "... the regime of formal democracy, with its freedom of the press and assemblage, made the backward oppressed nations only more aware of the most elementary means of cultural development; their own schools, their own courts, their own officials . . ." (*History of the Russian Revolution*, Leon Trotsky, Vol. III, p. 42).

Comrade Clark's positions remind me of others, such as the Workers League, and the Communist Party, which are also opposed to the concept of "community control." These people who claim that Lenin was opposed to the concept of "community control" point to Lenin's polemic with Otto Bauer on the question of "cultural-autonomy" as proof. However, to do this without really analyzing

what it was Lenin was saying can lead to distortions, which of course these people have already fallen into.

Trotsky has a rather concise description and analysis: "In the sphere of theory, the Austrian Social-Democracy, in the persons of Otto Bauer and Karl Renner, considered nationality independent of territory, economy and class, transforming it into a series of abstractions limited by so-called 'national character.' In the field of national policy, as for that matter in all other fields, it did not venture beyond a corrective of the status quo. Fearing the very thought of dismembering the monarchy, the Austrian Social-Democracy strove to adapt its national program to the borders of the patchwork state. The program of so-called 'national cultural autonomy' required that the citizens of one and the same nationality, irrespective of their dispersal over the territory of Austria and Hungary, and irrespective of the administrative divisions of the state, should be unified on the basis of purely personal attributes, into one community for the solution of their 'cultural' tasks (the theater, the church, the school and the like). That program was artificial and utopian, insofar as it attempted to separate culture from territory and economy in a society torn apart by social contradictions; it was at the same time reactionary, insofar as it *forced disunion* into various nationalities of the workers of one and the same state, undermining their class strength.

"Lenin's position was the direct opposite. Regarding nationality as unseverably connected with territory, economy and class structure, he refused at the same time to regard the historical state, the borders of which cut across the living body of the nations, as a sacrosanct and inviolate category. He demanded the recognition of the right to secession and independent existence of each national portion of the state. Insofar as the various nationalities, voluntarily or through force of necessity, co-exist within the borders of one state, their cultural interest must find the highest possible satisfaction within the framework of the broadest regional (and consequently territorial) autonomy, including statutory guarantees of the rights of each minority. At the same time, Lenin deemed it the incontrovertible duty of all workers of a given state, irrespective of nationality, to unite in one and the same *class organizations.*" (*Stalin*, by Leon Trotsky, pp. 152-153, London, 1947, emphasis added.)

It becomes clear from Trotsky's description, that what Lenin counterposed to the cultural national autonomy of Otto Bauer was *political* autonomy. Lenin felt that the granting of national autonomy, or community control, in areas populated by national minorities was a necessity. He said, "Obviously one cannot conceive of a modern, truly democratic state that did *not* grant such autonomy to every region having any appreciably distinct economic and special features, populations of a specific national composition, etc." And further, "Why national areas with populations, not only of half a million, but even of 50,000, should not be able to unite in the most diverse ways with neighboring areas of different dimensions into a single autonomous 'territory' if that is convenient or necessary for the economic intercourse—these things remain the secret of the Bundist Medem." (*Collected Works of Lenin*, Vol. 20, pp. 47-49.)

(It would be important to point out to Comrade Clark that Blacks can hardly be said to be in "political control"

of any of the cities where there is a Black mayor, any more than one could say that the white working class has political control of the other cities where there are white mayors. I think that the way that Comrade Clark looks at the question of political control could hardly be called Leninist.)

Defending the right of *political* autonomy of the oppressed nationalities, Lenin did not consider the question of what the workers of the oppressor nation were going to do as a major question. Their feelings were/are not important on the question, that is whether or not they like the idea. Instead, Lenin saw the need to educate the working class as a whole, and particularly that of the oppressor nation *that the best way to build working-class unity is by defending the rights of the oppressed nationality, "even to the point of separation."*

On the question of Black and Chicano parties, I would ask that comrades reread the section "A Negro Organization," pp. 33-37 in *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*. One thing I would like to point out here for the benefit of Comrade Clark: the party has not, is not, will never say that Black and Chicano parties are meant to take the place of the revolutionary vanguard party. It would be a lie and a slander to try and say otherwise. Comrade Clark should read very carefully the 1967 party resolution on Black work, "The Case for a Black Party," in order to get a clearer understanding of why the oppressed nationalities in the U. S. need their own organizations, their own parties.

*On the Struggles of National Minorities, Why They Are a Part of the Struggles of the Working Class As a Whole and the Socialist Revolution*

Comrade Clark seems to have some sort of fear that the struggles of national minorities are going to somehow interfere with the overall struggles of the working class as a class, that they will somehow interfere with the socialist revolution. He seems to feel that no struggles of any of the sectors of the working class, women, gays, Blacks, Chicanos, are valid. Comrade Clark sees the movements, i.e., the mass movements, as being petty-bourgeois, and far from being really necessary to the socialist revolution. It would do Comrade Clark a lot of good to read Lenin on this question.

"To imagine that the social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, the monarchy, against national oppression, etc. — to imagine all this is to *repudiate social revolution*. So one army lines up in one place and says, 'We are for socialism,' and another, somewhere else and says, 'We are for imperialism,' and that will be a social revolution! . . .

"The socialist revolution in Europe *cannot be* anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it—without such participation, *mass struggle is impossible*, without it *no revolution is possible*—and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fan-

tasies, their weaknesses and errors. But *objectively* they will attack *capital*, and the class-conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, capture power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which all hate (though for different reasons!), and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism. . . .

"The struggle of the oppressed *nations in Europe*, a struggle capable of going all the way to insurrection and street fighting, capable of breaking the iron discipline of the army and martial law, will 'sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe' to an infinitely greater degree than a much more developed rebellion in a remote country. . . .

"The general staffs in the current war are doing their utmost to utilise any national and revolutionary movement in the enemy camp: the Germans utilise the Irish rebellion, the French—the Czech movement, etc. They are acting quite correctly from their own point of view. A serious war would not be treated seriously if advantage were not taken of the enemy's slightest weakness and if every opportunity that presented itself were not seized upon, the more so since it is impossible to know beforehand at what moment, where and with what force some powder magazine will 'explode.' We would be very poor revolutionaries if, in the proletariat's great war of liberation for socialism, we did not know how to utilize *every* popular movement against *every single* disaster imperialism brings in order to intensify and extend the crisis. If we were, on the one hand, to repeat in a thousand keys the declaration that we are 'opposed' to all national oppression and, on the other, to describe the heroic revolt of the most mobile and enlightened section of certain classes in the oppressed nations against its oppressors as a 'putsch' we would be sinking to the same level of stupidity as the Kautskyites." (Emphasis in the original.)

And finally from Trotsky, on the question of the progressive nature of the nationalist movements. (No, Comrade Clark, this idea is not an invention of the SWP, no matter what you might like to believe.)

"The irreconcilable and irresistible going over of the masses from the most rudimentary tasks of the political, agrarian and national emancipation and abolition from serfdom to the slogan of proletarian rulership, resulted not from demagogic agitation, nor from pre-conceived schemes, not from the theory of the Permanent Revolution as the Liberals and Compromisers thought, but from the social structure in Russia and the conditions of the worldwide situation. The theory of the Permanent Revolution only formulated *the combined process of this development*.

"It is a question here not of Russia alone. This subordination of belated national revolutions to the revolution of the proletariat *follows a law which is valid throughout the world*. . . . In the broad historical sense the national revolutions in the East are only stages in the world revolution of the proletariat, *just as the national movements of Russia became stepping stones to the Soviet dictatorship*.

"Lenin appraised with admirable profundity *the revo-*

lutionary force inherent in the development of oppressed nationalities, both in Czarist Russia and throughout the world. . . . For him a war of national liberation, in contrast to the wars of imperialist oppression, was merely another form of the national revolution which in its turn enters as a necessary link in the liberating struggle of the international working class." (*The History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. III, p. 56, emphasis added.)

#### *In Conclusion*

It would seem that the dispute which Comrade Clark has with the party majority on the national question, extends itself to a dispute with Lenin and Trotsky as well. And if this is the case, if Comrade Clark feels that Lenin and Trotsky were wrong on the national question, on the importance of the mass movements that are part of the working-class struggle for socialism, it is important that

he makes it clear, rather than dishonestly accusing the party leadership of having "revised the Marxist program to make it fit."

(Comrade Clark causes another question to be raised. He speaks of a "process" which has caused the development or "creation" of a "small but growing urban Black petty bourgeoisie." How does Comrade Clarke make this theory of "the small but growing urban Black petty bourgeoisie" compatible with Trotsky's theory of the decline of the "middle class," i.e., the petty bourgeoisie? Does Comrade Clark have disagreements with Trotsky on this question? If so, now is a good time to let us know, so that we can have a full discussion on that question.)

One very important thing that Comrade Clark should keep in mind about our program, the Transitional Program: "A program is not formulated for the editorial board or for the leaders of discussion clubs *but for the revolutionary actions of millions.*"

July 13, 1973

## THE CHICAGO BRANCH OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY: AN ANATOMY OF CORRODING DEMOCRACY

by Nadja (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Branch

#### *The National Disaster And The Theory Behind It*

The internal situation of the Socialist Workers Party as a whole within the past few years has been characterized by an increasing trend towards, and indeed a positive obsession with, political and organizational monolithism. The view that dissidence of any kind within the party is an absolute aberration rather than a very natural occurrence has been firmly imprinted in the minds of the ranks. At the root of this mania for homogeneity lies a false and totally mechanical conception of party building, i.e., the conception that the construction of a revolutionary party is analogous to the physical construction of a high-rise or a fortress. One builds the party brick by brick, stone by stone, firmly cemented together until the initial blueprint realizes itself and culminates in the finished artifact, a mass combat party capable of leading the working class to the seizure of power.

Completely absent from such a projection is the understanding, so fundamental to Marxism, that violent contradictions on every level of reality, ever clashing and resolving themselves into a higher unity, are at the very heart of the historical process, a process from which party building cannot be abstracted as a thing-in-itself. More concretely, the pundits of the brick-laying theory of party building fail to recognize the creative and constructive role of diverse political currents confronting each other within the party. They cannot understand that factional struggles constitute an important political education for our cadres inasmuch as these struggles serve to clarify and develop revolutionary Marxist theory and insofar

as they foster the spirit of critical thought, without which no revolutionary party can remain healthy and dynamic.

Instead, the SWP has positively nurtured the confusion that party building and complete unquestioning agreement with the program and the practice of the leadership are synonymous. Disagreement, on the other hand, has come to be regarded as an impertinent disruption, if not an outright violation of "party loyalty." This distorted notion of party loyalty reached its shrillest pitch at the last convention in 1971 when comrades who supported the For A Proletarian Orientation Tendency were summarily branded as "party wreckers," or in the choicer words of one National Committee member, as "cadre killers" and "people killers"!

The shouters of these and other obscenities from the podium of the convention were in effect saying that opposition has no place within the SWP and that views which pose a challenge to the leadership must be stamped out lest they spread in the manner of gangrene. As a result, shortly after the convention 50 to 60 supporters of the SWP majority were dispatched to Oakland-Berkeley where they served as voting cattle in order to mechanically outnumber and crush the very strong minority there. Such undisguised cynicism on the part of the national leadership not only towards dissidents but also towards its own supporters is alone sufficient to constitute an indictment of that leadership.

Since the breaches of internal democracy on the national level are too numerous to catalogue at this time, we will confine ourselves to a brief enumeration of only the more



blatant incidents: the quiet and rapid expulsion of the Communist Tendency behind the backs of the membership soon after the convention; the continual harassment of the Leninist Faction and the refusal to recognize its legitimacy as a faction, a major factor in precipitating its sudden exodus from the party; the systematic exclusion of former PO supporters from any position of responsibility and from the decision-making process on a national and, in some cases, on a local level; the continual postponement or denial of membership to the party of dissident YSAers or those with differing views on the close periphery of the party. Here the recent refusal of the Los Angeles branch, guided by the N. O., to accept the application for membership of Milt Zaslow (Mike Bartell), is a case in point. It is only against this background of such undemocratic norms engendered and endorsed nationally, that the grotesque perversions of internal democracy existing in the Chicago branch can be analyzed and understood.

### *Chicago In The Past Two Years: A Paradigm Of How Not To Build A Party*

Any comrade who has spent any length of time whatsoever in the Chicago branch and who has not been blinded completely by the intense factional glare emanating from the branch leadership, can attest to the fact that Chicago has managed to plough new depths in the realm of internal democracy. Lacking the greater subtlety of the national leaders on these matters, the Chicago leadership largely under the direction and guidance of the organizer, has been compelled to resort to more Neanderthal techniques of heavy handedness in their effort to club the opposition into submission. So crude were their attempts to squelch any kind of political discussion, that even national figures who came to Chicago were somewhat taken aback.

For example, in the discussion period following the report on the International given by Betsey S. here, the organizer disruptingly yelled an order from the floor that Comrade Betsey should definitely not answer certain questions raised by comrades who are now supporters of the International Majority. During the Les E. educational weekend in April, an event which generated a great deal of energetic discussion, a leading Chicago comrade took the floor to point out that the discussion had gone too far and that comrades had better watch what they say since preconvention discussion had not yet started. Fortunately, this comrade who for years has assumed the role of chief custodian of revolutionary etiquette according to the guidelines set down by Emily Post, was promptly overruled by Les E.

Indeed, an outright terror of any kind of substantive political discussion was instilled in the cadre here. For instance, it has come to our attention that some SWP majority comrades actually believed that political discussion was impermissible, even between individuals, during the period between preconvention discussion. The SWP, if it is serious about making a revolution in this century, had better take a very close look at phenomena such as these. For the party will amount to nothing more than a mere blip on the graph of history, unless it begins to specialize in the training and development of hard and *critical*

Bolsheviks, and not in the manufacturing of timid and trembling automatons.

To give body to our assertion that the Chicago branch has succeeded in carrying out the undemocratic norms of the national leadership to farcical lengths, we shall at this time recount some of the more shameful episodes in the history of the party here in the last two years. One such episode was the systematic attempt to demoralize and drive out of the Trotskyist movement the YSAers from the Wisconsin region, particularly Madison, who had come to Chicago in the fall of 1971 in the hopes of deepening their revolutionary commitment by joining the party. Most of these YSAers had been active in the movement for at least one year and some as long as two years. They had served as active builders of the YSA and the mass movements in a local which functioned, in effect, as a junior party branch. The Madison local almost singlehandedly built the Wisconsin region, set up locals and a network of contacts throughout the state, ran a statewide gubernatorial campaign in 1970, and succeeded in doing women's work superior to most in the country, even by the admission of the national leadership.

Nonetheless, because the cadre recruited to that local were generally pro-working class, Madison rapidly acquired its present reputation as a bastion of dissidence within the YSA. Thus, though the For A Proletarian Orientation Tendency did not exist in the YSA, the Wisconsin comrades who came to Chicago were promptly branded with the mark of Cain, a situation which provided a justification for their exclusion not only from positions of responsibility in the YSA but also from membership in the party. They were immediately assigned to and kept in roles which virtually precluded the further development of leadership abilities, i.e., kitchen duty, clean-up crews, fund-raising committees etc. Minority party comrades who had formerly played leading roles either in the Chicago branch or in other branches, received the same treatment.

Let there be no mistake on this question. We are not saying that the minority comrades aimed toward stardom and were unwilling to perform the many tasks of sheer drudgery so necessary to building an organization. It should be clear by now that we did not place the all too prevalent and petty ambition to forge a career in the party above the objective needs of the party. Our role as oppositionists in a party which dooms the opposition to certain pariahship, constitutes ample evidence of this fact. We wish to emphasize, however, that continual confinement to menial tasks coupled with the closing off of all channels for political and organizational development because of one's political differences inevitably leads to wholesale demoralization. The intermittent periods of relative inactivity which many of us experienced and fought against, should therefore be seen in light of the impossible conditions in which we were forced to function.

To further exacerbate the situation, an atmosphere of paranoia came to pervade the branch with regard to dissidents. For instance, every effort was made to isolate minority comrades from contact with independents. Minority comrades who so much as conversed with independents after public party functions such as forums, were almost invariably surrounded by SWP majority supporters vigilantly guarding against possible violations of dis-

discipline and "double recruiting." In fact, two comrades were openly accused of being Spartacist or Wohlforthite agents within the YSA, a suspicion totally without substance. This paranoid frenzy had the effect of quarantining minority comrades from contact even with majority supporters within the party. Majority supporters who sought us out socially were promptly warned of the danger of infection.

Needless to say, it is difficult for those who know only the discipline of infantile supplication before authority (the distinguishing characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie, we might add) to understand another qualitatively different, and revolutionary kind of discipline. That is, the discipline of those who remain faithful to the cause of proletarian emancipation and who, precisely for that reason, refuse to extinguish their critical capacities.

Since political differences and particularly a pro-working-class stance were regarded as incompatible with membership even in the YSA, let alone the party, the mere, usually routine process of applying for membership in the party became a major ordeal for the Wisconsin comrades. Initially, the organizer managed to put off even so much as meeting with these YSAers to discuss their requests for membership. When after weeks, and in some cases months of dogged persistence, some of these comrades succeeded in arranging a meeting with the organizer, they were subjected to a lengthy waiting period during which time the branch exec was supposedly discussing and deciding the matter. One comrade who had applied for membership in November 1971 had to wait until August 1972 to be admitted into the party. Another YSAer from Beloit who had built a local and an SMC there wasn't even given the opportunity to meet with the organizer but was informed in no uncertain terms that he was not "party material." The organizer went so far as to tell him that "We don't take just anybody off the streets!" When the rest of the transplanted Wisconsin YSAers were finally admitted into the party, it was only because of the continuous pressure of minority party members at branch meetings. Perhaps also, the memory of the Control Commission sent into the IMG to investigate undemocratic practices there and initiated at the fraternal suggestion of the SWP, loomed fresh in the leadership's minds.

Subsequently, four of these comrades have dropped out of the SWP and two have joined the NCLC. Here as well as in other areas of the country, dissidents, demoralized and disgusted with the unbolshevik practices of the SWP have left our movement to join various sects such as the Spartacists and the Class Struggle League. We do not condone the actions of these individuals and have long disassociated ourselves with them. We wish only to emphasize at this time the SWP bears a considerable share of the responsibility for the recent and rather sizeable exodus from the party of groups and individuals. Indeed, the gravity of the situation is such that unless the party reverses its undemocratic course, it will continue to play the rather ironic role of being one of the best builders of our opponents' organizations!

Other illustrations of the bureaucratic machinations of the Chicago leadership vis-a-vis minority comrades can be seen in the cases of former comrades Rich G. and Gilbert D. Rich G., a party member who functioned in the YSA, was abruptly pulled out of the YSA in the spring of 1972 allegedly because he had become inactive in the

University of Illinois campus fraction. The many sophistries of the branch exec notwithstanding, the real reason for this sudden "graduation" was known to all. Rich G., who was not without some measure of oratorical flare and powers of persuasion, had to be removed from the youth lest he play the part of a "bad apple" in a bushel-basket. When the matter came to the attention of the N. O., the Chicago leadership was advised to reinstate him in the YSA.

This situation was to be repeated in the incidents surrounding the expulsion of another dissident, Gilbert D. The immediate occasion for his unexpected expulsion was a private phone conversation with the then organizer of the YSA in which he *allegedly* characterized the YSA as reformist. Minority comrades in the YSA vehemently opposed the expulsion to no avail. Several weeks later, a letter of protest written by Gilbert to the NO resulted in his hasty readmission.

#### *The Period Preceding and During Preconvention Discussion: A Walpurgis Night of Factional Concoctions*

Since a comprehensive document of the Chicago leadership's malpractices would assume the proportions of a book on the order of Upton Sinclair's muck-raking gem, *The Jungle*, we must restrict ourselves to presenting a detailed exposition of only the more recent events. These events are fresh in our memories and should serve to give the reader some feeling for "internal democracy, Windy City style."

1) Now as before, political discussion at branch meetings is tabooed as an interference with the full implementation of the party line as definitively decided at the last convention. Procedural points such as "one speaker for and one speaker against" are used both to cut off discussion and to polarize it from the outset. A mechanical majority as well as floor leaders, de facto if not official, are employed as if the branch meetings were an antiwar conference where members must raise their hands on demand. Thus, party members are not encouraged to think, but to rubber stamp.

2) No SWP minority comrade has been allowed to chair a meeting for months. Though chairpersons were at one time nominated from the floor, the procedure of chairing by appointment from the exec has been established. During the meeting then, the appointed chair usually receives the proper cues from the organizer, who in effect functions as chairperson by remote control. As a result, conducting a meeting in a fair and impartial manner is ruled out from the start. When the organizer herself assumes the chair, every last syllable of Robert's Rules of Order is promptly hurled out of the window, and with it even the mere appearance of impartiality. For example, an International Majority comrade made a motion from the floor to give voice to at-large party members during the preconvention discussion. The organizer who chaired reacted to that motion by immediately demanding a counter-motion from the chair, calling the question and taking the vote. All of this without any discussion whatever! In connection with this point, it should be noted that the at-large comrades in question are supporters of the International Majority.

3) Comrade Bill M., a representative from the Internationalist Tendency, requested of the organizer and the

exec that our tendency be allowed to have a representative on the exec with voice but no vote, during the period of the preconvention discussion. The exec responded with a denial of the request and pointed out that if and when we had a specific proposal to make, we could send a representative to the exec at that particular time. In the branch one comrade supporting the exec recommendation stated that the exec could not have supporters of the International Majority on it. Now of course, this comrade did not speak for the party or even for the exec. But she has learned her organizational norms from them and carries them out to their logical conclusion. She has learned that the exec is a body of comrades who agree on every political and factional question, no exceptions allowed, even if they have no vote and their stay is temporary.

4) During the discussion on the question of exec representation for the Internationalist Tendency, a member of the exec stated that all comrades could look at the exec minutes if they were seeking information. When we raised precisely this request, however, the branch led by the organizer voted that the exec minutes not be made available to branch members. The reason given was the necessity for secrecy. The exec deals with personal questions that are not for the eyes and the ears of the branch. Or so we are led to believe.

5) Next came a discussion on the upcoming antiwar demonstration in which a comrade raised a motion that the party intervene with the slogan "Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution." He was promptly ruled out of order. The next speaker, Comrade Don S., was halted before he could even speak when the organizer demanded to know what he was going to say in advance. This approximates censorship.

6) In a discussion of the summer school, a motion was raised by Comrade John B. that no attacks, either explicit or implicit, be made against the line of the International at public educationals. This was voted down along the straight factional lines. The organizer and the only National Committee member in the branch was the sole abstainer. It should be noted that this motion was not formulated in a vacuum since the main purpose of most educationals over the past year, not only in Chicago but nationally, has been to attack the political line of the 9th World Congress and the present international leadership. The educational director then stated that our summer schools would not be public. That is, no public attacks would be made during these educationals, just internal attacks. In addition, we have been warned not to raise our differences and not to present the positions of the International Majority in these internal educationals. This transforms the educationals into one-sided extensions of preconvention discussion.

6) At one of the early sessions of the preconvention dis-

ussion in the Chicago branch, a final speakers list was taken in line with a motion made at the previous preconvention discussion period. There had been two rounds, the first allowing speakers ten minutes each, the second allowing five minutes each. There had never been any provisions allowing for a third round proposed by either the Executive Committee or the branch membership. However, one International Minority supporter who had spoken already in the first and second rounds, placed his name on the speakers list to speak a third round. No other speaker had spoken a third time.

When this was pointed out, a leading member of the Chicago branch exec and the branch educational director, responded immediately by conjuring up the fantasy that the branch had approved a third round of three minutes per speaker! No verification of this can be found by checking the branch minutes unless, of course, two different sets of books are kept (which would at least explain why the leadership prefers not to have the exec minutes open to the members of the branch). In effect, this mythical third round was then approved by the branch, after the fact.

We have suspected for some time, and our suspicions have found corroboration along every step of the way, that the chief intent of the leadership with regard to minorities is this: to use every organizational means at their disposal to grind down or to drive out of the party all of those who maintain and fight for their political ideas. Party members with substantive criticisms of the program and practice of the SWP leadership are treated not as comrades, but in fact, as dangerous opponents.

The organizer of the Chicago branch capsulized this view and went a step further to call into question our allegiance to the "right side of the class line"! For example, during the discussion on Latin America, she bluntly asked the Internationalist Tendency which side of the class struggle it is on? This question was posed after a rundown of all the past oppositions in party history had been presented with the ludicrous analysis that they were all on the *wrong side* of the class struggle. It is abysmal theoretical confusion such as this coupled with blind factionalism, that has turned the Chicago branch into a complete cesspool, a drowning place for revolutionaries. The responsibility for the situation here no longer rests entirely with the branch leadership but with the party leadership, which has inspired these repressive methods in the first place.

We call upon the party leadership to reverse its own undemocratic procedures and those of its local leaderships. We caution those who turned our last convention into a theater of the absurd, i.e., Comrades Kerry, Barnes, Shepard and Montauk; those who are planning the most undemocratic party convention in our history as exemplified by the 15 person per delegate; to immediately put into practice what they so piously preach to the International. Internal democracy must prevail!

July 12, 1973

## LACK OF TRANSITION IN LEADERSHIP OF THE SWP

by Sudie, Los Angeles Branch

There's some fascinating reading in Discussion Bulletin No. 4 of this year, which is called "The Transition in Leadership of the Socialist Workers Party." In particular, there's lots of details about the National Committee that were very new to me.

There were several documents in that package. The general purpose was to encourage some of the older and less active National Committee members to "retire" to advisory status and make room for newer comrades. The feeling was that there had been too little turnover at the last SWP convention. That's certainly true. Among full members, there was a change of only one, out of twenty-eight.

If we kept changing one out of twenty-eight every two years, then National Committee members would each serve an average of 56 years on the NC. That's longer than even Cannon has been on it.

We are in a generation of radical change. So long as the SWP National Committee is modernized at such a slow rate, the SWP won't have a chance of being able to keep up with the times.

Here's another way to see this. Politically speaking, the beginning of the antiwar movement was a long, long time ago. Malcolm X was alive. Che was helping Fidel run things in Havana. Practically speaking, nobody had ever heard of women's liberation, Black Panthers, gay liberation, or hippies. Or the Raza Unida Party. Or the Ligue Communiste or the International Marxist Group or the Socialist Workers Party or the ERP. That was a long, long time ago.

By my count, out of 28 full members of the National Committee of the SWP, 26 of them were already national leaders of the party before the antiwar movement. Since then, the SWP has been changed dramatically, especially by the antiwar movement and the women's liberation movement. But the National Committee has hardly changed a bit.

There's a special problem with the social composition of the national leadership as a whole. Class background is only one factor here; although this is certainly something to be concerned with, this is not where I feel the SWP is weakest.

Six is more what I have in mind. Run your eye down this list, and see if it doesn't make you a little uncomfortable. In each of the following groups, women make up the following percentages:

- 100 percent of the women's liberation movement
- 51 percent of the masses
- 40 percent of the SWP (approx.)
- 30-40 percent of the branch leadership (my estimate)
- 23 percent of the national committee alternates
- 14 percent of the National committee full members
- 13 percent of the Political Committee

Now that just isn't good enough. Women are going to play—and are already playing—a much more important role than those last percentages in the socialist revolution. The SWP just has to get those percentages a whole lot higher, or the SWP just ain't gonna make it.

Why are women excluded from the leadership of the SWP? Is it because there is gross, conscious discrimination against women, by conscious sexists, like you get at *Time* magazine, or Harvard, or IBM, or the State Department, or the Catholic Church? No. It isn't conscious sexism at all. I'm sure the whole party would be glad to see an increase in female representation in the national leadership. But unconscious discrimination happens even among those who consciously oppose it.

Sexist discrimination is usually based on the general idea that women are supposedly less capable than men. Certainly the SWP doesn't believe in that. So how does the exclusion happen?

Some comrades have argued that sexist society oppresses women so bad that it makes them less capable, and so that's why they don't make it to the top of the SWP. It seems to me that this just works out to another way of saying that women are less capable than men (in practice).

Female oppression *does* make women less capable of serving the capitalist patriarchy. But oppression leads to revolutionary consciousness (that's why it's the oppressed that make the revolution, right?). Female oppression makes women *more* capable of leading a revolution and leading a revolutionary party.

The reason women don't make it to the top of the SWP yet is that female oppression makes us less capable of *competing*. An "equal" competition between a woman and a man in our society isn't equal at all. The woman has been held back and beaten down every day of her life, starting right when she was born and they put the pink booties on her.

Here's some examples. The way they raise all of us, women grow up being much less able to speak to a crowd of people, especially if men are included. At branch meetings, the average woman has a much harder time just talking than the average man. So even if they have the same amount of thoughts, the man will say more. And the less you speak, the less anyone will notice any leadership abilities you have.

Women are trained to underestimate themselves; men are trained to overestimate themselves. When they become comrades, men are much more likely to imagine themselves as leaders than women. Men will tend to up and volunteer themselves for leadership responsibilities, expressing a strong self-confidence that will encourage others to have confidence in them. Women on the average have a much better developed sense of humility. They'll work harder than male comrades, but they'll resist taking leadership positions. Naturally, if they resist being moved up the structure, other comrades will tend to go along with that and choose some cocky, eager-beaver man instead.

The feminist literature tells us of the psychology experiment where students of both sexes were given articles they had never seen and asked to grade them. The articles had fake names, half of each sex, at random, with no connection to the sex of the real writer of the article. With each article, the students who thought it was by a man

gave it a much higher grade than the students who thought it was by a woman. That shows you how deep prejudice goes. It obviously affects the party to some extent. Social pressure makes all of us tend to be prejudiced against women.

How can we change all this? There's only a certain amount that can be done on an individual level, although a thorough reading of the feminist literature will help a lot. Lots of women benefit a whole lot from joining a consciousness-raising group. Breaking up with a man often works wonders. All-female classes can do lots of good. Changing men's heads is okay, but it goes kinda slow, and we shouldn't wait for it or depend on it.

Even with all of these things put together, you still don't have enough to deal with the problem on an individual level. The conscious way to deal with this absolutely intolerable situation is for the Trotskyist movement as a movement to learn the political principle involved, namely that so long as women and men are judged individually by "equal" standards, the "equality" will be an illusion, and in practice women will come out on the bottom, men on top of them.

This doesn't just apply to women, either. It applies for all oppressed groups. Every oppressed group should be represented in the top leadership of the SWP in *at least* the same percentage that they are in the ranks. If women are 40 percent of the SWP, then they should be at least 40 percent of the National Committee, and 40 percent of the Political Committee.

Do we have enough capable women comrades to fill the spaces? Or would we have to scrape the bottom of the barrel?

We have plenty of female comrades who aren't on the National Committee (or Political Committee), who are easily capable of these positions. Just think of the female comrades who aren't even alternates to the NC. Like Caroline Lund, or Wendy Reissner, or Linda Jenness, or Melissa Singler, or Peggy Brundy, or Kipp Dawson, or Chris Hildebrand, or Mariana Hernandez, or Debby Woodroffe, or Stephanie Coontz, or Linda T., not to mention all the names I'm leaving out. Would adding these comrades to the national leadership of the SWP lower our standards even an inch?

I don't think so. I think it would be a big gain. I think such a modernization, revitalization, and balancing out of the National Committee is a necessary way of strengthening the composition of the leadership.

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What I'm saying about women applies in various ways to other oppressed groups as well.

Far as I can tell, out of fifty members and alternates of the National Committee, only one is a conscious gay (that's 2 percent). The portion of the ranks of the party who are consciously gay must be at least 15 percent, maybe 20 percent. That ain't fair. Obviously, it's related to the ban we had until two and a half years ago against gays being member (it may have been an informal rule, but it was very real, and was enforced). The effects of that ban explains why gays are not in the leadership yet, but it certainly isn't a justification for that situation continuing!

The younger generation is another oppressed group. Throughout society, they are excluded by what they call "age-ism," excluded from all positions of power. Only today's young people are really capable of understanding and being conscious of the experience of today's young people (memories of being young in a previous time are not good enough).

But young people are always the vanguard of the masses. Look how far ahead of their parents they were in coming to oppose the war in Vietnam! Look how far ahead they are on sexism, or racism! There is a historical rule here, but it is particularly true in our generation. The parents of today's youth were the "silent generation"—and they aren't making too much noise even today. The youth radicalization is one of the most basic facts about the 1960s and 1970s.

Most of the antiwar movement was young; maybe 90 percent. Most of the feminist movement. Most of the Raza movement, the Black movement, the gay movement, the ecology movement, etc. are young. Maybe 90 percent for some of these; maybe just 80 percent for others.

Maybe two-thirds of the comrades in the USA are in the YSA. This includes I guess about a third of the members of the SWP. But how many YSAers are on the SWP National Committee? Out of fifty members and alternates, I count only one who is in the YSA, and he's way at the bottom of the list of alternates.

The great majority of the comrades in the USA joined the movement sometime since the beginning of the antiwar movement in 1965. But by my count, only one out of 28 members of the NC joined the movement since then, and only three out of 22 alternates. Out of fifteen members of the Political Committee, I don't believe any of them joined the movement less than a decade ago.

I'm basing myself on the lists of the members of the National Committee on page 5, and the Political Committee on page 15, given by the national office in the "Transition in Leadership" bulletin. The national office divides the National Committee into "older," "middle" and "younger." Comrades like Harry Ring or Art Sharon are called "middle." The ones that are called "younger" are generally over thirty, and generally joined the movement in the late fifties or early sixties. The majority of the SWP is younger than the "younger" members of the national leadership committees.

As long as we take into account *how long* certain comrades have been playing a leading role in deciding whether they should be on the NC or the PC—we obviously will be discriminating against young people.

I can imagine how we might be able to get more Third World people on the National Committee, too, if we tried hard enough. Actually, I don't understand why Comrades Paul Boutelle and Bob Vernon were dropped from the National Committee in 1971. I could imagine Mariana H. or Ken M. or Olga R. or Laura M. being on the NC—and I'm sure that would help to increase the party's consciousness of where it's at in the ghetto or the barrio.

You might say that I'm very dissatisfied with the present leadership of the SWP. In a sense, that's true. But I don't think the problem is basically a question of the politics of the leadership—I think it's more a question of their social composition.

For instance, the SWP has a basically correct position on feminism, saying that feminism is a revolutionary struggle in its own right; that no other movement or group can liberate women except women themselves, in independent mass actions; that the family is a hopelessly reactionary and oppressive institution; etc. No other tendency comes close to this position.

But I don't think we've carried that out as well as we could have. For instance, now that the abortion movement has won in the U.S., there is very little SWP involvement in the feminist movement. I think there's plenty happening, too.

There's a lot going on, in NOW, in the movement to pass the ERA, in childcare, in women's caucuses in unions, in the lesbian movement, in campus struggles and groups, in the literature of the movement (how often do comrades even try to write for the *Second Wave*, or *Off Our Backs*, or *Ms.*?), the movement against rape, the movement for female self-defense, the movement to repeal laws against prostitutes (the San Francisco hookers' union, "Coyote: Loose Women's Organization," gets front-page coverage in the Bay Area), in older women's liberation, in high school women's liberation, and more. I wouldn't be too fussy about what parts of the feminist movement we were working in, if only we were doing a lot more of it.

I think the party has basically correct positions on the national liberation struggles, from Vietnam to Crystal City to Harlem. But I'm not so sure that we always carry this out, either. I suspect maybe we could be more involved in the mass movement. There surely must be a way in which we could improve our recruitment rate!

In 1971 the SWP took the basic correct position of supporting the gay struggle for full civil and human rights, etc.; the spring plenum rejected the mental-illness theory; and much progress has been made toward gay-is-good. But the party is still almost totally abstaining from the movement, refusing to see the opportunities that exist, refusing to cross the street to look for some.

Who are the best-informed comrades in the party on the gay liberation movement? Judging from what's written so far, the comrades who actually have brought us any information on the subject are pretty much 100 percent gay—which ain't surprising. And the comrades who actually have some knowledge of the field to share with us—like Kendall Green or John Lauritsen or Lucy R. or Mike M. or David Thorstad—all agree that there are lots of opportunities for us in the movement right now.

But only about one of the fifty NC members and alternates is an up-front gay. None of the comrades who have brought us any real information about gay oppression, gay history, gay science, or the gay movement—none of them is on the NC. Apparently nobody on the NC really

knows very much about any of these subjects.

The party has a general position of support to the struggles of youth, from high school rights to lower the voting age to legalize marijuana. But the party consciously abstains from taking part in, or giving active support to, the marijuana legalization movement, even when it mobilizes enough volunteers to get over 300,000 valid voters' signatures and get a referendum on the state ballot in California—which got almost as many votes as McGovern got, including a majority in San Francisco.

Young people who live or dress or wear their hair in modern ways, face the grossest oppression and discrimination, from getting kicked out of school, to courts martial in the army, to open discrimination in jobs or housing. How much coverage does this get in *The Militant*? How much attention did the '72 presidential campaign give this area? Does a single piece of Jenness-Pulley literature deal with such questions?

I think it makes a lot of sense to think that if women were better represented in the official leadership of the party, then the party would be better equipped to find good opportunities for work in the women's liberation movement. I guess if there were more Raza and Black comrades on the NC, then we'd be better equipped to know what's going on in these movements. I think if gays were adequately represented in the National Committee, then the plenum report on gay liberation would have been very different, and the NC in particular would be more aware of the real opportunities the party is now ignoring in that movement—opportunities that gay comrades seem to be best able to see. I think if the younger generation were adequately represented on the leading bodies of the SWP, then the party's support for legalization of marijuana would become much more active.

In other words, I think the basic politics of the leadership of the SWP are adequate—on question after question, only the Trotskyist movement even comes close to an adequate basic position—but I think that the social composition of the leadership is very inadequate, and that this expresses itself by reducing our ability to actively and successfully relate to the mass movements we support.

I think this problem will grow more and more severe as time goes on. It's not really that there's something so terribly wrong with the old, straight, white male leaders. But they are old, straight, white, and male, and there are limits to how well they can overcome these things.

1917 was a long time ago, and Petrograd is very far away from Berkeley.

The coming revolution will not be led by old, straight, white males. So long as the SWP is led by old, straight, white males, there's going to be some real painful limits to what the SWP can accomplish.

July 3, 1973

## DECLARATION OF REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY

by Irene Gorgosz, Detroit Branch; Gerald Clark, Oakland-Berkeley Branch; and Michael Milin, Detroit Branch

The present crisis of capitalism has entered into a new period. The turning point in this crisis was the August 15, 1971, policy of the United States government imposing wage controls upon the working class, and seeking as well to better its own position at the expense of the other imperialist bourgeoisies. These measures initiated a general, international crisis of bourgeois relations. The result has been a growing instability of bourgeois regimes, exacerbated by the continuing war in Southeast Asia and the rising competition in trade and a faltering monetary system.

The post-war stability of the capitalist system based upon American hegemony was first shattered in 1968 with the Vietnamese Tet offensive, which brought the Johnson administration to its knees, and this was accompanied by a wide-ranging new rise in the class struggle: the French general strike, the Czech events, followed by major upheavals in northern Italy, Poland, Ireland, Chile, and Argentina. In every part of the world—advanced capitalist countries, the deformed workers states, colonial and semicolonial nations—the class struggle has emerged with a vigor unseen since the 1930s.

The revolutionary socialist movement, small and isolated from the working class, must realize and take advantage of this new period to begin the long, uphill struggle to root our forces in the working class and prepare our cadre for the battles which are sure to come. But not to simply proclaim to the world our proletarian character and love for the workers. No! Our strategy of penetrating the workers' organizations is based on our analysis of the deep-going crisis of leadership of the proletariat and the necessity to defeat the present misleaders who have tied the working class to the saddle of the bourgeoisie.

But so far the proletariat has refused to be whipped into line. Caught between the bourgeois parties and the traditional reformist and Stalinist misleaders, the working class struggles militantly against the attacks by capital but is unable to advance beyond the limits of bourgeois relations. Only under the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard will it be possible to advance the struggle for socialism and defeat capitalism once and for all.

But the vanguard must be armed with a program which is in the interests of the proletariat and capable of organizing it for the successful conquest of power. The present leaderships of the United Secretariat and the Socialist Workers Party offer no such program. Both tendencies within the world movement offer us two forms of the same substance: political liquidationism. In the case of the SWP, liquidation into petty-bourgeois milieus and the subordination of the vanguard role of the revolutionary party to the reformist leaderships of the petty-bourgeois movements, and in the labor movement its support to government-tied reformers—like the UMW's Miller and the NMU's Morrissey. In the case of the IMT, liquidation into guerrillism and the "new mass vanguard" of

Europe, which also represents a subordination of the role of the vanguard party. Therefore, both tendencies are unsupportable.

On the international level the positions put forward in Comrade Clark's document "The Only Road to Revolution is the Proletariat," represents for us a generally correct program and strategy for building revolutionary parties throughout the world in the next period. A strategy which places the proletariat in the center of our work and the organization of a mass, democratic-centralist International, rooted in the working class and capable of leading workers in the struggle for power, as a major objective of the Trotskyist movement.

Within the United States, we are in general agreement with the line of the document "A Program for Building a Proletarian Party: In Opposition to the Centrism of the Party Majority," also authored by Comrade Clark. This document counterposes a revolutionary Marxist program and perspective to the reformist democratic program of the party majority. In opposition to the "sectoral" thesis of the party leadership, which adapts to the democratic demands of Blacks, Chicanos, women, gays, students, and labor bureaucrats, the document calls for immediate major implantation into the unions to carry out work based on the Transitional Program and the principle of class unity against capitalist exploitation. In calling for the formation of trade-union caucuses based on the Transitional Program, the document correctly poses the question within the workers' movement of who should lead the class: revolutionary socialists or the present labor lieutenants of capital. These tasks flow directly from the evaluation we had made of the present period.

The political bankruptcy of the SWP majority's program and perspectives has been clearly revealed in its stubborn clinging to a student orientation in the face of *qualitative* changes in the world situation. What is worse, the majority has dug *deeper* into this milieu the more openly the crisis of bourgeois society develops. Unable to face this reality squarely, i.e., act in a revolutionary manner, the majority resorts to a frenzied attempt to appear "orthodox" before the final curtain is raised and reveals its two-stage theory of revolution for *all* sectors of the world movement!

Yet with the present method and practice of the SWP majority, should it decide tomorrow to turn massively to a "labor orientation," as it may well be compelled to do, such an orientation could only be a reflection of its continuing practice in other arenas. The task of Leninists among all strata of the oppressed is to fuse together their struggles into the general class struggle, to transcend all narrow, partial, and therefore counterposed, aspects. Only the program and practice of revolutionary Marxism has the capacity to achieve this. Hence the centrality of a revolutionary proletarian perspective in no way excludes work in other sections of the op-

pressed but rather directs the thrust of such work.

Two years ago, a struggle was launched to orient the party toward the proletariat. It failed. It failed because the comrades of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency refused to address themselves to the question of program, and underestimated the degree to which the party has retreated from genuine Trotskyism. But because these questions couldn't be avoided, a split took place in the POT within a year after the convention. Those who took up the question of program in a serious manner eventually grouped into the Leninist Faction.

But those who retreated from this question of program are now, in their majority, grouped into the Internationalist Tendency and the West-Coast Tendency. Both have declared that they are in principled agreement with the International Majority Tendency. What differences they do have with the IMT are subordinated in the interests of organizational maneuvers. Inside both the tendencies which support the IMT there are wide and divergent political views that centrifugal force will probably pull apart in the future again. Despite the many correct criticisms these tendencies make of the party's program, we cannot support them because of our principled disagreement with the program of the IMT.

The International Majority Tendency in standing for the petty-bourgeois guerrilla road in the colonial world—which even if successful could at best lead to a *deformed* workers state, and at the expense of a working class centered revolution—has reaped with the PRT-ERP the inevitable consequences: that for such guerrillas, a Mao or a Castro, not a Trotsky, is their legitimate ideological

hero and inspirer. In Europe, the IMT's latest fad is the phrase "new mass vanguard" and the revolution guaranteed within five years. These quick remedies are not one bit superior to the concept of "red universities" as bastions of revolution, or "from the periphery to the center," since for many years they lamentably failed to turn Stalinist and reformist bureaucrats into involuntary revolutionaries through the tactic of "deep entryism." And for the United States, the IMT has been content to endorse the whole past work of the SWP, suggesting only that it might have been given a somewhat more radical cover.

The issue of democratic centralism in the United Secretariat is a travesty of Trotskyism. Democratic centralism—internal democracy and iron front of discipline in external work—is a vital requirement for proletariat revolutionaries, no less on the international than on the national plane. In the disparity of elements in the United Secretariat whose marriage of convenience is profoundly shaken, the pretense of discipline can only alternate between centrist mockery and bureaucratic abuse.

We know that many left-wing members of the party have been drawn to the IMT because of some of its correct specific criticisms of positions of the SWP. We hope to show these elements that the concept of "the enemy of our enemy is our friend" is not always true; in fact in this case, is a destructive illusion.

On the basis of the position of this statement, we take our stance at this crucial moment in the history of our movement, and call upon all serious revolutionaries in the party to join with us.

July 12, 1973