



# Discussion Bulletin

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**SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

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- Marty Jan 2014

THE BARNES-KERRY SCHOOL OF SCANDALS  
A Brief Reply to a Last Minute Horror Story

by Bill Massey (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Branch

Due to the planned lateness of the "Barzman letter" document, any answer is going to be hurried and lacking in the preparation that it deserves. By this I do not mean to give any great import to the pastiche of organizational horror stories that the document in question dredges up, but one always has the responsibility to explain the truth in order to clear the air so that the business at hand, in this case the political debate within the Fourth International and the party, can be gotten back to and treated in a political manner. I will just make a statement giving my tendency's view of this matter.

1. The two purloined items did not come into the hands of the leadership by "accident" any more than the Ellsberg tapes were obtained by accident. As long as the leadership feigns such an interest in "facts" and goes to such lengths to achieve them, they might start off by giving the membership a few.

Barzman's letter was a personal letter and was written in that manner. To those who say, "But it was political in content," we would reply, "Of course it is." Both the sender and the recipients are political people. They are revolutionaries; politics is our life; what are we expected to write? Letters about the weather or baseball? We will continue to write political letters irregardless of how many of them are stolen and "exposed." If this constitutes a crime, let someone bring charges and a trial and a sentence worthy of such a heinous act of writing political letters. If no such charges and trial is forthcoming, it exposes the phoniness of the entire procedure. No amount of threatening rhetoric, even when it is issued by that Vesuvius of invective himself, Comrade Kerry, will stop us. This whole sordid affair is an attempt by the party leadership to create a smokescreen to hide their own political impoverishment on both the national and international level. All the Pollyanna pipe-dreams of the Barnes leadership have gone up in smoke, leaving the acrid smell of failure in their wake, and so this calls for smoking up the atmosphere with the incense of horror stories.

2. Comrade Barnes' allegations of a "secret faction" in the International is a rather dangerous gamble by our adventurer-leader. It would come off like a bad school-boy prank if it did not involve the question of the International movement in its dynamic. The Barzman letter was written *after* the International Majority Tendency was an established fact. It was written *after* our Tendency had been declared in this party. It was written *after* the SWP national office had been notified by the leadership of both the International Majority Tendency and the leadership of the Massey-Shaffer-Smith Tendency that they were going to meet and discuss collaboration. So who the hell is Barnes trying to kid with this bullshit of "secret faction." Barnes must have more contempt for the ranks of the Trotskyist movement than he has previously been given credit for. The only secret faction in the International is the one that has been using its publishing house for a cover for its factional interests and intentions. This is the *real* secret faction—and now it wants to become public so it needed a "scandal" to do it. The emergency steps Barnes talks about are the formation of a Leninist Trotskyist Faction to wage war on the leadership—the duly elected leadership of the world Trotskyist movement.

The methods of bookstore international inc. have proved insufficient, and so in desperation our gambler leader plays a wild card. Can we expect another open letter from Comrade Hansen, another split by the SWP from the world movement, and another retreat to the failure of IC politics where Comrade Kerry can play the role of Gerry Healy and Barnes can be his Wohlforth. What a tragic scheme! The SWP, after ten years of reunification, has failed the test to integrate itself into the world movement, so what it can't rule it will seek by "emergency steps" to ruin.

3. Our Tendency will continue to function in a disciplined manner in our party. That means carrying out the line set by the party. However, we will retain our differences and our Tendency. There will be no dissolution of our Tendency at this convention. This is our right and we will exercise it—to the hilt.

4. Comrade Kerry knows of no higher body than our party. Well, that just shows that Comrade Kerry is a federalist, not an internationalist. The Fourth International is a higher body; you had better believe it! Or, Comrade Kerry, it will be the saddest day of *your* political career! The days of American exceptionalism and American chauvinism and American indiscipline are over. Read the statutes of the International Comrade. They contain no clause about being meant for only those not covered by the Voorhis Act. They are fraternally meant for co-thinkers. That is if you still consider yourself a co-thinker.

One more thing Comrade Kerry, your cheap threats have become a bore. You have overplayed your "hatchet role." Either learn a new act or retire to warmer and more pleasant climates. Nothing is sadder than to see a person hang on after his days are over.

In the context of the letter I sent to Kerry 18 months ago, I think it was a rather stupid letter. I apologize only to Comrade Geb for the crassness of my letter. Since Comrade Geb does not get to vote since he has been precipitously expelled, I trust I won't be accused of opportunism. But since I probably will, let me make it clear that I am totally opposed to the politics of Comrades Sudie and Geb, but I will raise and fight for their democratic rights including the right to appeal their expulsions to the convention.

5. On consulting comrades in the International on political questions: We will continue to do so as there is no crime in this. Did not Comrades Blanco-Hansen-Camejo-Moreno, et al., consult each other? Is this their right only? We don't agree.

6. The biggest joke of all is the charge of unprincipled politics that the leadership throws out in routinist fashion. A leadership that is part of a Tendency that has no line resolution on the European question! A single issue Tendency that wishes to overthrow the leadership of the International by any means necessary. If that means blocs between disparate elements so what? Whose policy on China can we expect? Peng or Moreno? Whose position on work in the working class? The PST or the SWP. Whose position on the Worldwide Student Radicalization? The LTT is a totally unprincipled combination. The SWP has

been maintaining its opposition to the International's European perspective but the LTT can't draw up a political line because they are afraid it would split their bloc. No, Comrade Kerry, it is you who are the master of combinationism! After all Comrade, you learned it from the master Abern, in whose clique you were a charter member. Stop projecting your own sins and/or your own guilt on to us. Facts, comrade, are hard things to prove and hard things to deny.

Finally, Barzman's letter had some bad formulations and some gossipy parts. It was a private letter. Second, Barzman is not unlike most mortals (Comrade Kerry et al., being exceptions). He makes mistakes. However, to use this letter to provoke a split course in the International is totally dishonest and what's more, quite ineffective. Comrades, you are not even serious about this.

Oh, one word—much is made about our change in

our political positions. We don't claim to be infallible, nor to have not made errors in political matters; however, we don't apologize for changing our positions or for learning more. This is not Stalinism as Kerry stupidly states. It is Leninism. We hold our positions because we believe them to be correct. We get no Brussel's gold or any bookstores either. We will continue to fight for these positions, whether we are a minority or a majority, and if the leadership can't live with these facts what do they propose to do about it? We are members of the SWP and co-thinkers of the FI. We will continue as such. Our highest duty is to the FI and it should be the highest of all comrades. Those who do not put the FI highest are not Leninists or Trotskyists. They are a fraud. Call a halt to the policies of split, comrades of the party majority. There can be no Trotskyist movement without an International movement, and that is the FI and no other!

July 28, 1973

### THE ANTIDEPORTATION MOVEMENT: THE HAITIAN CASE

by Patti Iiyama, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

A new area of work is opening up for the party in New York City—the struggle against deportations of Haitians, Dominicans, Chicanos and other Latinos. The unprecedented response which we have received in New York on the case of the 117 Haitians in Florida who are threatened with deportation indicates that there are important openings available to work on this issue.

Between December 1972 and April 1973, 117 men, women and children sailed from Haiti to Miami, Florida, and applied for political asylum in the United States. Twelve of them are escaped political prisoners, while the rest fled the repression in Haiti. So far, eight of them have been found guilty of "illegal entry" into the U.S. The Immigration Department has refused to grant them political asylum on the grounds that they have nothing to fear from the Haitian government. The immigration authorities have tried to convince concerned politicians and judges that these refugees are not fleeing political repression, just widespread unemployment.

These arguments, however, are not very convincing in face of the substantial evidence of torture, murder, kidnapping and assassination by the Duvalier regime. (See the June-July-August issue of the *USLA Reporter* for further details.) From the past record of this repressive regime, it is clear that if any of these refugees are deported back to Haiti, they will face certain imprisonment, torture and probably death for having publicized their political opposition to the Duvalier government.

The case of the 117 Haitians is rapidly expanding to include more defendants. On July 17, 1973, another group of Haitians landed in Miami seeking political asylum and announced that they will be followed by at least four more boatloads of Haitian refugees. As the victimizations continue, we can expect this issue to stay important.

Primary to the Haitian defense effort is the need to ex-

plain why they fled Haiti and need asylum in the U.S. This involves a detailed expose of the repression in Haiti to counter the Immigration Department's claim that the refugees are only fleeing from unemployment and have nothing to fear from the Duvalier regime. The political, social and economic domination of Haiti by the U.S., its consequent underdevelopment and U.S. complicity in the Duvalier repressive apparatus are important issues for the defense campaign.

In spite of U.S. complicity in Haiti, the Haitians are seeking political asylum here, rather than in Cuba, which would seem to be a more likely source of political refuge. They are afraid of persecution of their relatives and friends who remain in Haiti if they seek asylum in Cuba. That is why even the most radical of the refugees come to the United States rather than Cuba.

It is interesting to compare the differences in treatment of the Cuban exiles (*gusanos*) and the Haitian refugees. The *gusanos*, who are Latino and relatively more affluent, are immediately put on welfare when they arrive in Miami. They are given food, clothing, housing and are even paid to learn new skills and placed in jobs. The Haitians, on the other hand, who are predominantly poor and Black, are arrested, denied asylum and threatened with deportation. They are not provided with any food, clothing, housing or work while they are awaiting trial, but must fend for themselves with whatever aid they can obtain from other poor people.

Aside from the clearly racist aspect of this treatment, by law the United States only grants the status of political asylum to people fleeing from the workers states (Soviet Union, China, Cuba, etc.). Even exiles from the workers states have to undergo intensive examination before they are granted political asylum to make sure they have never belonged to the Communist Party in any of these states—

i.e., they have to be counterrevolutionary.

There can, of course, be exceptions to the law; the Haitians are fighting to become exceptions. We are not interested at this time in attacking the validity of the whole law, but only in establishing the Haitians' democratic right to political asylum. Concrete cases such as this provide more opportunities to build a movement than a vague, generalized civil liberties issue and lay the groundwork for fighting the law as a whole later.

The case of the Haitians is also closely related to the plight of other immigrant workers, "illegal aliens" as the immigration authorities have recently labelled them. So-called "illegal" immigration has not always been discouraged by the U.S. government. In fact, until last year the American government, in complicity with employers, encouraged illegal entry into the U.S. through its lax enforcement of deportation. In New York City alone, it is estimated that there are 200,000 Haitians, 60,000 Colombians and 350,000 Dominicans, at least half of whom are here "illegally."

These "illegal" immigrant workers from Caribbean and Latin American countries help to alleviate the acute crisis of underdevelopment in their native countries, many of which have a permanent unemployment rate of 30-50 percent. The immigration to the U.S. thus acts as a kind of safety valve on discontent in the countries with high unemployment.

These immigrant workers also fill the need in the United States for cheap, unskilled labor as a reserve labor pool. The majority of immigrants have no vocational training and are willing to accept any kind of job at reduced wages, long hours without overtime pay, lower grading on the job and minimal or no benefits. As such, they are profitable to the capitalists and their government in two ways: not only are they the cheapest labor but they involuntarily depress the wages of other workers, since immigrant workers are generally not unionized and are willing to accept substantially lower wages. They also serve to maintain a certain level of unemployment in the U.S. when necessary and to thereby limit the combativity of the working class here.

They economize the expenses of the state for health, education and welfare, since they are usually not eligible for these benefits and come to the U.S. only to enter the labor market as adults. The industrialized economy does not bear any of the expenses of bringing up these immigrants or even of bringing up their children, born in the United States. Neither does it bear any of the expenses of their old age, since this labor either returns voluntarily or is returned to the country of origin when it is no longer profitable. The immigrants are discriminated against in terms of social security benefits, workmen's disability compensation and unemployment benefits as well.

The ruling class also seeks to use immigrant labor to divide the working class by blaming immigrants for unemployment, poor working conditions and low wages. Since most of the immigrant workers are Black or Latin American or both, the government and employers play on racism and xenophobia to divert the working class from the real causes of unemployment, poor working conditions and low wages. These causes lie in the private ownership of the means of production and the anarchy stemming from capitalist production. Labelling these immigrant workers "illegal aliens," the ruling class implies

that they are not only noncitizens but are foreign, hostile and inferior to Americans. They are a highly visible scapegoat.

The immigrant workers thus face oppression on two levels—as workers and as members of oppressed minorities. Although their situation is similar to that of other oppressed minorities, it is complicated by their illegal status, which makes them even more vulnerable to oppression and exploitation. These immigrant workers are encouraged to come to the United States when the U.S. economy is prospering and there is a need for a pool of unskilled labor to artificially depress wages. However, when there is an economic recession, they are a surplus which can be conveniently deported out of the country.

The pressure of the present U.S. economic crisis is the basis for the recent revival of anti-alien hysteria by the ruling class, symbolized in such legislation as the Rodino bill, and the stepped-up deportations carried out by the immigration authorities. Since mid-1972, dragnet raids in the U.S. have victimized thousands of people who are arrested and deported if they have dark skin and look Latin American.

*The Militant* has publicized deportations of Mexicanos and Chicanos on the West Coast. Recent events in New York City indicate the large scale of activity against Latin Americans throughout the nation: On July 11, 1972, immigration officials stopped pedestrians at a corner in Queens and arrested 35 Latin Americans. This was termed a "routine operation." On October 16, 1972, Immigration officials in Manhattan stopped nearly 100 passers-by who were either Black or looked Latin American and arrested over 10 carloads of them. On December 12, 1972, at 7:00 A.M. at a subway station in Queens, 64 persons, all dark-skinned and mostly Latin American, were arrested. The Immigration Service Director for New York City admits that from September to December 1972 there were 14 "subway operations" to arrest and deport "illegal aliens." After these suspected "illegal aliens" are arrested, they usually are deported without a chance to call their families or friends, let alone to have a hearing on their case.

The isolation and fear these Latin Americans suffer, many of them venturing to leave their rooms only to go to work, has made it difficult to organize a fight against these deportations in the past. However, the radicalization in the U.S. has provided an example and an atmosphere in which increasing numbers of "illegal" immigrants have been willing to struggle against deportation and in which other groups, especially those of the oppressed national minorities in the U.S., solidarize themselves with that fight.

For instance, the Black community in Miami immediately rallied to the defense of the Haitian refugees. Black churches gave them food and shelter and played a key role in organizing their defense. The *Miami Times*, a Black paper, gave extensive coverage to their struggle, and a committee to defend their right to asylum was formed which has conducted demonstrations numbering several hundred.

The Committee to Defend Democratic Rights for the Haitian People (KODDPA), a coalition of several Haitian groups in New York City, had become rather demoralized, because they had no concrete defense strategy. The U.S. Committee for Justice for Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA), New York Chapter, is working in close

cooperation with KODDPA to organize an effective political defense campaign. Although generally USLA is not involved in political cases of Latin Americans in the U. S., it is able to handle the Haitian case because of the 12 escaped political prisoners who would certainly become political prisoners again if sent back to Haiti, as well as because of the likelihood of others' victimization.

A telegram campaign to the immigration authorities was initiated in mid-June and succeeded in winning a partial victory. The eight Haitians who had been convicted of "illegal entry," 20 others arrested by immigration officials in Miami and around 50 others who surrendered to immigration authorities were being held on bail of \$1,000 each. The scope of the three-day telegram campaign, which included Congresswomen Bella Abzug and Shirley Chisholm, Bishop Paul Moore and Luis Fuentes, Superintendent of N. Y. School District 1, forced the immigration authorities to release all of the Haitians on their own recognizance.

Since then, USLA and KODDPA have embarked on a campaign to publicize the case and to build support. They have cosponsored with other organizations a well publicized picket line and news conference. It was discovered that several of the 117 Haitians are having hearings in New York City, including an escaped political prisoner who was jailed without trial in Haiti for speaking out publicly against unemployment. A picket line is planned for his hearing in mid-August.

In addition, the process of involving other groups in the defense effort by holding a rally against deportations has begun. The rally will focus on the case of the 117 Haitians but will also feature speakers relating the Haitian case to their own struggles against deportations. The involvement of major forces in the Latino movement is seen by the fact that two of the main speakers are Bert Corona, from CASA-Hermandad in Los Angeles, and Ramon Arbona, general secretary of the U. S. Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

Important possibilities revealing the potential impact of this struggle have opened up on many levels. The SWP and USLA have been able to reach out to many groups we have not been able to work with in the past. The American Friends Service Committee and many church groups have become interested in this struggle, as evidenced by their endorsements and willingness to speak. Their involvement opens the door to significant funding of the defense by the churches. USLA was also able to get free office space at two churches with unlimited access to telephones, xeroxing and a postage meter.

We have been able to begin to establish good working relations with important Latin organizations in New York City, such as KODDPA and Latin students in CLAN (Coalition of Latin Americans and Friends of Latin America).

Significant civil liberties organizations have expressed interest in the case, including the Workers Defense League and the National Lawyers Guild. We have begun to reach out to unions in New York; the Social Services Employees Union local distributed leaflets for the rally with their latest newspaper.

This is also one of the few areas nationally in which we have been able to force the indirect participation of the Communist Party into a coalition effort, due to the

breadth of the movement. We have obtained the endorsement of the Young Workers Liberation League and of the United Defense Committee to Free All Political Prisoners, which grew out of the Angela Davis Defense Committee, sent out a mailing on the rally, mimeographed several thousand leaflets on their machine, and obtained coverage of the rally in the *Daily World* and on WBAI-FM radio.

USLA managed to obtain endorsement of the Haitian defense from such liberal Democratic Party politicians as Congresswoman Bella Abzug, Congressman Charles Rangel from Harlem, Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton, Senator Edward Kennedy, Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman on the House Immigration Committee, and New York State Senator Carol Bellamy. Some of them regularly call our office to keep informed of developments.

We have also been able to break through the traditionally hard-to-crack New York press. The picket line at the Immigration Department was reported in the Sunday *Daily News* (with a circulation of 2 million, the highest of all New York papers), on the 6 o'clock news of four major television stations and at least three radio stations. The rally will be covered by at least one of the major television stations, which has expressed an interest in a special feature on the Haitians, while Black News on Channel 5 and a Spanish station have already given 15 minutes of prime time to this struggle. The entire rally is being taped by WBAI-FM radio and videotaped by people from the Urban Coalition. USLA has sent an open letter to *The New York Times* editorial page signed by such prominent people as Bella Abzug, Charles Rangel, Gloria Steinem and Emile de Antonio ("Milhouse"); with signatures like these, it will only be a matter of time when the letter will be printed.

There is also a possibility of extending the campaign on a national level, not just limiting it to the East Coast. For instance, a group of clergymen, Raza Unida Party people, United Farm Workers, and people from CASA-Hermandad met in late July in Los Angeles, were informed of the case, sent telegrams to the Attorney General demanding political asylum for the Haitians and wanted to know what they could do to help.

The excellent response which the USLA work has received so far points to the great interest that exists in the Haitian, Latino and Chicano communities for a united fight against deportations. It also highlights the potential of this movement as a key issue around which to mobilize if given the proper political focus.

The SWP, through its support to USLA, has provided an example to the rest of the Latino and radical movements on how to conduct a defense campaign that can win. We have built our defense effort in the best traditions of the radical movement in the United States. We are willing to defend people around their basic democratic right to win political asylum in the U.S. We have helped to build a coalition that does not just appeal to the radical movement but reaches out for broad sponsorship from anyone who supports that democratic right. This policy of involving liberals and bourgeois politicians as well as socialists is important to build the support of the large numbers of people necessary to exert

enough political pressure on the Immigration Department to win. Another key aspect of our defense of the Haitians is that we don't rely on the bourgeois regime or its spokespersons to win. While utilizing all legal means open to us, we also use extraparliamentary, proletarian means of struggle to build support.

This kind of political defense has set a precedent in the radical and Latino communities and helps to educate them on the necessity of a nonsectarian and principled defense effort. For example, the 117 Haitians were at first afraid to fight their deportations on political grounds. However, with the example of the broad base of support that has been built in New York City for their case around a political basis, they publicly declared in late July that they had all been members of the underground political opposition to the Haitian government and were therefore political refugees.

The SWP's prominent role in supporting, shaping and leading this defense has gained us much credibility. Our comrades are visibly involved in the defense movement. In addition, the party has related to this work through the campaign and recruitment.

The party campaign in New York City has related to this emerging struggle in several ways. The campaign has intervened with our literature and has issued a statement on deportations in both English and Spanish. Norman Oliver, our mayoral candidate, demonstrated at the picket line and handed out campaign literature. The seriousness with which the SWP campaign takes the case

of the 117 Haitians is also demonstrated by the fact that Norman has been assigned for the last week and a half to work full-time in the USLA office to help build the rally on July 28. Independents are quite impressed with the campaign's concrete involvement in the struggle.

We have not yet recruited any of the activists to the party or the YSA, although two or three are close to joining. However, we have laid the basis for recruitment by establishing a periphery of people who regularly read *The Militant* and are open to our ideas and analysis. In our fraction meetings, we discuss each contact and assign comrades to discuss our politics with them and to invite them to forums, parties, summer school and other party and YSA functions. This systematic and conscious effort at recruitment is already paying off; we have a small group of around six independents who attend forums and educationals fairly regularly.

The struggle against deportations obviously has a great deal of dynamic and potential. People are clearly willing to go into action around this issue when provided with a clear political focus. The party will want to continue to relate to this struggle through our participation, when possible, and our propaganda. We will want to keep our eyes open for future possibilities.

Through our participation in this movement, we will be able to work with Latin Americans, Blacks and white youth on concrete actions, to project our concept of political defense and to recruit the best activists to our movement.

July 27, 1973

REMARKS MADE IN THE HOUSTON BRANCH ON  
JULY 23, 1973, REGARDING THE FRANCHISE  
APPLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONALIST  
TENDENCY

By Paul McKnight, Houston Branch

Comrades, when I read this document, "The Building of a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America," last week, about a dozen questions popped into my mind.

The main question is this: What purpose could possibly be served by presenting to the party ranks a document so full of obvious slanders and distortions of the party's positions that it could not possibly win over any party member who had not already been recruited to the dream-world of the tendency behind the party's back before the discussion opened? That is the main question: Why the slander and distortion?

Other, secondary questions are the following:

Why use a title that tries to approximate as closely as possible the title of the European Perspectives Document of Mandel, Maitan, and Frank?

Why did they pick up on some of the key phrases used by Mandel, Maitan, and Frank in their writings, grafting them into the document in a sometimes artificial manner? Phrases like "from the periphery to the center"?

Why the quotations from Mandel, who two years ago was an arch-villain?

Some related questions that have come up in the course of this discussion are:

Why the 180-degree turn on Latin America?

Why the reluctance to admit that Stern's ideas on Vietnam are shared by the IEC majority?

Why did Barzman side-step the \$64,000 question of whether or not he has a split perspective, saying that the only two things that keep the SWP from floating down the river of reformism are the Internationalist Tendency and the Fourth International?

Why have these comrades picked up on every single criticism of the SWP that has been made or imagined to be made by anyone in the European leadership?

Why have they suddenly latched onto the "Victory to the NLF" slogan, which also comes from Europe?

Why does Bill Massey, the attorney who represents them in their dealings with the N.O., insist that every memo

he scribbles to Jack Barnes be published as an International Document?

Why the sudden criticism of the 'electoralism' of the SWP, a policy we have had at least since 1948, when we ran our first presidential campaign?

Why do they constantly parrot Mandel's demands for more centralism in the International?

Why have they taken to calling themselves "Internationalists"?

The answers to these questions, and many more, can be found by examining the nature of this document; its form and its content. The form of this document is a political counter resolution, supposedly designed to win a majority of the ranks of the party to the perspectives outlined here. That's its form. It even says so right here on the front: "A Political Counter Resolution Submitted by the Internationalist Tendency."

However, the content of this document, its true nature, what it really is, is a franchise application, an application for a franchise.

Let me elaborate. Everyone in the party knows that the present international differences contain within them at least the seeds of the possibility of another split in the world Trotskyist movement.

It is my contention that these comrades are banking on such a split and that everything they have done since they met with Krivine in Canada; every document they have written, every position they have put forth, changed, or covered up; *everything* fits into the strategy of preparing themselves to win the franchise of the American Section (MMF) in the event of such a split in the world

movement. Therein lie the answers to all the questions I posed. That's what I mean when I say this document is a franchise application.

Of course, they don't expect an immediate reply to this request. They are willing to wait for the world congress. But they have their application in.

They know that at the time of the 1953 split in the world movement, Mandel, Maitan, Frank, and Pablo were quick to recognize comrade Clarke as their American Section; the Cochranite comrade Clarke who was in Europe pretending to represent the Political Committee of the SWP, but who in reality was representing only himself.

They have heard Mandel's vitriolic slander against the Moreno group in Argentina in his attempt to kick the PST out of the world movement, and they hope to paint a picture of the SWP as being even worse than the PST.

That's the reason for the slander and distortion in this document; that's why we hear them get up here and say, "You just wait; we're going to tell Ernest on you and expose your revisionism to the whole international!"

That's why the style of this document makes it clear that it was not written for domestic consumption, but for export. That's why they refuse to confront the IEC majority position on Vietnam. That's why they adopted the position of the IEC majority on Latin America.

That's why they run around wearing the latest European fashions in hammer-and-sickle T-shirts.

That's why they are parroting Mandel's demands for a centralist international, and that's why they disguise themselves as "internationalists."

July 28, 1973

## MAJOR FLAWS IN THE THORSTAD-GREEN RESOLUTION, "FOR AN INTERVENTION INTO THE GAY LIBERATION STRUGGLE"

by Barry Sheppard

There are important differences in line between the resolution submitted by Comrades Thorstad and Green, "For an Intervention into the Gay Liberation Struggle," and the memorandum on the gay liberation movement adopted by the National Committee (NC) at its meeting last April. Before taking up these important differences, I would like to comment on aspects of the discussion, both as it is reflected in the Discussion Bulletin, and as it was reflected in the verbal Los Angeles branch discussion in which I participated.

Assertions have been made by supporters of the Thorstad-Green resolution that the NC memorandum's political position gives only lip service to the struggle of gay people for their full rights. Comrades Beren, Green, Keepnews, Lauritsen and Thorstad, in "Where the National Committee Memorandum on the Gay Liberation Movement Goes Wrong," even raise the following question: "If the party were asked, could it assure gays that following a successful socialist revolution in the United States under the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party a similar treatment

and policy [to the present repressive policy followed by the Cuban regime] would not await them?"

But the memorandum is crystal clear in its political position. It states that the party's position is one of "unconditional support to the struggles of homosexuals for full democratic rights, including full civil and human rights, and against all the forms of discrimination and oppression they suffer under capitalism." The party rejects all forms of prejudice and prejudiced theories against gay people, which are used as justifications to oppress them. The memorandum rejects "with contempt all forms of bourgeois prejudice against gay people, including quack psychological 'theories' labelling gays as mentally ill — prejudices echoed by the Stalinists. . . ."

Further: "The development of the gay liberation movement is progressive. It confronts and helps break down the reactionary morality that helps preserve class society. The struggle of gay people for their rights is directed against the capitalist government, and is in the interests of socialism, which can only be built by the mobilization



of the working class and its allies in the historic task of rebuilding society, eliminating every vestige of discrimination spawned by class society, including the oppression of gay people. The party identifies with the aims of this struggle and supports it. . . ."

A second confusion that has been evident in the discussion is what the memorandum means when it says that where local struggles for the rights of gay people occur, the party should "support" them. The question is, does this preclude "intervention" or "participation" in such struggles, or does "support" mean strictly support from the sidelines. We will return to this question in dealing with the different lines of the memorandum and the Thorstad-Green resolution concerning our relation to the gay liberation movement at the present time. But here we will point out that the word "support" certainly does not preclude intervention or participation. Our support to such struggles where they occur can take many forms, depending upon circumstances. In some cases, the best way for us to support a given struggle would be through our election campaigns, or through an article in *The Militant*. In other situations, we would participate in a demonstration, or in a defense committee, or in a united front to organize a demonstration. It depends upon the concrete circumstances. There are no a priori, abstract prohibitions on the form our support to such struggles will take.

A third point relates to a dangerous method that has been, I believe inadvertently, introduced into the discussion. Supporters of the Thorstad-Green resolution, in the Discussion Bulletin and in the verbal discussion, have raised suspicions about what the memorandum "really" means, using gossip, quotations of what this or that person supposedly said, questioning the "real" motivation of those who voted for the memorandum, and attempting to build up the case that the memorandum represents a "compromise" with prejudice. Comrade Lee Smith's article, "Looking Backward, the SWP and Gay Liberation, 1970-1973," is an example.

By this method, the memorandum is dismissed out of hand, and an objective discussion of the real differences between its line and that of the Thorstad-Green resolution is made more difficult.

Let us now turn to three areas of difference between the line of the memorandum and the line of the Thorstad-Green resolution. These are: (1) the question of whether the party should take a position on the nature or value of homosexuality; (2) the social weight of the gay liberation movement and the related question of our general priorities in relation to it; (3) the analysis of the present stage of the gay liberation movement and our immediate tactical orientation towards it.

### *1. Should the Party Take a Position on the Nature or Value of Homosexuality?*

First, we should outline the position of the memorandum. The memorandum rejects all forms of prejudice against gay people. It supports their struggle for the eradication of every aspect of the oppression they suffer, and rejects "theories" about gay people or about homosexuality that are used to justify the oppression of gay people.

But while we reject such theories, we do so on the ground that they are used to oppress gay people. We do not attempt, as a party, to put any other theory about homosexuality in the place of such theories.

The Thorstad-Green resolution insists that the party must take the position that "homosexuality is not inferior

to heterosexuality," as is made abundantly clear in the document "Where the National Committee Memorandum on the Gay Liberation Movement Goes Wrong," signed by the Comrades Thorstad and Green and others.

It is important to establish what is the difference in the two positions. The line of the memorandum is that the party stands in opposition to all forms of oppression of gay people. This implies rejection of any notion of the "inferiority" of gay people. But this does not entail taking any position on the question of homosexuality itself. The difference can perhaps be seen in the two possible interpretations of the "gay is good" slogan. One, in line with the memorandum, is that "gay people are just as good as heterosexual people." Another, on which the memorandum takes no position, but which is embraced by the Thorstad-Green resolution, is that "gayness or homosexuality is just as good as heterosexuality."

Why should the party not adopt this stand that homosexuality is just as good as heterosexuality? First of all, let us look more closely at the statement itself. What does it mean? It is capable of many interpretations.

One possible interpretation is a moral one. That is, that homosexuality is just as good in a moral sense as heterosexuality. As Marxists, we reject religious or other moral arguments against either homosexuality or heterosexuality or just sexuality. We reject such moral arguments in toto, and do not judge phenomenon by such criteria, and do not make statements about the morality of homosexuality or heterosexuality. I'm sure that all comrades agree on this.

Another possible interpretation is that by "homosexuality is just as good as heterosexuality" what is meant is that homosexual activity, desires, etc., are just as "good" or "not inferior" to heterosexual desires, acts, etc., in a clinical or physical or psychological sense. This is clearly not true in the case of most individuals presently living in our society. The vast majority of individuals in this society *prefer* either homosexuality or heterosexuality, think one or the other *is better* for them. Obviously, we are not going to make it a matter of party policy to tell people they are *wrong* to have a personal preference. The authors and key supporters of the Thorstad-Green resolution, in fact, say that this is not what they mean.

A third possibility is to assert that if there was no oppression of homosexuals, and no prejudice against homosexual acts, then homosexuality would be looked upon by humanity as not inferior to heterosexuality. There is no evidence to make any such assertion. We do not know, in a society free of distortions of sexuality and free of prejudice, whether there will continue to be a spectrum of sexual preference among the population, which preference would have the majority, or if in the case that such differentiations cease to exist, that people will not prefer, for example, heterosexual contacts over homosexual contacts. Comrades may have their own views on such questions. Some comrades even hold that sexuality itself will recede in importance over time. But the party does not take a position on such questions.

We must also place this question in the context of the real gay liberation movement, where there are many people who do assert just such interpretations of "gay is good" as these. Comrade Thorstad's and Green's protestations to the contrary, for the party to assert that "homosexuality is just as good as heterosexuality" *could only* be interpreted

as taking a position on a matter we should say is a personal decision.

Nor are we helped out of this dilemma by the answer given by Comrades Joe Johnson, Bill Perdue, and Jon Hillson that we should say that homosexuality is "natural." Of course it is "natural" in the sense that it is a natural phenomenon. Presumably, this is not what Comrades Johnson and Hillson are referring to. One assumes that they are referring to "natural" in the sense discussed above, of what sexuality will be like under a society in which distortions of sexuality, prejudices, etc., have been eliminated.

So far, we have discussed one aspect of this question, that of the difficulty of arriving at a scientifically valid conclusion on the nature or value of homosexuality. There is a more important aspect, outlined in the memorandum. That is, that the party is a *political* organization, that does not take positions on such scientific questions, or on questions of personal preference like this. Comrades Thorstad, Green, Beren, et. al. put great emphasis on this question, calling it the "central thrust" of gay liberation movement, in "Where the National Committee Memorandum on the Gay Liberation Movement Goes Wrong."

For the party to adopt a position on the question of the value of homosexuality vis-a-vis heterosexuality would be a diversion from our purpose, as the memorandum explains. It would open the door to further debates on the nature and value of homosexuality in the party, and on other questions such as the nature and value of other sexually-related activities and desires (sadism, masochism, transvestism, fetishism, etc., all of which are raised and discussed in certain sections of the gay liberation movement—see the Gay Manifesto, for example).

The party adopts *political* positions to guide its work. The memorandum makes clear what our political position is in regard to the oppression of gay people. I repeat, this *political* position includes rejection of all "theories" that are utilized to justify that oppression. Those comrades in the discussion who belittle this position as a merely "civil liberties" one because we refuse to adopt a position on the value of homosexuality, are in reality proposing that the party begin to become something other than a political organization. They would have us become a proponent of "gayness is good"—which falls outside of our political purpose.

## 2. *The Social Weight of the Gay Liberation Movement*

The memorandum has a section that characterizes the relative social weight of the gay liberation movement. We should first clear up a misunderstanding that resulted from the memorandum's use of the word "peripheral" in the following sentence: "In our long-term strategic priorities, the gay liberation movement is much more peripheral to the central issues of the class struggle than either the women's movement or the movements of the oppressed nationalities." We have polemicized with the FAPO grouping at our last convention, and with opponents, who dismiss the struggles that have arisen in the course of the radicalization as "peripheral" to the class struggle. We deny this, and see these movements, including the gay liberation movement, as part of the class struggle against the myriad forms of capitalist oppression. But at the same time, movements on different questions against different aspects of the oppression spawned by capitalist society do not all have the same weight in the class struggle. Nor do the issues different movements raise have the same importance in the class struggle.

The gay liberation movement raises issues that taken together are relatively narrow in their scope, compared to other movements. Looking at *political* issues raised by the gay liberation movement, as outlined in the Thorstad-Green resolution, for example, we find the following:

(1) struggles against the antigay laws; (2) demands for equal rights legislation; (3) opposition to police harassment; (4) fights for campus recognition; (5) opposition to job discrimination; (6) opposition to theories promulgated by the psychiatric profession. The resolution also points to efforts by gays to utilize the elections to fight for their rights. As can be seen from this list itself, the scope of the issues raised is not the same as those raised by the women's movement or the movements of the oppressed nationalities, let alone the workers movement.

The memorandum, as quoted above, recognizes that the gay liberation movement "confronts and helps break down the reactionary morality that helps preserve class society." But the Thorstad-Green resolution exaggerates this aspect of the movement, as Comrade Mimi Harary has pointed out. The sexual morality of class society is only one aspect of the ideological props of class society, and the gay liberation movement challenges only one aspect of this sexual morality. The movement for the repeal of abortion laws, for example, implicitly challenged reactionary sexual morality as it directly affects a far wider section of the population than the gay liberation movement does.

It is true that the gay liberation movement does in some way affect every person, and the realization of any of its political goals would be a step forward for all people oppressed and exploited by capitalism. But it is directly concerned with the rights of a relatively narrow section of the population, those who are gay. While this is not an insignificant section of the population, it is not as massive as the number of women, for example, or as massive as the movements of the oppressed nationalities.

More important, our understanding of the key role of the struggle of Black people in the coming American revolution is based not only on our appreciation of the numbers of Black people and other oppressed minorities but also on their class composition and urban concentration. Black people are a large sector of the industrial working class, a sector which is raising and fighting for demands which are of central importance to the class as a whole. The potential power and effect of the struggles of Black people as the largest oppressed nationality and the most combative and class-conscious sector of the working class has already been reflected in the giant ghetto rebellions and in all aspects of the class struggle as it has unfolded.

Even if we differ on the number of gays in the population, or on how many of them will become mobilized by this movement, the scope of the movement must be characterized as considerably more narrow than the women's movement and the movements of the major oppressed nationalities.

We must also add that it remains to be seen how extensively the mass of gay people will be mobilized by the gay liberation movement, although we can expect that the movement will grow and have the support of most gays.

The Thorstad-Green resolution *deletes* this whole section on the relative social weight of the movement. Thus the door is left open for considering this movement as im-

portant for our work as these others, for example. There is a danger in this concept of refusing to objectively consider the real scope and weight of this or any other movement, and see where it fits in the generalized class struggle. That danger is to begin to slip toward *polyvanguardist* conceptions and away from the class analysis of society and the coming revolution.

Comrade Terry Hillman correctly points out that we have to start with our class analysis of society in weighing any movement and see where it fits in. We don't just merely say that we support all movements against the oppression of capitalist society—we do say that, of course, but we must say more. If we don't, then we can foster the idea that the revolution will be a sort of united front of the various protest movements, with the workers as the most important component, rather than our Marxist view that it will be a proletarian revolution, mobilizing all the oppressed as allies of the working class.

The polyvanguardist view is not supported by the main authors and supporters of the Thorstad-Green resolution, but the whole thrust of their exaggeration of the role of the gay liberation movement, and their opposition to including a clear statement on the fact that the relative social weight of this movement is considerably less than that of the women's movement and the major oppressed nationalities, opens the door to misconceptions that can lead in this direction.

The memorandum's outline of the social weight of the gay liberation movement is needed by the party, as a general guide to our propaganda, election campaigns, and our work in general.

### *3. The Present State of the Gay Liberation Movement and Our Immediate Tactical Orientation Towards It.*

The memorandum and the Thorstad-Green resolution have two opposed evaluations of the present state of the gay liberation movement. Thorstad-Green see a burgeoning movement.

But the paucity of struggles described in the Thorstad-Green resolution itself, and what has been reported about concrete struggles in last year's literary discussion on the movement, and what has been said by supporters of the Thorstad-Green resolution in this discussion, indicate that the memorandum's view of the movement is more realistic and sober. The fact is that there are not many struggles, and what struggles have occurred have been on a local basis. Where they do occur, the memorandum says that the branches should support them. We are not going to miss out on any real struggles that do occur. In this regard, we should also note that the Thorstad-Green resolution itself doesn't see big struggles with a national focus emerging in the next immediate period. As has been pointed out, "support" of such local struggles can be a wide range of things, and there is no prohibition of any form of support, such as participation, by the memorandum.

Given the current state of the gay liberation movement, the memorandum rejects a national party intervention into the movement at the present time. It indicates that the branches should not make general, standing assignments of comrades to participate in gay liberation organizations at this time. Within this framework, as and if concrete struggles occur, the branches should support them, carrying out this work in the context of the major

campaigns the party is engaged in.

Why, if the Thorstad-Green resolution itself cannot find many examples of real political struggles being carried out by the gay liberation movement at present, is there such a difference on evaluation of the present state of the movement?

I do not know the answer to this question for certain, but would speculate that it is related to the two views of the gay liberation movement that are in the memorandum and the Thorstad-Green resolution. The memorandum, in discussing the political import of the gay liberation movement, is talking about its political aspects, real struggles against the laws, against victimization of gays, for the rights of gays, etc. It rejects the view presented by Comrades Thorstad and Green that the "central thrust" or "underlying thrust" of the gay liberation movement is proving that homosexuality is just as good as heterosexuality. To the extent that this is true, it indicates a turn away from politics by the gay liberation movement.

This itself indicates how wrong the Thorstad-Green resolution is, taken as a guide to how we should intervene in this movement where that is desirable or possible. The memorandum clearly orients us to supporting real, political struggles when and if they occur in the next period. The Thorstad-Green resolution would go in the direction of participating in the movement to "prove" the statements about the value of homosexuality.

Let us take one other argument which is implied in the Thorstad-Green resolution. That is the argument that, well, maybe the movement is presently facing some problems. But if the SWP decided to vigorously intervene on a national scale in it, that would provide the necessary leadership to transform it.

Comrade Terry Hillman took up this question, and pointed out that this is not enough to decide that we should so intervene, even if true. In the first place, to think that we could by our own efforts merely step into this movement and overcome its leadership problems is dubious at best. We do not approach any movement that way. In the work we did to help build NPAC and WONAAC, for example, we saw that other significant forces were ready to move on these issues, and ready to support a united front effort. We also saw that there was a difference between the level of response to the antiwar campaign and to the abortion law repeal campaign, not because of any difference in our quality of our leadership in the two movements, but because of the different objective factors related to them. We see no immediate prospect of forming action united fronts nationally around the other issues of the women's movement at the present time (although this could rapidly change). For us to attempt to form united fronts, or to become the leadership of the gay liberation movement at this time, would most certainly fail, because the movement itself is not ready for this. And even if we grant that in certain instances we could have some modest success in mobilizing this movement, it would clearly take such effort on the part of the party as to seriously distort the priorities of the party's work in the next period.

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There is a section of the memorandum dealing with dress, certain aspects of party functions, the pressure ema-

nating from some lesbian groups that the highest form of feminism is lesbianism, and other questions. Some of these questions were raised in the literary discussion on the gay liberation movement, and are raised in the gay liberation movement itself. For these reasons, this section was included as part of the memorandum.

In the discussion, some comrades have objected to the inclusion of this section in the memorandum, feeling that it implies that gay comrades per se are more counter-culturalist than other people. This was not intended, and it should be clear (the memorandum itself states this) that this section is not about gay liberation and should be seen as dealing with a separate point. Comrades should remember that one of the purposes of the memorandum was to evaluate the points raised in the party's literary discussion, and this topic was one of those. Comrades supporting the Thorstad-Green resolution have stated that they supported the content of this section, although they object to its being included in the memorandum. It should

be made clear that the national committee, in voting for this section, was voting for its content, and in no way for any implication that gay comrades or gay people in general are more prone to counter-culturalism than others, and that if the convention votes to adopt the political resolution as it now stands on this point, it should be interpreted in this sense.

Finally, we should note that the memorandum does not pretend to be a full resolution or analysis of gay liberation. It is intended to make clear our political position on the oppression of gay people; clarify our general view of the social weight of this movement to help guide our work, proportions and priorities; and outline our tactical intervention in the movement at the present time in light of the real state of the movement.

The Thorstad-Green resolution, while containing many things that are good, presents a wrong line for the party and for the gay liberation movement itself.

July 29, 1973

## SOME PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL INTEREST IN ETHNOLOGY

by R. Vernon, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

1. It would be helpful to distinguish the political characteristics (interests, biases, areas of tolerance) of four potential audiences for our views on ethnological topics (comrades, feminists, feminist social-anthropologists, materialist social-anthropologists), ignoring overlap between these audiences for the time being.

A. *Comrades*. We are a revolutionary political party, not a society of seekers of truth-for-its-own-sake pertaining to primitive peoples and pre-history, and the overwhelming majority of comrades are justifiably interested in ethnological topics only insofar as political points helpful to the building of the party, and the validation of Marxist theory and method, are concerned. There is a heavy political investment in the vindication of Engels and also in the vindication of Evelyn Reed, whose views are presented to our periphery outside the party, and internationally, in a manner reflecting apparent unanimity and quasi-official status. The many comrades who are skeptical of matriarchalist views, or who reject them outright, apparently do not feel there is anything of *political interest* that would counter those views, or compensate politically for them.

B. *Feminists*. Many, but not all, feminists respond favorably to matriarchalist views. Those who voice outright rejection of the SWP citing rejection of E. Reed's views as the reason are most likely politically opposed to the SWP for other reasons. The fact that the SWP is interested in the subject at all, and that one of its leading spokespersons argues forcefully on the subject, appears to be a positive recommendation for many feminists. The matriarchalist points of most general interest are of course the status and contributions of women in pre-history and

among primitive peoples, and not irrelevant technical questions such as whether or not all human societies passed through a stage of matrilineal clans prior to patrilineal clans ushering in a sudden and catastrophic patriarchalization.

C. *Feminist Social-Anthropologists*. Aside from the problems women professionals have to face in any field, those in the social sciences are confronted with the problem of what relevance and enlightenment the research findings in their science bear for women. Problems in the area of studies of primitive peoples (ethnography) and in comparative ethnology include: status of women in the diverse cultures around the globe, cross-cultural synchronic and diachronic studies of women's labor, social roles, problems, etc., suitable methods of research and needed innovations in areas traditionally neglected, the effects of major social, political, and economic changes on women's role and status, and the pseudo-problem of "the matriarchy." Except for the last point, these are uncharted regions, and the difficulties are formidable.

Microsociological and psychological research is of much greater importance in cross-cultural studies of women than in ethnography in general, but it is precisely in psychological research and in sociology of small groups that idealist methods and concepts reign triumphant and virtually unchallenged. (Most scholars with a materialist bent focus on problems in the large: long-term changes in societies, energy input-output analysis of entire cultures, operation of major causal determinants, the state and political structuring, etc.)

Demolishing matriarchalist theories and conjectures is

child's play for any professional social-anthropologist, but what follows is relative indifference to women's studies problems of the type referred to in the above paragraph. This indifference, plus patriarchalist attitudes and contempt for women, is a constant irritant, and refuels suspicion that there "must be something" in the matriarchalist domain. The thoroughness with which matriarchalism, as the weakest link in the chain of interest in women's history, is shattered nurtures the illusion that matriarchalism is what most upsets or bugs patriarchalist social-anthropologists (analogously, ultraleftists cite the ruling class' fulminations and vituperations against trashing and petty violence as proof of what the ruling class is most afraid of and proof of their correct tactics). Comrades should read "Matriarchy: As Women See It" by social-anthropologist students Esther Newton and Paula Webster in APHRA (vol. 4, No. 3, Summer 1973) to get a feel of the extent of idealist disorientation this reaction can lead to.

D. *Materialist social-anthropologists.* An earlier article (DB, vol. 31, no. 20) mentioned some American ethnologists inclined toward (their idea of) Marxism and (their idea of) materialism, and the potential importance to us of such a trend in the groves of academe. That is certainly not exhaustive, and must include Eleanor Leacock and Kathleen Gough, who consider themselves Marxist and whose interests also overlap with feminism. Soviet ethnologists also fit in here. Unfortunately, there is no adequate literature by or about Soviet ethnologists in English, but I recommend that all comrades sooner or later get around to reading the following monographs, even if they have had no special strong interest in ethnological topics:

*Evolution of Culture*, Service, Sahlins, Harding. U. of Michigan, 1960.

*The Rise of Anthropological Theory*. Marvin Harris. Crowell, 1968.

*Primitive Social Organization*, Elman Service. Random House, 1962.

*Social Structure*, Geo. P. Murdock. Macmillan, 1949.

*The Evolution of Political Society*, Morton Fried. Random House, 1967.

*Formation of the State*, L. Krader. Prentice Hall, 1968.

*Culture Theory*, D. Kaplan, R. Manners. Prentice Hall, 1972.

[Murdock is neither evolutionist nor materialist, but his dominant interest in statistical cross-cultural data make his work of vital interest in this area.]

## 2. *Trivial Male Dominance Among Primates*

One of the most current and popular fallacies, among social scientists (sociologists, social-anthropologists, animal ethnologists) and in the general public, is the supposedly proven male dominance among primates. It is only in the past two decades that field studies of the social life and habits of free-ranging and wild primates have been studied by scientifically valid methods (chimpanzees by Jane Van Goodall-Lawick, mountain gorillas by Geo. Schaller, baboons by Hall and DeVore, langurs by Phyllis Jay, Japanese macaques (*Macaca fuscata*) by Imanishi, Kawamura, Kawai, Sugiyama, Frisch, rhesus by Koford, vervets by Gartlan and Brain, etc.).

Most of these fieldworkers report patterns of male dominance—dominance of males over other males and over all or most females. This can be "proved" scientifically, on the basis of such operationalized definitions as "An individual is said to be dominant over another when it has priority

in feeding, sexual and locomotor behavior and when it is superior in aggressiveness and in group control to another or other individuals." (C. R. Carpenter, "Societies of Monkeys and Apes," *Biological Symposia*, vol. 8, 177, 1942.)

The "dominant" silverback mountain gorilla exerts his "dominance" by taking initiative in leading the troop out of a particular location or in selecting the nesting area for the night. There is no other manifestation of male "dominance"—all gorillas take care of their own feeding (except infants dependent on their mothers). Smaller gorillas of either sex yield way to bigger gorillas of either sex, female gorillas as observed by Schaller initiate coitus with what males they damn well feel like, even in the presence of old "dominant" silverback patriarch, and both sexes do the Tarzan chest-thumping display.

Goodall reports "submissive" female chimpanzees and "aggressive dominant" males in her work, the "submissiveness" consisting in the fact that females engage in sociable and conciliatory gesture to big, bad, aggressive, dominant male chimps far more often than vice-versa. (*In the Shadow of Man*; also article in NY Times magazine, Feb. 18, 1973.)

Jay, Hall, Goodall, Schaller, et al., are in agreement that "dominance interactions" are rare, and offer no other evidence (control of the food supply and living areas, idle bosses and busy workers, females doing all the housework) that would convey a meaning of nontrivial dominance to us. Yet Goodall concludes definitively that "primates live in male-dominated groups" (NY Times, *ibid.*).

Like the Red queen, scientists have the right to define terms and constructs to mean whatever they choose them to mean, nothing more and nothing less—so long as the usage is consistent and unambiguous. But new problems arise when a term has its scientifically prescribed and delimited meaning, and a different and readily confusable meaning in the discourse of ordinary speech. Primate ethnologists have every right to define as "dominance" whatever pattern of trivial primate behavior they choose—but they are perpetrating an abuse of language and scientific procedure if they mix that up with the meanings of the term in ordinary language, or with other usages of the term in other contexts.

For instance, Walter Goldschmidt defines "social class": "We may accept the minimal definition that a social class is a segment of the community, the members of which show a common social position in a hierarchical ranking. Class is differentiated from status in that the latter suggests a range and continuum, while class connotes a degree of unity and some form of homogeneity among its members" (*Amer. Anthropologist*, vol. 52, 491, 1950).

That's a nice definition of something; but it would be absurd to use that to refute the Marxist theory of class struggle, as if our definition of "class" was the same as Goldschmidt's collection of words. The use of "dominance" as a term to describe primate behavior (perhaps "sociability index" would be a better, less ambiguous, term for Goodall's "submissiveness in female chimpanzees") is bound to lead to such fallacious extensions, unless caution against abuse of the term is made specifically and repeatedly. The lack of any such caution is compelling evidence of the very human dominant-male bias affecting scientists who I am sure desire to be scrupulously honest and perceive themselves as such.

An analogous abuse of language is the use of the term *social structure* in social-anthropology to denote pattern

of filiation, post-marital residence, kinship terms, kinship etiquette, etc., while the term is simultaneously used (and therefore abused) in its ordinary-language meaning (what *we* would think of as *social structure*: the structure of society, major institutions, major diagnostic keys in assessing the level of development of a society). This type of semantic fallacy seems to be almost as common in the social sciences (sometimes even in the physical sciences) as in politics.

#### 4. *Male Dominance Among Primitives*

Sloppy formulations of male dominance also crop up in ethnographic studies, where very real patterns of male dominance are described, and not only in stratified and class societies. But there is no operationalized cross-culturally valid, intersubjectively consistent definition of male dominance to go by. Such a complex definition is one of the tools desperately needed for further progress on this topic. Without the insights that can be provided by feminists, but that would have to be disciplined within the framework of ethnographic science, instances of male dominance will be perceived where it is spurious or trivial (e.g., swaggering talk on the part of males in a culture where they exercise no such exclusive and abusive power in actual practice), or else male dominance will be ignored or denied entirely even when it is glaringly obvious to any conscious feminist observer (as happens in everyday life among us).

One interesting criterion of nontrivial male dominance is the relative rights enjoyed by the two spouses in initiating separation and divorce. "Family stability in non-European cultures," a paper on this topic by G. P. Murdock (Ann. Amer. Acad. Polit. Soc. Sci., vol. 22, 195, 1950) compares data referable to forty such cultures around the globe. The husband's rights grossly overshadow the wife's in six of these cultures, and the wife has a clear edge in four cultures in the sample. Prerogatives are about equal, a little more or less in one respect or another, in all of the other cultures in the sample. Half of the sample show higher divorce rates than in the US in 1950, with no sign of the "nuclear family coming apart at the seams."

Murdock concludes: "Perhaps the most striking conclusion from the study is the extraordinary extent to which human societies accord to both sexes an approximately equal right to initiate divorce. In thirty of the forty cultures surveyed it was impossible to detect any substantial difference in the rights of men and women to terminate an unsatisfactory alliance. The stereotype of the oppressed aboriginal woman proved to be a complete myth."

I would also conclude: (1) a study of 400 cultures would be more enlightening and more conclusive, but credit is due to Murdock for initiating such studies; (2) a correlation check I made with the *World Ethnographic Atlas* (Murdock, Amer. Anthropologist, vol. 59, 664, 1957) shows all four societies in which wives have the distinct edge in divorce-initiating prerogatives to be patrilocal (Kwoma [New Guinea], Fon [Dahomey], Yurok [California], Witoto [Amazonia]), the first two also featuring patrilineal systems; and no significant correlation of filiation and post-marital residence with this aspect of women's status in the rest of the sample; (3) Murdock's conclusion above seems to be for him one mildly interesting fact, among a multiplicity of other intriguing ethnographic

facts, such as how the Ifugao, Hanunoo, and Kalinga in the Philippines classify colors, diseases, and local plants. In contrast, our (SWP, E. Reed, myself) political bias and interests would lead us to consider this evidence of lack of oppression of women, at least by this criterion, a striking and crucial conclusion, and our inclination is to shout it from the rooftops.

5. *Vestiges*. Matriarchalist dissertations rely heavily on presumed vestiges, survivals, or residues as alleged proofs of the previous existence of matriarchal structures and customs in since-modified cultures and societies. Many institutions, structures and customs leave behind vestiges, relics, or fossils, that can be recognized with some exercise of ingenuity. But recourse to alleged vestiges can be, and has been, used to prove anything and everything in tautological arguments, which is to say it often proves nothing.

Malinowski, in *Scientific Theory of Culture*, lays down an anathema against the use and abuse of vestiges, claiming that anything that still has a demonstrable use or function cannot be treated as a vestige.

This is going too far. Vestiges of the past do exist, and are certainly palpable as heuristic devices in the context of discovery. They are dangerously misleading in the context of validation, and evidence that such items really are vestiges of something past is required, not just the assertion. I would illustrate the point by two examples.

Vestige No. 1: the "w" in the English spelling of "two" is a vestige of a former pronunciation of the labialized glide "w" (as in "twig"). This vestige is a valid one, because comparative evidence from other related languages shows the number "two" frequently pronounced as dental + glide + vowel (dva, dua, twee), with some languages losing the glide as English does, and some exhibiting both forms (e.g., Lithuanian). The known history of English (Anglo-Saxon) offers confirmation, and we still pronounce the "w" in: *twelve, twin, between, twain*.

Vestige No. 2: systems of clans organized as moieties (phratries) often go out of business with two totemic moieties functioning for an extended time only as opposing sides in games, get-togethers, contests. *In the US, the two big political parties are symbolized by the Donkey and the Elephant, which are obviously vestiges of totemic moieties in the primeval American matriarchal clan structure*. This "vestige" is every bit as valid in structure as many of its type submitted in the early ethnological literature (or in my DB article, vol. 29, no. 23). It is preposterous because in this one instance we know the premises to be invalid beforehand.

6. *Sudden catastrophic patriarchalization?* The Bachofen-Morgan theory distinctly postulates a sudden catastrophic transition from "matriarchy" to patriarchal society. This corollary is in general just as invalid as the mechanism posited for the transition (sudden metamorphosis of matrilineal systems into patrilineal systems). But however suddenly or gradually, whether germinating from within a society or imposed from without, there is no mistaking the general trend toward patriarchalization in the development of class societies.

Comrade Garrett has presented an interesting argument (DB, vol. 31, no. 7) emphasizing full-time intensive militarism over pastoralism as a major causal impetus to patriarchalization. Curiously, Garrett ignores one form of "cattle" which clearly correlates with both militarism

and pastoralism: the horse. Domestication of the horse by Indo-European, Turkic, and Mongol peoples played an enormous part in the history of Asia and Europe from 2000 BC on. A laboratory test case came about when the horse was introduced to the plains of western North America, and the Chaco and Pampas of South America. Within decades, Native Americans in those areas mastered the breeding, training, economic, and military use of horses, and transformed many aspects of their cultures concomitantly. The effects on political organization and on the status of women in the case of the Dakota, Apsaroka [Crow], Cheyenne, Shoshoni, Comanche, Blackfeet have been illustrated by Wissler, Ewers, Mishkin (*Rank and warfare among the plains Indians*, Amer. Ethnol. Soc. monograph no. 3, 1940), by Wallace and Hoebel, Lowie, Grinnell. An excellent review of the subject has been compiled by the Soviet matriarchalist Y. P. Averkieva, *Indeiskoe Kochevoe Obshchestvo XVIII-XIX vv.* [Indian nomadic society of the XVIII and XIX centuries], 1970. Similar information on the Lengua, Choroti, Chiriguano, etc. of the Chaco, and on the Tehuelche, Puelche, and Mapuche in the Argentine Pampas, available in scattered papers, is not yet collected in an accessible source or review monograph.

7. *Egalitarian golden age?* One aspect of the method employed by Morgan and Engels (but not by Bachofen) which is of enormous value is the method of examining the data of the ethnographic present (or very recent past) as a basis for inferences on pre-history. The ethnographic data do not present a perfect unmarred picture of the remote past, but they are almost the only data we have. In attempting to assess questions disputed by comrades (Garrett, Reed, Vernon) rash enough to project themselves as knowledgeable on these complex subjects, most comrades would have to seek evidence based on the ethnographic data, linked by plausible theory and logic, and at least have the right to demand that the disputing "experts" present in evidence their hard, reliable data, or indicate where it can be found and corroborated.

Garrett (DB, vol. 31, no. 5) feels that it is impermissible to project conscious egalitarian concepts and preferences onto primitive peoples, even if it can be demonstrated that their cultures have no institutionalized or consistent mechanisms of oppression and social inequality, and that egalitarianism is an idea or ideal that can arise only in societies where social equality is absent and therefore sorely desired. Reed's reply (DB, vol. 31, no. 14) does not answer the specific question posed by Garrett of what goes on *in the minds* of peoples living in such relatively egalitarian cultures.

Fortunately, some relevant ethnographic data do exist in this case, in reliable direct quotes from the mouths of such people. Explicit attachment to social equality as a positive virtue is expressed in quotes cited in Reed's *Problems of Women's Liberation* and in Leacock's introduction to Engels' *Origins*. . . . Such attitudes have been expressed by Canadian Algonkians, Iroquois, African Pygmies, Eskimo, probably many other peoples. The evidence is not conclusive, since possible a majority of primitive peoples readily prefer Coca-Cola, transistor radios, and weekly wages to their old ways, as soon as they get a change to make a real comparison—only a statistical survey of the available worldwide data on either side of the question could settle the matter.

8. *Gynocracy?* Most matriarchalists (Bachofen, McLen-

nan, Morgan, Lippert, Frazer, Briffault, Graves, Davis, Diner) defend the concept of Amazons and societies in the past in which women ruled as a sex. (Briffault has a disclaimer opening chapter 8 of *The Mothers*, but he soon gets down to business.) Engels, and Reed, steer clear of such formulations.

Here again, the data relevant to the case are what counts, not what individual comrades would or would not like to retroject onto the past. Admittedly, it would look bad for Marxists to advocate a society in which women oppressed men, but if such a society could be proved to exist, that would be an empirical fact that would have to be dealt with. The total absence to date of any reliable data on existence of gynocratic societies puts the probability of such societies ever existing near zero (this was not certain in Engels' time), but we know of no law definitively ruling out the existence of such societies.

We neither advocate nor reject—as utopian preferences—the possibility that whites may have been oppressed by blacks somewhere, but when that turns out to be the case, as in Moorish rule in Spain, raids on the coasts of France and Italy by African pirates and tyrants circa 1000AD, or the surrender of the Byzantine Greeks in Egypt to a black Arab general (Hitti, *History of the Arabs*), these, if verified, become empirical facts that are part of the materialist heritage. Nor could we advocate for the past anything as outlandish as a society with an all-female shadow bureaucracy dual to the ruling all-male bureaucracy, plus a 5000-woman fighting army, but that is precisely what existed in Dahomey (West Africa) a couple of centuries ago (M. Herskovits, *Economic Anthropology*).

If reliable evidence of a gynocratic society ever did turn up (say, unambiguously and reliably described in some hitherto unexcavated ruins of an ancient literate culture in Iraq or Mexico), it would be fascinating news not only to matriarchalists, but to all ethnologists, who would be dying to examine the details of this ethnographic curiosity, just as biologists were fascinated by news of the appearance of a living coelacanth.

9. *Ignorance of paternity?* Comrade Reed has restated (DB, vol. 31, no. 14) the "long-established fact that primitive peoples did not know the connection between sexual intercourse and the birth of children," invoking this "fact" in support of a universal stage of "matriarchy."

This "long-established" (pre-Boas) fact also requires statistical inquiry: how many hunting and gathering peoples, and how many early-agricultural peoples, entertain such illusions? And how many don't? In how many does that "ignorance" coexist with traditional practical knowledge of pregnancy terms and paternity? Overriding these considerations is the colossal irrelevance of the "fact" to the point being made: all of the peoples apparently ignorant of the facts of paternity are well acquainted with fathers, nuclear families, patrilineal kin, and many of them live in virilocal bands (Australians), have patrilocal post-marital residence (Trobrianders), patrilineages (Yap), and patrilineal clans (New Guinea).

The example of fairly advanced Yap, with its intensive agriculture and socially differentiated caste structure, is instructive. "Prior to the German administration of Yap [1900], the ideology was that coitus had no bearing on conception. Conception was the reward arranged by happy ancestral ghosts, who intervened with a particular spirit to bestow pregnancy on a deserving woman. The bond between father and child, therefore, had no biological content. Even in 1947 this ideology had not been

gravely altered. Despite the knowledge imparted by Germans, Japanese, and Americans, the official line on this matter had not been altered in any significant degree, partly because the Yaps themselves tended to take an attitude of indifference to it. It was an interesting piece of information which might well be true, but it was irrelevant to any matters of significance on Yap and it was not integrated into the ideology of patrilineal relationships at the time I was there." (D. Schneider, "Double descent on Yap," *J. Polynes. Soc.*, vol. 71, no. 1, 1962).

Membership in one's patrilineage is a most important social fact for Yapese, since it defines status, rank, and privilege in local politics, and most of all since it legitimates claims on land. The ideology of the mechanics of paternity is irrelevant to the development and importance of the corporate patrilineage kin groups, as the Yapese themselves state.

10. *Matri-patri-transitions*. There are no valid operationalized criteria extant for estimating the probability, time scale, and concomitant conditions of transitions in filiation. Since a slow process stretching over generations would be most likely involved in pre-capitalist eras, and such transitions cannot be pinpointed in-process in the present day, it would be helpful to devise a suitable experiment to explore and test hypotheses on such transitions.

The expansion of the Bantu peoples might afford such a test. Archeological, linguistic, cultural, and anthropological data concur on a pattern of vigorous expansion by a people originally located in the Nigerian area into the whole of the southern third of Africa within the past two millenia. The area occupied was apparently previously sparsely populated by Pygmies (Kongo rain forests) and Khoisan peoples (Hottentots, Bushmen). Important cultural mixing occurred on the northern fringes of the area with Nilotic tribes and on Malagasy with Indonesians. Mixing with Pygmies is insignificant (baHutu, baTwa), and all except a few Bantu (baKalahari, mountain Damara) are anthropologically distinct from the Khoisan.

Despite their many uniform features, basic cultural and linguistic unity, and demonstrable common origin, Bantu peoples display a whole spectrum of "social structures" (variations in filiation, post-marital residence patterns, etc.). Matrilineans: waBemba, waIla, waKongo, waKuba, waLamba, waLuimbe (all of them patrilocal); patrilineans: Pondo, maShona, Sotho, baThonga, abaZulu, Ngoni, Kikuyu, Fang (Pangwe), abaGanda, baLuba; double de-

scend: oviHerero, Mbundu. These traits would have to be correlated against other traits, historical events, or economic and technological criteria relevant to the problem. The application of statistical weights, and the differing statistical models resulting from lack of agreement among students handling such a problem on the relative importance of criteria and reliability of evidence available, would render the problem unmanageable unless programmed for an electronic computer.

Anyone who would seek to place the Bachofen-Morgan matri-patri-transition schema on a firm scientific footing would have to put some such research program to work, or devise a better one.

11. *Pseudoproblems*. Precise formulation of problems is an important step in any investigative process. Species of pseudoproblems which do not even lend themselves to precise and unambiguous formulation would include, in my judgement, problems such that:

1) Concepts and constructs stated in the problem are inadequately defined . . . the relationship to existing relevant data and theory, particularly contradicting theory, is inadequately defined . . . semantic ambiguities and self-deception affect crucial areas of the problem;

2) The problem is trivial and not central to the issues in dispute . . . the experiment proposed to test the hypothesis is not suitably designed to yield answers to the problem or overall research goal . . . ;

3) No viable research strategy is considered or developed for arriving at testable solutions;

4) Insufficient data are available with which to verify or refute the hypotheses under consideration or implied . . .

5) Counterexamples and refutations are already on record . . . an adequate opposing theory is already established and buttressed by ample verifications and subsequent developments . . . the problem or experiment does not represent a new and more adequate approach capable of superseding the established opposing theory.

In my view, the problem of "the matriarchy" as formulated to date rates as a pseudoproblem under criteria (1), (3), and partially (5) [refutations are plentiful, but an adequate theory of human sociogenesis has yet to be constructed; Marxist historical-materialist methodology is potentially adequate to the problem, if anything is, but matriarchalism has little or nothing in common with Marxist methodology].

July 27, 1973

## WHY WE MUST TAKE THE CORRECT STANDS ON GAY LIBERATION

by John Lauritsen, Upper West Side Branch,  
New York Local

Although an abundance of material on gay liberation has appeared in discussion bulletins over the past two years, recent discussions on gay liberation have made me aware that not even the most basic facts are yet completely understood or accepted by many comrades. Perhaps the sheer bulk of material has proved confusing—a case of not being able to see the forest for the trees.

So what I'd like to attempt is a summary of what I think is important to an understanding of gay liberation.

I'm going to give a capsule description of what I think represents a correct Marxist approach to gay liberation, and what is the state of factual knowledge on the subject. And then, I'll give reasons why the party must take a forthright stand that homosexuality *per se* is not sick,



not decadent, not depraved, and not unnatural—in sum, that a homosexual orientation is in no way less valid or inferior to an exclusively heterosexual orientation.

#### *Two ways of viewing the taboo on homosexuality*

The antihomosexuality statutes of medieval and modern times are full of such phrases as "unnatural intercourse," "unnatural crimes," "infamous crime against nature," and "abominable and detestable crime against nature." Opposing these codifications of their oppression and the premises behind them, gay liberationists have raised such slogans as "Gay Is Good." This confrontation is at the heart of the gay liberation fight. It has raised basic questions on which revolutionists must be prepared to take stands.

As Marxists we approach social questions in a particular way—with a historical perspective, a class analysis, a materialist philosophy, and a commitment to scientific objectivity, this must also be our approach for the gay liberation movement.

I think it may clarify things to take the *taboo* on homosexuality as a focal point. The taboo is easier to see in historical terms than is homosexuality itself. Whereas homosexual love has been practised in all human societies of which we have record, and among all classes and types of people, the taboo on homosexuality is a historical variable.

Broadly speaking, there are two ways one might view the taboo on homosexuality.

*Viewpoint one.* The taboo on homosexuality is an inherent and unchangeable characteristic of humankind. Something which occurs spontaneously in human society. Correspondingly, homosexuality is very likely some form of depravity, disease, or malfunction. If this view be held, then the historic persecutions of gay people, although excessive and inhumane, would nevertheless be understandable as the response of healthy people to loathsome and unnatural behavior.

or,

*Viewpoint two.* Historically, the taboo on homosexuality has not always been a part of human culture. Rather, antigay attitudes and practices are limited in time and space, and derive from particular moral traditions. These moral traditions were the result of specific forms of social and economic organization. The taboo on homosexuality is therefore not an eternal feature of human society, but a transitory historical phenomenon.

The first viewpoint reflects classic idealism, with its assumptions of unchanging human nature and "eternal truths." This first viewpoint is the one behind the antigay myths and laws of our society.

The second viewpoint is the approach for materialists. Its perspective is historical. It also happens to be fully backed up by facts, whereas there's not a scrap of evidence to support the first viewpoint.

And on a political level, the second is obviously the only approach that would lead us to solidarise ourselves with the gay liberation movement and with gay pride, a motive force behind it.

#### *The state of knowledge about homosexuality*

How much do we know about homosexual behavior? According to the memorandum on gay liberation, not

much. The memorandum claims, ". . . the whole question of the scientific investigation of sexuality and the related one of psychology is still in its infancy. Especially concerning homosexuality, little is known, and it is difficult to ascertain what is objectively based and what represents prejudice in what knowledge is available."

Let's take the claim that the scientific investigation of sexuality "is still in its infancy." Obviously, "infancy" is a relative term. I am not sure what was meant by it, or indeed why it was used at all.

In my opinion we have plenty of information to take the stands that need to be taken, on a scientific basis, once the appropriate hypotheses have been formulated.

Only the rather bourgeoisified field of psychology was mentioned in the memorandum, presumably as an appropriate tool for a Marxist analysis—psychology, which by its very nature is concerned with speculation about consciousness inside individual heads. Gay liberationists justifiably consider psychiatric quacks to be enemies who provide a modern rationalization for continued oppression. Why did the memorandum not mention more objective disciplines—disciplines concerned with *practice*—such as history, anthropology, zoology, and statistical research? History, for instance, which shows that homosexuality was practised in the earliest civilizations, that it was exalted in a considerable amount of early art and literature, and that the persecution of homosexuality reached its greatest intensity in societies with a Judeo-Christian tradition? Or anthropology and ethnology, which show that many of the world's societies tolerate or encourage some forms of homosexual behavior? Or zoology, which shows that homosexual behavior can be found in every species of mammals that has been extensively studied, and that the higher one goes on the evolutionary scale, the more frequent it becomes? Or statistical research, where the massive studies of Kinsey demonstrate that homosexual responsiveness is a feature of the human animal.

#### *The class function of morality*

I'm going to jump a bit to give a quick sketch of how gay liberation fits into the class struggle, how class morality, among whose victims are gays, helps keep the rulers in power.

The concrete aspects of gay oppression are certainly as harrowing as anything in the roster of atrocities committed to uphold class rule. Even now, gays are denied basic democratic rights which virtually everyone else has, at least on paper. Gays don't legally have the right to a job, housing, the right to be in public places. Gays are potentially denied even the right to live—that is, the right not to be tortured, castrated, or lobotomised as "sexual psychopaths"; not to be imprisoned for "unnatural crimes," or not to be assaulted and blackmailed.

But beyond these very real injustices, the antigay myths serve an integral role in the prevailing ideology—the official morality—the "eternal truths"—which make people toe the line and which veil the true mysteries, the political-economic relations of capitalist society. The ramifications of gay oppression go far beyond the sexual sphere; they affect the consciousness of everyone.

Marxists do battle in the ideological sphere, as well as in arenas of immediate struggle. Our ideas are weapons in the class war. I think these passages from Trotsky's essay *Their Morals And Ours*, are a good summary

of how Marxists view morality:

"Morality is one of the ideological functions in this [class] struggle. The ruling class forces *its* ends upon society and habituates it into considering all those means which contradict its ends as immoral. That is the chief function of official morality. It pursues the idea of the 'greatest possible happiness' not for the majority but for a small and ever diminishing minority. Such a regime could not have endured for even a week through force alone. It needs the cement of morality . . . .

"Whoever does not care to return to Moses, Christ, or Mohammed; whoever is not satisfied with eclectic *hodge-podges* must acknowledge that morality is a product of social development; that there is nothing invariable about it; that it serves social interests; that these interests are contradictory; that morality more than any other form of ideology has a class character . . . .

"The bourgeoisie, which far surpasses the proletariat in the completeness and irreconcilability of its class consciousness, is vitally interested in imposing *its* moral philosophy upon the exploited masses. It is exactly for this purpose that the concrete norms of the bourgeois catechism are concealed under moral abstractions patronized by religion, philosophy, or that hybrid which is called 'common sense'. The appeal to abstract norms is not a disinterested philosophic mistake but a necessary element in the mechanics of class deception. The exposure of this deceit which retains the tradition of thousands of years is the first duty of a proletarian revolutionist."

*Why we must take a stand that homosexuality is not sick, decadent, unnatural, or otherwise inferior*

For at least five reasons:

*One*—the FACTS. When we say that homosexual behavior is not inferior, we are making a true statement. Much of this evidence was summarised in the literary discussion, whereas no evidence against this position was offered in the entire literary discussion or in the memorandum. For any comrades who'd like to learn more, a good start would be Wainwright Churchill's *Homosexual Behavior Among Males* and Ford and Beach's *Patterns Of Sexual Behavior* (both available in paperback). The two Kinsey studies are also valuable.

*Two.* Not taking a stand would lead to an inadequate approach to gay liberation. It would limit the party to a civil rights approach rather than championing the aim of the gay liberation movement for full acceptance of homosexual behavior.

*Three.* Such a stand is necessary for us to relate to the correct slogans and demands of the gay liberation movement. To take just one slogan, "Gay Is Good" is a political statement that calls upon closeted gays to come out of their closets, to join in united struggle against oppression. Gay Is Good further represents a breaking through into consciousness of the *truth* — the realization that all of the sickness, depravity and decadence theories are nothing but superstitious crap without a bit of foundation in the real world. Gay Is Good is a slogan we ought to support.

*Four.* This stand is necessary to differentiate us completely from the Stalinists. It is common knowledge in the gay movement and among gays generally that gays are oppressed in the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other countries that call themselves "socialist." The Stalinist myths about "decadence" and that homosexuality will "wither away" under socialism are also widely known. We have got to make it absolutely clear that the Stalinist myths and practices are contrary to Marxism and that we have no part of them. We should also show in our literature that Stalinist antigay practices represent a reversal of previous socialist stands. [See *The Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935)* by John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 31 No. 10.]

*Five.* This is the very basis and starting point of a Marxist analysis.

Historically, gay people were not persecuted because of the revulsion good, decent, healthy people felt at loathsome and unnatural deeds. No. Gays were persecuted in the name of theologically derived concepts of morality. These moral concepts did not mysteriously spring out of nowhere, they were not accidents. These moral concepts originated in the interests of class rule, they acted as powerful supports for class rule, for three thousand years they have perpetuated and they continue to perpetuate class rule.

July 28, 1973

## SOME PREPARATORY NOTES FOR A TRADE UNION RESOLUTION

by Guy Miller and Ted Stacy (Internationalist Tendency)  
Chicago Branch

### *Introduction*

This contribution "Some Preparatory Notes for a Trade Union Resolution" is submitted by the Internationalist Tendency as an initial contribution to a thorough and full discussion of what we consider a vital necessity to the party at this time, i.e., a detailed method to implement a program of action in the organized working class.

It will be the recommendation of our tendency at the convention that a literary discussion be opened in the wake of the convention around this question. It is our

position that this question is a priority and that a party that held a literary question on the gay liberation movement can well afford a discussion to arrive at a trade union resolution, particularly if that party's reason for existence is to lead the working class to victory over capitalism.

### *Some Preparatory Notes for a Trade Union Resolution*

1) As the Internationalist Tendency political resolution outlines, the crisis of imperialism is insoluble. There will be inevitable attacks on the organizations of the workers

in the coming period. We must begin a specific discussion on how to implement the transitional program in the trade unions today, that is the purpose of this contribution. Due to necessity this contribution will be somewhat schematic and comrades must keep in mind that we are confining ourselves to the economic defense organizations of the workers, the trade unions.

2) The generational turnover in the workforce has combined with the socio/political developments of the 1960s to create a radicalized layer increasingly receptive to our ideas. This layer is unmarked by a capitalist witchhunt, depression or a major working class defeat. No longer do we see the organized workers as an unquestioning, stagnant monolith. Instead we see questions being asked, the stagnation turning into life and the monolith starting to crack. This changing composition of the unions will pose an obstacle to the ruling class' economic strategy.

3) The capitalist class attack on the unions will be primarily through the following devices:

- a. incomes policies
- b. inflation
- c. legislation
- d. runaway shops
- e. speed-up
- f. propaganda attacks against foreign competition
- g. the direct intervention of the state
- h. the indirect intervention of the state through "progressive" schemes
- i. the further incorporation of the union bureaucracy with the capitalist state

A variant of the last example was the collaboration of the United Transportation Union bureaucracy with the Penn Central Railroad Company. In this instance the UTU bureaucrats encouraged the workers to put in *free* overtime for the company in an effort to save their jobs.

On the other hand, apart from the more or less frontal attacks on the workers, the capitalists are capable of utilizing the "carrot" to entice the workers to take more "interest" in their jobs and thus more interest in increasing productivity. An example of the "carrot" approach is the so-called "enrichment" programs. From the giant GM corporation, to a tiny 50-worker unit of Monsanto Corporation, in Pensacola, Florida, literally hundreds of companies have initiated "enrichment" programs to give workers a sense of identification with their work situations.

Capitalist experimentation with the two-pronged "carrot and stick" technique will increase as the contradictions of imperialism become more acute.

4) The ruling class attack on the organized workers has met with varied responses which reveal growing combativity. It is necessary to examine several work-actions in order to show their similarities and differences and because these actions represent general trends.

a. The 1971 Lordstown strike: The Lordstown plant represented the conscious ruling class policy of removing the production units from the old urban centers to relatively unindustrialized areas. In this new environment GM was able to institute speed-up and other schemes to increase productivity. The workers hired in this new facility were mostly under thirty and many were Vietnam veterans. No long-standing entrenched bureaucracy had developed.

Despite every effort of the UAW bureaucracy to isolate the strike, its dynamic carried to other plants, particularly the Norwood facility. The deep frustration and militancy of the strikers indicate to us that the vanguard of the radicalization has changed its address. However, without the day-to-day involvement of our cadre in such plants,

it will be impossible to gain the allegiance of these advanced workers.

b. The 1970 Postal Workers strike: This strike occurred in the government sector where it was illegal from its inception. The government intervened directly with troops in an effort to break the strike. From the beginning the Black postal workers were in the vanguard of this wildcat strike. One of the results of the strike was the increased authority of the postal workers unions as viable organizations. The leadership of this action arose from the rank and file; if our comrades had been part of this process, the reputation of the SWP would have been enhanced.

c. The 1973 Shell strike: The oil, chemical and atomic workers struck several oil refineries early in 1973. Nearly all of the disputes were quickly settled. The outstanding strike was/is against Royal Dutch Shell. In this instance we had comrades in the union. The union bureaucracy lined up with the ruling class in this instance by portraying the Shell company as "bad" because it was foreign owned. This has had some impact within the union. The union took the strike into the community via billboards and ads while at the same time systematically isolating it; first from the other companies and second by settling part of the Shell units before the others. The bureaucracy refused to mobilize the rank and file in support of the Shell workers. Our intervention was limited to interviews in *The Militant* and a few campaign statements. With a higher level of organization, we would have been able to develop meaningful united actions.

We cite these examples along with the Farmworkers strike, the Mead strike, the NYC municipal workers strike and others to show that there have been new developments in the economic struggles of the organized workers. These openings would allow the party to begin to integrate itself into areas where the workers are struggling—starting at the present level of the struggle—and then developing into a major factor in working class politics. To continue the current policy of abstention only leaves these struggles open to organization by our opponents, mainly the Stalinists.

5) Concretely, we recommend that the party begin to selectively orient part of the cadre to those areas of the organized labor movement which have shown a willingness to engage in struggle. We suggest the following areas:

- a) Auto (Freemont, Lordstown, Norwood, International Harvester in Melrose Pk, Illinois, etc.)
- b) AFSCME (especially in NYC, District 37)
- c) ILA (Gulf states)
- d) USW (South Chicago, Gary, Pittsburg)
- e) Postal Workers (particularly Chicago and New York)
- f) Teachers—AFT (wherever we have cadre)
- g) Drug and Hospital Union (division of RWDSU, e.g. local #1199)

We view this as an initial list, reports from the field and observations could expand or supplement our suggestions.

If we were to send 50 comrades into each of the areas we suggest it would involve only around 350, which would leave a substantial number of comrades for other areas of work. While the number "50" is arbitrary, and we are flexible on that figure, we don't think 350 cadre would be too much for our proletarian party to assign to work in the trade unions.

6) Not only are we suggesting work areas but also organizational structure for that work. We don't believe in "freelancing". Communist work in the unions should entail these general organizational approaches:

a. One-to-one propaganda activity centered around the party press and program. This should be organized into "red circle" formations.

A red circle formation should be seen as a cell of militants. This cell would intervene on the shop floor and in union meetings. It would organize caucuses, intervene in existing caucuses and participate in shop stewards' committees when possible—in short, carry on organized propaganda in a broader milieu. The red circles should be seen as a candidate program for prospective party members.

b. As mentioned above red circles in some cases will be able to intervene in shop steward committees. In many cases these committees will be a vehicle through which discontent with the broader bureaucracy will be expressed. Comrades who are shop stewards will be in the position to organize strike activity, pickets and education. They can use their position for a spring board in developing the broader caucus formations.

c. The caucus represents a tendency within a union which can be organized either for a general programmatic challenge to current practice or leadership. In addition, a caucus may be narrower, limited to a specific economic or social issue.

Our main interest in the caucus is to use it as a tool for mobilizing a wide layer of workers around specific, nationally-coordinated issues. We do not counterpose this to local caucuses dealing with more limited areas, when applicable.

The watchword of the next phase for the party has to be "recruit." We think our organizational method will achieve maximum returns.

## II. Issues, Programs and Campaigns

7) Without programmatic proposals our organizational methods would be so much form with no substance. We believe the following proposals would offer a basis for initiating the party's intervention into the unions. Many of these proposals can be grasped by the broad masses, immediately. Others are aimed at the more advanced section of the class and could gain a hearing in this "vanguard" grouping. We see a certain dynamic to our proposals leading to an awakening of class consciousness of the entire class.

8) The two most pressing concerns of the broad masses are inflation and unemployment. We should raise the slogans of "30 for 40" and the "sliding scale of wages and hours," coupled with the demand "jobs for all," as the only solution to the problems of inflation and unemployment.

In this context we foresee the need for an extensive education campaign conducted around all forms of discrimination. It will be necessary to explain that unemployment is a problem facing the *whole* class and that its solution does not lie in the confines of the unions alone. Likewise, the solution does not lie in pitting workers of one nation against those of another. The film "Where's Joe?" jointly produced by the Steelworkers Union and U. S. Steel represents the most vicious and backward capitulation to

national chauvinism. We must expose all such manifestations.

The logic of "Where's Joe," of course, is that it can be applied to minorities within the United States as well. It is essential that the party campaign unmercifully against all such chauvinist and racist appeals of these efforts to corrupt the working class. There can be *no* abstention from such struggles. Working class unity has to be promoted in all party propaganda.

9) Working class solidarity: We counterpose to the national chauvinist legislation, the Burke-Hartke Bill, a campaign for international working class solidarity.

One major factor inhibiting the development of class consciousness is the lack of unity in the workers' movement. Our intervention must include a national campaign for labor unity. We must return to the slogan: "An injury to one is an injury to all."

The Taft-Hartley Act and its prohibition of secondary boycotts allows diversified corporations to "out-flank" unions in strike actions by shifting their operations away from the struck facility. In addition the union bureaucrats use the cover of the "illegal secondary boycott" as a smoke screen to isolate strikers and to dampen class militancy. We must organize to demand "Abolish the Taft-Hartley Act!" We must condemn and expose the treacherous role of the union bureaucrats' collaboration with the capitalist state. We further note that this is a two-way street. Not only do the bureaucrats participate in the government (the pay-board) but the government participates in the union's affairs. We demand full independence for the unions. Union democracy can only come from the rank and file—not the capitalist class. We place no reliance on the Landrum-Griffin Act or any other capitalist legislation or commission such as the NLRB.

Cannibal actions such as the Teamsters' attacks on the Farmworkers Union can only divide and weaken the workers movement. We call for united action against the Teamsters for their hooliganism. Again, as always, only the workers have the right to police the working class movement.

10) Workers' control—how to popularize it: There is much confusion around the concept of workers' control. On the one hand there are the bourgeois schemes which create the illusion of workers' control through profit-sharing plans, "employee ownership" (e.g., C&NW RR), self-management participation schemes, etc. What is confused here is the authority relationships of the factory with the production relationships in society as a whole. The reason for this confusion, which is the most common of all in dealing with the concept of workers' control, resides in the contradiction of the working class under capitalism. It is the company and its management who are the clearest, most visible oppressors of the workers. The relations of capitalist production remain invisible (so to speak—"behind the scenes"). So, on the other hand we want to explain the essential idea that what is involved is not a struggle against management, per se, but a struggle against the entire economic system.

We propose a system of demands which can educate and direct the workers' struggle to implement workers' control in the factory. At the same time we seek to tie these local struggles into a more general perspective which points to the necessity of a workers' government built on

the workers' councils.

What is posed initially is the question of the workers' right to veto management decisions concerning:

1. job safety
2. production rates
3. over-time, bonuses and shift work
4. hiring and firing
5. work assignments
6. movement of workers in the plant
7. plant design and construction

Through the intervention of the party, these local, isolated plant struggles will be tied to the general social struggle for the socialist transformation of society.

11) Workers' defense: The working-class challenge to bourgeois property relations will inevitably lead to clashes with the capitalist state. The Trotskyist concepts of workers defense have to be popularized wherever the movement

is attacked. We must explain the role of the police, company guards and "extra-legal" right-wing goon squads, including such groups as the Ku Klux Klan, etc. If a strike is attacked we should help the workers draw the correct conclusions as to the organization of a militia. If fascist groups try to organize, we must do everything possible to polarize the situation to the extent where preventive actions can be successfully implemented. In no case do we want the bourgeois state called in to arbitrate labor disputes of any character. We call for independence of the unions *and* the workers' militia. We do not have a third-camp position—we are for every action which helps to extend the scope of the workers' movement and which develops the confidence of the masses in the resoluteness of the working class in the struggle for power.

July 28, 1973

#### STATEMENT OF SUPPORT TO THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY'S POLITICAL RESOLUTION

by Berta Langston, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local  
Bob Langston, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local  
Jon Rothschild, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

We have decided to vote against the "Draft Political Resolution" approved by the Political Committee. With some reservations we support the general line of the draft counterresolution submitted by the Internationalist Tendency.

Unfortunately, since the two draft resolutions appeared so late, it has been impossible for us to thoroughly clarify the extremely complex issues involved. We feel that Comrade Bill Massey's request that the convention be postponed because of the long delay in publishing the draft political resolution is well taken; but since it does not appear that this request is going to be met, we feel we should try to briefly indicate now the reasons for our decision.

In our opinion, the central political difference between the IT document and the positions the party developed especially since the 1969 political resolution turns on the interrelated questions of the significance of the "sectoral" movements in relation to the working class, the concept of the "combined revolution," and the nature of the transitional method. We think the party has shown some dangerous deviations in connection with these questions; we think the IT resolution points in a fundamentally correct direction in dealing with them.

It is gratifying to us to read the passages in the PC draft resolution that explicitly reject the notion that fundamental social change—or even massive reform—is possible without the mobilization of the working class, and to read the explicit rejection of "polyvanguardist schemes of seeing the revolution as simply an extension of the struggles of the 'movements' rather than the dialectical process

of transferring power from one class to another." (Draft Political Resolution, p. 14, col. 2.) But we don't think this has ever been a central question in the SWP; to see the "revolution" simply as an extension of the "movements" would be outright reformism, and the party has never been guilty of that. And as far as we know there have been very few—if any—comrades who have ever believed that a revolution could be victorious in the United States without the "heavy battalions" of the organized labor movement.

No, the question is different. Do we understand these "sectoral" movements—including the most profound of them, those of the oppressed nationalities—as possessing an independent dynamic of their own persisting from now until the struggle for power, and do we therefore see that struggle for power as a *convergence* of these basically independent movements? That is, will the revolution be made by Blacks, women, workers, and so on, each sector marching separately but striking together? Will the primary function of the party be to propose slogans and organizational forms for each separate sector and to serve as a coordinating committee whose task is to see to it that each sector becomes conscious of the need to converge with all the others since all have the same enemy?

Or do we regard the "independence" of the "movements" as a transitory phenomenon, a function of the relative quiescence and fragmentation of working-class struggle, so that these movements will tend to be absorbed into the class struggle? And will the party therefore remain primarily the bearer of revolutionary working-class consciousness and the organizer of the class in struggle?

It seems to us that at least since 1969 the party has increasingly adopted the first concept. This has been most clearly articulated in the notion of a "combined revolution." The 1971 political resolution, "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization," states that the American revolution "will be a revolution by the oppressed nationalities for self-determination together with a working-class revolution to take power and open the road to the destruction of capitalist exploitation, alienation, oppression, racism and sexism, and the construction of socialism—the first truly human social order." (1971 Draft Political Resolution, SWP DB, Vol. 31, No. 13, p. 35, col. 1.)

In our opinion, this is incorrect. It makes sense to speak of a "combined revolution" in a region like the old Russian empire, where the overwhelming majority of the oppressed nationalities were nonproletarian. There, one of the proletarian revolutionary party's central tasks was to place itself at the head of the rebellion of *nonproletarian* masses. The proletariat that led the Russian revolution was overwhelmingly of the Great Russian nationality; one of its historic tasks was to create the preconditions for the national liberation of the non-Russian nationalities, which, being overwhelmingly nonproletarian in composition, tended to follow the lead of the Great Russian proletariat. No one would say that the oppressed nationalities of the old Russian empire played a vanguard role (if we may be permitted use of that expression) in the October Revolution. The combined character of that revolution derived from the fact that the proletariat in its struggle to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat had to simultaneously carry out a whole series of bourgeois-democratic tasks—and in this the proletariat was joined by the masses (mostly peasant) of the oppressed nationalities as well as by the Great Russian peasantry.

In the United States, where the overwhelming majority of the oppressed nationalities are proletarian in composition, a central task of the proletarian revolutionary party is to advance the development of proletarian class consciousness of the oppressed nationalities so that they can more readily play the role of vanguard workers, a role objectively derived from their double oppression and super-exploitation. Just as the end of national oppression in the advanced capitalist countries can be achieved only by the victory of the working class, so the working class can develop its revolutionary potential only by overcoming the national divisions within it. It is not a question of a "combined" revolution, but of unfolding the real proletarian class content of demands that appear to be merely democratic.

A reviving, increasingly class-conscious working-class struggle will progressively absorb the "independent" national organization of the oppressed nationalities. The workers of the oppressed nationalities through appropriate organizational forms, will of course be the broad vanguard of the struggle within the working-class movement for those proletarian demands that directly counter the racism of chauvinism of capitalist society.

The same approach is even more valid with respect to the women's movement. Demands directed against the specific conditions of women's oppression will become the demands of a reviving labor movement. Working women (and men) will fight for these demands as an integral part of their class struggle. This labor movement will

become a pole of attraction for women of the middle layers. Bourgeois women will, by and large, remain loyal to their class.

Radicalizing students and intellectual strata will be immediately drawn to the increasingly class-conscious labor movement on the global political questions that this labor movement will be providing answers to.

This general perspective must determine how we relate to these movements *now*, prior to the massive unfolding of the working-class struggle as such. It is not only a question of explaining this perspective, but of also letting it guide our choice of organizational forms, slogans, and the content of our agitation and propaganda.

For example, we do not think we should try to develop "transitional programs" or "programs of democratic and transitional demands" for all the various sectors in the sense that we project demands that are supposed to progressively impel the struggles of these sectors *as such* toward the socialist revolution. The real application of the transitional method to the "movements" requires that we project demands and conduct agitation and propaganda that pose the issues raised in these sectors in explicitly *class* terms.

For example, in the women's movement, we do not think we should have built a single-issue abortion coalition. We think we should have intervened wherever possible with slogans based around the three themes of the August 26, 1970, demonstrations: free abortion on demand, 24-hour child-care facilities, and equal pay for equal work. Slogans like these would have allowed us to raise the class issues involved in women's liberation in a way that the demand for the purely legal right to abortion could never do. They would have made the concept of "women's right to choose" a lot more concrete in class terms. The working-class woman's right to choose remains exceedingly limited to say the least as long as that right remains restricted to the right not to have a child rather than being extended to the "right" to have children under optimal conditions for their care. Free 24-hour child-care has vast, though of course less immediate, significance to working-class men, who bear a large part of the financial burden of child-rearing. Equal pay for equal work can directly pose the necessity for breaking down the barriers of privilege within the working class.

Besides intervening with demands like these, we think we should have incessantly explained their class content. This means drawing a line between Marxism and what Marxists used to call feminism. We don't want to quibble about terminology, but there *is* an essential distinction that the party has tended to blur. The conception that the task of liberating women is objectively a task of *women as women* (or women organized as women) can reasonably be called feminism—and it is a false consciousness. The conception that the task of liberating women is objectively a task of the working class seems to us the correct Marxist position.

The Internationalist Tendency's political resolution quotes a part of a Discussion Bulletin written by Comrade Evelyn Reed in 1954. (p. 20, col. 1-2.) The substance of the quotation is an argument against divorcing the "Woman question" from the "class question." Comrade Evelyn is quoted as having written: "The woman question can only be resolved through the line-up of working men and wo-

men against the ruling class man and woman. This means that the interests of workers as a class are identical; and not the interests of all women as a sex. . . Thus the emancipation of working women will not be achieved in alliance with the women of the enemy class, but just the opposite; in a struggle against them, as part and parcel of the whole class struggle."

In the branch discussion, Comrade Evelyn claimed that the article was written in a different objective situation. But despite the obvious difference in the objective situation, the political position that Comrade Evelyn advanced in that article should, we believe, be in the center of our propaganda in the women's movement today. We further believe that the party has substantially retreated from this correct position because of the theory of "movements with independent dynamics."

We also reject the notion that there is a distinctive set of "student interests" objectively based on the capitalist educational system that could be the basis for a program of democratic and transitional demands for students—much less for "youth." In practice, the effort to concretize the red university concept in the slogan of the antiwar university led to serious errors in the May 1970 events. It tended to put the question of the university in the center of our agitation instead of the question of the war; because of this, we lost some opportunities to build the SMC and the YSA.

Similarly, in the antiwar movement, we *do* think the party should have intervened with a more "advanced" slogan along the lines of "hands off the Vietnamese revolution," while, of course, also building the antiwar movement on the principled demand of "out now." The slogan Hands off the Vietnamese Revolution goes beyond the purely democratic theme of self-determination—important as that is—and emphasizes what is also crucial to stress (and what nobody but we could have correctly stressed): that whatever the character of the leadership, it is a socialist revolution that is going on in South Vietnam. At the same time, this slogan helps expose the real reasons for U.S. imperialism's intervention.

In short, we think the tendency toward sectoralism that the SWP has manifested is wrong; we think it is of crucial importance that it be reversed. In our opinion, the IT political resolution takes this issue head on and poses a generally correct direction. We think this is the main issue involved—and it is on that fundamental basis that we intend to vote for the IT political resolution.

We also think the IT resolution is generally correct in laying out a practical orientation for the next period. Both conflicting political resolutions agree that there is an increasing molecular radicalization among U.S. workers. In view of the relative decline of the so-called movements, we think it especially important to *begin* intervening in that process by a carefully selective process of colonization of comrades in plants. This intervention would have to have a mainly propagandistic character right now, and it is useless to try to predict when "general openings" will appear. But we should not wait. In our opinion there is one exceptionally important lesson of May 1968 that the 1971 political resolution did not draw when it stated: "The May 1968 events in France did not lead to victory, not because of a lack of consciousness or incorrect tactics by the revolutionary Trotskyist forces, but because of the political domination of the workers

movement by the mass Stalinist party, a domination which could not be reversed by the revolutionary nucleus qualitatively smaller than the C.P." But it was not *only* because our section was qualitatively smaller than the CP—although of course this is important. It was also because the section had only a minimal implantation in the plants. On the basis of the conjunctural analysis advanced even in the PC political resolution, it is time to begin a fundamental effort to achieve an implantation in the factories in the United States.

There are some important points—and any number of minor ones—on which we disagree with the IT resolution. Two of these should be specifically mentioned.

First, we are opposed to the slogan "Victory to the NLF" for our intervention in the antiwar movement and we also disagree with the IT document's statement about the character of the NLF. We think the slogan of Victory to the NLF can suggest political support to the program of the NLF, which would be incorrect. It may be that we have a more basic difference with the IT over the nature of Stalinism.

Second, we think the IT discussion of racism and Black nationalism is inadequate. Our primary approach to the phenomenon of Black oppression must be an unrelenting struggle against white racism, and this requires more emphasis than they give it. And it seems to us basically incorrect to write, as the IT comrades do: "In fact, this ideology [Black nationalism] has two objective functions. For the extremely small layer of Black bourgeoisie and especially petty-bourgeoisie, it serves as a protective shelter against the competition of white big business. But more importantly, it objectively serves the American ruling class by hindering the process of united working-class struggles."

Rather, in our opinion, the most important objective function of Black nationalism at present is to begin to unite, in however unsatisfactory a fashion, the most oppressed layer of the U.S. working class in struggle at a time when the class as a whole is not struggling as a class. It does not objectively serve the U.S. ruling class by hindering the process of united working-class struggle. That role is played by the relatively privileged position of white workers, and, ideologically, by racism.

Moreover, we think the IT comrades have made a mistake here that is similar to the one made by the party majority: liquidating the differences between Black nationalism and the more usual varieties of colonial nationalism. The party majority has tended to generalize our critical support to Black nationalism to the whole colonial world, as in the case, for example, of Palestine. The IT comrades make the same kind of generalization, but in the opposite direction. We think the distinction is important to maintain.

Nevertheless, despite these important differences, we think that the questions of sectoralism, the combined revolution, and their connection with the transitional program are of such basic importance that we will vote for the IT political resolution.

In conclusion: We have already indicated our support to the general line of the resolution on Europe approved by the majority of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International. We are not, however, joining the Internationalist Tendency at this time, despite our

agreement with the general line of the European resolution and with the general line of the IT political resolution. We feel that Comrade Germain's document "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" (IIDB,

Vol. X, No. 4) leaves too many questions on Latin America unclarified to permit us to support it. We will abstain on Comrade Germain's document if it is submitted to a vote.

July 28, 1973

FOR A DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION —  
STATEMENT OF 83 PARTY MEMBERS

The setting of the delegate ratio of 15 voters per 1 delegate is a blatantly anti-democratic action taken by the Party leadership to minimize the political impact of those who do not share the political views of the SWP leaders. In light of the coming World Congress our Convention should provide for a full and democratic debate on the issues in dispute in the World Trotskyist Movement. Since the International Majority Tendency Supporters Caucus will represent the political perspectives of the International Majority as reflected in the documents "In Defense of Leninism: In Defense of the Fourth International;" and "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe;" both of which are opposed by the Party leadership which supports the views of the International Minority Tendency — this would set the stage for a full discussion of the political issues at stake.

However, our leadership prefers instead to muzzle these dissident views by the "legalism" of a totally unwarranted delegate ratio. Since the positions that our Caucus holds reflect those that are shared by the International Majority and since our Caucus represents a significant number of comrades in the Socialist Workers Party, we demand that the restrictions on the Party's right to a full and democratic discussion of the differences be removed. If any change should have been made in the delegate ratio it should have been to lower it, thereby increasing the ability of the Minority to adequately put forward its views. This action by the SWP leadership only lessens the impact of any decisions arrived at at the Party's convention not only here but in the eyes of the World Movement. Not only are such actions undemocratic they are short-sighted.

Failing to convince the leadership to adjust the delegate ratio we would ask that the Caucus we represent be given proportional representation at the Convention and allowed to select our delegates on the basis of our real strength in the Party. Without our proper representation at the convention it becomes impossible to adequately present our political views. Are we the only ones to suffer from this procedure? We think not. Rather the entire Party and the World Movement will be effected in a negative fashion. A Convention gains its legitimacy not by fiat but by the manner in which it allows the delegates to hear all points of view respective to their support in the membership and the value to the discussion in helping to build the International and the Party.

We would therefore propose that the leadership of the Party either readjust its delegate apportionment or that it provide by proportional representation, the delegates that our numbers demand.

At the convention of the LSA/LSO the Revolutionary Communist Tendency was allowed to have non-delegates

present their positions to the Convention. The motivation for this was to allow the most adequate statement of the Tendency's views to be heard by the assembled delegates before making their decisions. We are not in favor of this method at our Convention in that we feel that if we were not frozen out of representation by the 15 for 1 ratio or by the gerrymandering (that could be overcome by a system of proportional representation, as a lesser evil) we would have no trouble adequately presenting our views. For the leadership to deny us these democratic *rights* and to cover up these denials by the favor of non-delegates being allowed to make the presentations would be to legitimize this basic denial of minority rights. We have no interest in being accomplices to a charade. To restrict a Minority and indeed the views of the International Majority Tendency to possibly one delegate or even two, three or four considering our numbers is worse than a charade.

Finally we ask that immediate action be taken concerning these matters so that our representatives may adequately prepare themselves to state our point of view in the forthcoming Party Convention. We ask that the leadership act in the interests of the entire Party in this matter so that the Convention will enable the Party and the International to go forward.

*For the Internationalist Tendency*

**BOSTON:** Bruce C.; John M.; **NEW YORK:** Hedda G.; Frank M.; Charles P.; Bob S.; John S.; **PHILADELPHIA:** Harry B.; Robin B.; Ginne W.; **WASHINGTON, D.C.:** Kathy K.; Marilyn L.; Chris M.; Tom Q.; Sel B. **CHICAGO:** Polly C.; Bill B.; Gerry D.; Ed H.; Mark L.; Mike F.; Bill M.; Jeff M.; Guy M.; Rich M.; Debbie P.; Martha Q.; Pat Q.; Don S.; Therese S.; Ted S. **BLOOMINGTON:** Bill Y.; Estelle Y. **PORTLAND:** Peter K.; **OAKLAND-BERKELEY:** John C.; Kari C.; Beth Anne S. **HOUSTON:** Fred B.; John B.; Laura B.; Cheryl C.; Howard G.; Peter G.; Jerry F.; Sunny F.; Mark L.; Danny L.; Jana P.; Bill P.; Cherie P.; David R.; Judi R.; Jean S.; John S.; Roy S.; Steve S.; Bob T.; Russel W.; Jim W.

*For the Tendency Formed Around the June 10 "Statement of Support to the International Majority Tendency"*

**BOSTON:** Debby S.; **LOS ANGELES:** Mickie H.; Ed M.; Ned M.; Judi S.; John V.; Ron W.; Gene W.; Sue W.; Judy W.; **OAKLAND-BERKELEY:** Lauren C.; Sandy H.; Tim K.; Ralph L.; Cathy M.; Lew P.; Celia S.; Mike T.; Alan W. **SAN FRANCISCO:** Jeff B.; Garth C.; Gloria; Johann; Peter G.

July 28, 1973



WONAAC: A DIFFERENT EVALUATION  
OR  
THE STONE-WATERS SCHOOL OF OPPORTUNISM

by Polly Connelly (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago  
Branch; and Hedda Garza (Internationalist Tendency),  
Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local

*Introduction*

In their contribution "The Abortion Struggle: What Have We Accomplished, Where Should We Go From Here," Comrades Betsey Stone and Mary-Alice Waters tell us that WONAAC "... was a vehicle through which feminists could provide a *class struggle* leadership to much broader social forces." They say that the "class struggle policy" of the party was based on "three fundamental concepts":

"First is our orientation toward issues that are fundamental to the exploitation and oppression of the working class. We advance a political line and perspective that speaks to the real problems and needs of the working masses. Struggles to resolve these problems begin to challenge the interests and prerogatives of the ruling class.

"Second our class struggle policy is based on political independence from the individuals and institutions of the ruling class political apparatus — parties, politicians, legislatures, etc. We defer nothing, we subordinate nothing to the needs of any alien class interest. While capitalist politicians and others of their ilk are welcome to support our demands and our actions, they do so on our terms.

"Third are the methods of struggle employed, which are proletarian methods — the use of extra-parliamentary action as opposed to reliance on the capitalist legislature. We teach the struggling masses to rely on their own strength and united power as opposed to the institutions, representatives and spokespersons of the class enemy."

Nothing could be further from the truth than the assertions of the above-quoted paragraphs! Instead of a "class struggle" policy, the party leadership put forth a policy that wavered between total capitulation to bourgeois feminist ideology instead of "a political line and perspective that speaks to the real problems and needs of the working masses." Then, there was a dangerous turn toward legislative lobbying instead of "political independence from the individuals and institutions of the ruling class apparatus..."

In this contribution we intend to explain and document the tragic example of adaptationism and opportunism displayed by the SWP leadership in their WONAAC intervention. We intend to dispel the idea held by many party comrades that errors made were merely "excesses" by the ranks — that the party leadership indeed had a "class struggle line," and that such non-Trotskyist concepts as "Lobbying," "Woman's Party," "Man-hatred," etc., were never supported or codified in writing by the leaders of our party.

*The Theoretical Foundations of the Error*

The concept of how to build the revolutionary party is one of the major subjects being debated in the International. The errors of the WONAAC intervention highlight an important component of the current dispute: the nature of the new mass vanguard. (In the U.S., we call it the "new vanguard.") Perhaps comrades would better

understand the term if we called it the "newly radicalized layers," or "the youth open to our ideas as a result of the radicalization." Nevertheless, whatever its label, in the women's movement, the new mass vanguard was composed of the radical intellectuals and activists who served as the organizing base of the movement. This base did not have a clear Marxist conception of the oppression of women, but it was seeking clarification and it was open to our ideas. Around this base was a larger periphery from which the base drew its supporters and within which they tested their developing ideas. In short, this organizing base served as a transmission belt to carry more radical ideas into a broader layer of the population. Many of them had been in SDS and were attracted to Marxism. All in all, these women were the most class conscious elements around outside of the left organizations, and they were *not* committed to any party. It was from this base that we should have significantly recruited to our party by intervening with a genuine "class struggle" perspective.

It would be appropriate to make an analogy to a pyramid. The pyramid represents the masses as a whole. Our party is (or hopes to be) on the top. Under the most conscious layer which is organized within the party, there is a layer which is larger than the party but narrower than the base. The concept of the new mass vanguard implies that we should try to educate this intermediate layer and raise its level of consciousness. By doing this, we can utilize this mass to propagate the ideas of our party — codified in our program — into the broader masses. This is the Leninist concept of party-building: We educate that layer which has become active around a struggle by bringing to it a correct program and tactics.

Opposed to this conception of party building is the methodology of the "Leninist-Trotskyist" Tendency. Their conception is twofold — each method used at different times. One method is to sidestep the advanced layer and go straight to the broad masses. Since these broad masses are on a lower level of understanding than the advanced layer, we must avoid being seen as "crazies." Therefore, we judiciously drop our Marxist program for something that seems to be more realistic to the masses. These, of course, are the much-vaunted "democratic demands." The other method is to recruit that part of the advanced layer which isn't so advanced and then send them back into the struggle with the same ideas they had when they were recruited (in this case, feminist). In order to do this, of course, we must be careful not to turn them away by coming right out with our full-blown Marxist positions (i.e., "feminism is a bourgeois ideology," "we are against a woman's party," etc.).

By using these methods in relation to the new vanguard, the SWP leadership displayed its ingrained hostility toward them — resulting in a sectarian posture. Instead of correctly concluding that this vanguard is not clearly conscious and attempting to educate and recruit it, strengthening our

link to the broader masses, the SWP leadership dedicated its energies to shunning or smashing this vanguard in the hope that if we did a hatchet job on these radicals, we could win their base. We managed neatly to smash the vanguard organizationally, but we *did not* win their base. Even women on the lowest levels of Marxist understanding never understood the artificial counterposing of "Repeal All Abortion Laws" to "Free Abortion on Demand." They understood that there was no contradiction between these two demands, that chanting one did not preclude chanting the other, and that the Supreme Court decision would have taken place as it did regardless of whether or not the "Free Abortion" slogan was used or dropped. The difference, of course, would have been in the consciousness-raising of thousands of women to the whole idea of free medical care.

The results of the "Leninist-Trotskyist" version of the struggle for women's liberation have been the same throughout the country. The middle of the pyramid has been crushed and pushed aside. The top (SWP) is left unsupported. The base is left without a revolutionary leadership because the top is too small to lead alone. The result is a fragmentation of the struggle and its diversion into the camp of the petty-bourgeois politicians. The Socialist Workers Party played a major role in assuring the current fragmentation of the women's movement.

On the following pages we will demonstrate how the party in its WONAAC work liquidated its program, opportunistically took up the line of the least advanced layers, and resoundingly earned the characterization of "right opportunist current."

#### *The Decision to Help Set Up WONAAC Vs. Communism*

If we are going to salvage anything from our expedition into bourgeois feminism and intervene with a genuine "class struggle perspective" to influence what remains of the anticapitalist consciousness among women generated by the women's movement, we must critically evaluate the focus of our work since 1971—when the decision was made to help create the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC).

In 1971, the forces that had put together the August 28, 1970, demonstrations calling for the three demands of "Equal Pay for Equal Work," "24-hour Day-Care Centers," and "Free Abortion on Demand" were disseminated into small groups all over the country. There was no immediate national focus, but in all of these groups there were women who were ripe for our socialist ideas. The party, however, was searching for a single-issue national focus to strengthen the woman's movement. Actually, this flowed from their pessimism. They were looking for a glue to tie together all of the varying elements around the questions of the repression of women. The issue of abortion was one of several issues under discussion in the women's movement. In the 1971 plenum report, Comrade Stone (Info Bull. No. 2., April 1971) outlined a strategy for a national campaign on abortion—a strategy flowing from the single-issue theory—a strategy aimed at dumping the other issues on women's minds. In the words of the report:

"It is clearer than ever before that the women's liberation movement should intervene decisively in this growing national ferment and discussion over the issue of

abortion, to put forward the position of the feminist movement, to demonstrate the power of women, and to build a nationwide abortion movement which can have a real impact in winning gains for women" (page 7, col. 1, paragraph 4).

The lack of "class struggle" line in the foregoing is all too apparent. We were interested in putting "forward the position of the feminist movement" and in demonstrating "the power of women." Nothing here related to our deep concern, as communists, about the oppression of women, what Lenin called her double oppression of class and sex. What flowed from this logically was the whole caving in to the slogan of "Sisterhood is Powerful." We were about to put the sex question before the class question and substitute ourselves for what we considered to be the best interests of the women's liberation movement. Comrade Stone goes on:

"The right to control over your body is absolutely fundamental to any kind of freedom for women at all." (*op. cit.*, p. 7, col. 2)

This crops up again in the Waters-Stone document, "The Abortion Struggle," when they say:

"The abortion rights victory opened the door for millions of women—especially working women, Blacks, Chicanas, Puerto Ricans—to begin to control their own reproductive functions, their own bodies. It went a significant way towards establishing a fundamental human right for all women—the right to choose whether or not to bear a child."

How hypocritical this must sound to working class women! In a capitalist society, what kind of choice does the Supreme Court decision really grant to them? When they decide whether or not to continue a pregnancy, isn't the main consideration the terrible weight of poverty, discrimination and all of the things their *class position* brings (unemployment, slum housing, poor health, etc.)? How much right does a working class woman have to bring a child into this world and look forward to sufficient food, decent housing, medical care, day-care centers, etc.? The slogan "the right to control your own body" better suits a middle-class or upper-class woman, who can afford day care, etc., and may forego an abortion because it is illegal and dangerous.

It is unlikely that since Kautsky put forward his notions about "pure democracy" that there has been such a revision on such a fundamental question for Marxists. The truth is that there is no "freedom for women at all," no equality or end to oppression short of the resolution of the class question—and that goes for men, too! With the formulation quoted above, the Socialist Workers Party leadership gave up all pretense of retaining even in words the Marxist analysis of women's oppression and went on to their full-blown extensions on "Sisterhood."

The communist position on the woman question is so easily found that one wonders how Comrade Stone managed to avoid it as she embarked on her love affair with feminism. In "Soviet Power and the Status of Women," Lenin castigated those who were attracted to the "high sounding slogans of freedom and equality" put forth by the bourgeois democracies:

"...not a single bourgeois republic even the most advanced has granted women—half the human race—com-

plete equality in the eyes of the law, or delivered women from dependence on and the oppression of the male." (*The Emancipation of Women*, International Publishers, p. 74.)

He noted that only with the establishment of *socialist* democracy would the "foul lie" of equality and democracy be ended.

"There is no real 'freedom,' nor can there be so long as women are handicapped by men's legal privileges, so long as there is no freedom for the worker from the yoke of capital. . . . Let the liars and hypocrites, the obtuse and the blind, the bourgeois and their supporters deceive the people with talk about freedom in general, about equality in general, about democracy in general. We say to the workers and peasants—tear the mask from these liars. . . . Ask them: Is there equality of the two sexes? Which nation is the equal of which? Which class is the equal of which?" (*op. cit.*, p. 74)

In 1921, at the 3rd Congress of the Communist International, under the section "Methods of Work Among Women of the Communist Party," Resolution #5 of the Communist position on the woman question made the point clear:

"The 3rd Congress of the Comintern confirms the basic proposition of revolutionary Marxism, *i.e.*, that there is 'no specific women's movement' and 'no specific women's question' and that, *every sort of alliance with bourgeois feminism* as well as any support by the woman workers of the treacherous tactics of the social compromisers and opportunists leads to the *undermining of the forces of the proletariat*, delaying thereby the triumph of social revolution and the advent of communism, and thus also postponing the great hour of women's ultimate liberation. *Communism will not be achieved by the united efforts of all women of different classes* but by the united struggle of the exploited."

Therein is contained the nexes of the communist position on women—a position which emphasizes again and again that only when the class question is resolved—the question of *which class rules*—can the question of sex be resolved. According to Comrade Stone, however, the Supreme Court abortion decision granted a right "fundamental to any kind of freedom for women at all."

This does not mean, of course, that we abandon the woman question until after the revolution. It means that we must consistently, steadfastly and consciously put forward the class question in the women's movement. Instead of adapting to feminism and becoming the "best feminists" in the movement, we must do the opposite. We must attempt to educate against, to smash, feminist ideology—the bourgeois ideology of sex before class, as being inconsistent with the communist aims for the united struggle of the exploited. In that way, and only in that way, can we demonstrate our solidarity with oppressed women.

But Comrade Stone has codified for all time the attitude in 1971 of the SWP leadership when she explained sisterhood and our orientation to it in her 1971 plenum report:

"It doesn't mean, for example, that someone who works as a maid has any great love for the woman who employs her. What it does mean is that whether or not they

are conscious of it, these women do have certain political objectives in common because of the fact they are both oppressed as women." (Plenum report, 4/71, p. 11, paragraph 4)

Lenin's reply to Kautsky on the question of equality and democracy could apply to Comrade Stone's formulations very well.

"The exploiter and the exploited cannot be equal. There can be no real equality until all possibility of the exploitation of one class by another has been destroyed." (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, International Publishers (1935), p. 34.)

And so WONAAC was born under the flag of "Sisterhood Is Powerful." On the basis of the formulations laid out in the plenum report and later supported by the political resolution "Towards a Mass Feminist Movement," the Socialist Workers Party leadership projected the abortion movement without rejecting the sex-before-class ideology of bourgeois feminism. In this way the leadership gagged the ranks, making them incapable of struggling against or educating the feminists in the movement. Worse than that, this attitude filtered down to the ranks of the party and succeeded in turning many comrades, new recruits to our movement, into ideologues of feminism.

The film made by David Weiss on the YSA was a good example of this miseducation process. The leadership of the YSA saw the original film and were upset by the flagrant man-hatred and lack of class consciousness displayed by the ranks. Left on the cutting-room floor were yards of film showing comrades spontaneously and joyfully singing lines from songs like, "Take it from the Mister. Give it to the Sister," and ranting about man hatred and their new-found feminism.

Older and supposedly wiser comrades were also not immune. At a WONAAC conference in New York City, at Hunter College, a new YSAer called from the podium for a woman's party. The house came down—with every YSA and SWP comrade applauding enthusiastically. Comrade Hedda Garza asked Comrade Betsey Stone whether anyone was going to say anything about this. The answer was, "It's nothing. It doesn't matter." Here was a key opportunity to explain the class question, an opportunity to educate our own miseducated ranks and to put forth the communist position on feminism, but it apparently was preferable to leave the impression that we were all for feminism and women's party, too.

Comrade Peter Camejo has admitted that he did call for a woman's party at the 1971 YSA convention. However, he insists that was a "slip"—that he really meant, when he was listing all possible parties, to add "woman's movement."

Actually, Comrade Camejo's "slip" was the common unwritten "line" of the party at that point. It flowed from the whole plenum report. We must forgive Comrade Camejo; his slip was right in tune with the line being put forward by many party members and at least not contradicted by the leading comrades involved in the work.

Later, when a good chunk of our ranks were convinced that we should officially call for a woman's party, it became necessary to disavow that concept. Sisterhood was powerful, yes. Women and their maids had political objectives in common, but if we couldn't bring ourselves

to endorse the Henry Wallace party of 1948, how could we come out on paper for a woman's party? That was a little too strong, even for the "best feminists" in the movement!

From the Sisterhood is Powerful concept, it was concluded that the new "abortion campaign" would do three things at least:

"(1) This means giving women the confidence in the fact that the movement can have an impact on this country.

"(2) That there are large numbers of new women not involved in the movement today who can be reached and brought in on the basis of struggle.

"(3) The larger this movement becomes, the more women there are who don't feel like subordinating their struggle to any other struggle, and who want to fight and win victories to help women." (Plenum report, p. 8, col. 1, paragraphs 1 and 2)

Susan B. Anthony could not have said it better! And, finally, the political resolution gave us the theoretical underpinnings for this plan:

"There is an objective basis for a unified struggle of all different nationalities and classes because all women are oppressed as women by capitalism. Sisterhood is powerful because of this universal female oppression, and this is the basis of the existence of an independent, non-exclusive mass feminist movement with an anti-capitalist logic." (*Towards a Mass Feminist Movement*, p. 11, col. 2)

Thus, we went into our WONAAC campaign with the clear understanding that the struggle was of *all women against all men*. The class struggle line of our party had been locked away in anticipation of the communal bath with the feminists who we expected would join us in our newest production—WONAAC. A new definition of feminism had been found, based on the concept that Old Feminism was different than New Feminism, the latter being different because of its:

". . . deep going challenge of every aspect of the oppression of women including the hitherto unquestioned 'sacred' role of women in the family. . . ." (*Towards a Mass Feminist Movement*, p. 3)

The class struggle was no longer the criteria. Faced with a deeper and broader feminism, we could no longer characterize it as petty bourgeois—not if we wanted to intervene with a minimal line and leave out all the "nasty stuff" that might frighten away "healthy independents" (even if it attracted vanguard women).

#### *WONAAC – and Minimalism*

WONAAC was conceived as a national organization to coordinate activities around abortion repeal for the women's movement and to serve as an arena where the party's politics could be advanced to win new militants to our organization. The plenum report projected the abortion struggle as a turning point for the survival of the women's movement—giving it a much needed national focus. In reality, the women's movement was indeed at a turning point. It required the intervention of the Socialist Workers Party with a class struggle program to turn it from its dead end of feminism onto the path of revolution.

There already existed the nucleus of a national abortion movement. There was NARAL, REPEAL, and quasi-national leaders Maginnis and Clark-Phelan, and many actions which drew thousands of women together. In 1969, more than 4,000 women in Chicago attended an abortion

speaking out and 300 demonstrated in front of the AMA national convention protesting its anti-abortion stand. Demonstrations had taken place in Philadelphia, Denver, San Francisco and New York; conventions were held and lobbying went on with such success that by early 1970, 15 states had liberalized their laws. Women's liberation groups were springing up in many cities, differentiating themselves from the "traditional" abortion reform movement by demanding Free Abortion and Contraception—No Forced Sterilization. Mass demonstrations, by late 1970, were a recognized tactic by the whole movement. Organizations like the Chicago Women's Liberation Union (CWLU) grew from 100 in 1968 to 1,000 by 1970, with a hard-core of about 200 activists. Similarly, in Detroit, the Women's Liberation Coalition grew from a small number of militant activists in 1969 to nearly 400 by 1970. Abortion repeal coalitions were set up in many places, often initiated as task force committees by women in the larger organizations. The party had many arenas for intervention with a class struggle program to educate and win women from these new movements. WONAAC would never achieve this because from its inception it was founded on the incorrect theoretical premise of feminism. It was destined to become another single-issue reformist abortion coalition.

At the founding convention of WONAAC in July 1971, the tone set at the planning meeting in June created divisions over "male dominated women," slogans, tactics, demands, etc. Attempting to prevent differences rather than debate these issues from a revolutionary socialist point of view, the party women were unable to fulfill their responsibilities and point out that abortion repeal would not change the nature of women's oppression—that we can never control our own bodies as long as capitalism survives. Instead, women of the Socialist Workers Party became the most enthusiastic supporters of the demand for repeal, and put forth the concept that if the laws were repealed, women would be taking a historic step forward. Most of the Socialist Workers Party women did not identify themselves as socialist or advance their revolutionary program, and because of the class antagonisms of feminists, the comrades left themselves wide open for frenzied red-baiting in the movement as a whole, which was to eventually manifest itself at WONAAC's 3rd and final conference a year later.

The individual single-issue WONAAC coalitions found themselves almost totally dependent upon the Socialist Workers Party cadre in order to carry out their activities. Turning away from the multi-issue women's liberation groups, the party buried itself whole-hog in the task of keeping WONAAC alive. There was no time to pay attention to independent women in the multi-issue groups who were ready for socialist ideas and who resented our abandonment of the other women's issues. There was no time to put forth our transitional demands in an effort to organize working women. In Detroit, the situation deteriorated to such an extent that one month after DWAAC moved into the Women's Liberation Coalition Center (8-17-71), it was asked to leave and was eventually locked out. SWP women were accused of misusing the center address as an "abortion repeal center" when abortion was clearly seen by the members as only one aspect of the center's work. As the single-issue purists of WONAAC carried on their battle against the women of the center, the latter finally turned to red-baiting. The charges were outlined in the Detroit feminist paper "Womankind" Vol.

I, No. 4. It was not difficult for the Detroit Center women to learn a false lesson about socialists: that socialist women are militant reformists—single-issue and minimal to the core.

In Chicago, IWAC was similarly isolated and became a coalition of individuals, mostly our own cadre who went from one meeting to the next, totally out of the mainstream of activity of the women's movement as a whole. The Chicago Women's Liberation Union called itself a "socialist feminist" group. It published a program, *Socialist Feminism: A Strategy for the Women's Movement*. A few lines from that document will demonstrate the kind of opportunity we were missing while we kept IWAC alive but not much kicking.

"But we share a particular conception of feminism that is socialist. It is one that focuses on how power has been denied women because of their class position. We see capitalism as an institutionalized form of oppression based on profit for private owners of publicly-worked-for wealth. It sets into motion hostile social relations in classes. . . . We share the socialist vision of a humanist world made possible through a redistribution of wealth and an end to the distinction between the ruling class and those who are ruled."

It should be obvious from the above that we had a fertile field in this organization. Instead of working with them and thoroughly debating the issue of socialism and feminism, we chose to isolate our cadre in IWAC—an isolation elevated to the level of a principle. When we were invited as the SWP to send a speaker to an International Women's Day rally, on March 11, 1972, we did not send a party spokeswoman. Instead a YSAer, representing IWAC, talked about the repeal of abortion laws. WONAAC affiliates became separate organizations for abortion repeal existing alongside other abortion reform organizations, often in competition with each other for the affection of the feminist movement as a whole.

In many areas where our cadre were involved in other women's organizations, they were pulled out of that work in favor of strengthening the wobbly WONAAC affiliates, i.e., Boston cadre in Female Liberation; Detroit women in Wayne Women's Liberation; etc. When women mobilized on other issues, WONAAC affiliates would send a handful of abortion repeal leafleters. This happened in April 1972, when a child care demonstration of 30,000 took place in Washington, D. C., and in Albany when a group of 2,000 predominantly Black and Puerto Rican mothers protested the proposed hike in day-care costs at city day-care centers. WONAAC leafleters gave them abortion repeal material.

Where organizations existed that were willing to take up abortion as *part* of their work, they were ignored in favor of setting up separate, single-issue abortion groups. A good example of this situation occurred at the University of Illinois in Chicago. The University Women's Liberation Group there was willing to allow IWAC people on the campus to use their office, but the IWAC leaders preferred to have a separate abortion repeal group. The campus Women's Liberation Group was overwhelmingly for free abortion on demand, but they had no objection to working for repeal *as well*. Emnity developed out of this situation and the separate abortion group became a paper organization which functioned only in order to earn honorariums for various WONAAC speakers at the

occasional meetings it organized.

Our 1972 election campaign reflected this same narrow demand. Linda Jenness sounded most of the time like any WONAAC speaker when she presented our program for women's liberation. We were indeed the best "feminists." The theme of class versus class instead of sex versus sex was a forbidden topic.

By the time the November demonstration rolled around, that "other" national organization, NARAL (National Association to Repeal Abortion Laws), had held its much publicized national conference of 500 and had announced that abortion was to be the key issue of 1972. Many women were wondering why there were two national organizations. The modest size of the demonstrations, no matter how "enthusiastic" the women attending them, cannot be explained away. The demonstrations were small because of the narrowness of the support won by the various "coalitions" in the region.

The second WONAAC conference in February 1972 in Boston, fulfilled its goal of bridging the feminism of the past and the present by inviting suffragist Florence Luskcomb to give the major address. About a thousand women registered, of which only 359 were members of affiliate coalitions. A resolution was passed for Abortion Action Week, May 1-6. The slogan Free Abortion on Demand, now crystallizing as the main issue of contention between WONAAC and women's liberation organizations, was rejected. *The WONAAC Newsletter* of March 1972 explained why:

"Although most participants support the advent of free medical care for all people, the rationale for rejecting this slogan was the belief that WONAAC must first concentrate on making abortions completely legal. We cannot demand that something be free if it is still illegal."

#### *The Legality Argument*

This is not a revolutionary policy; it is simply the Menshevik program of revolution by stages, or in this case, reform by stages. Since when does the logic of revolutionaries include the rejection of a demand because it is not legal? Whose logic is that? Whose legality? The "revolutionary expediency" of special forms of organization of the party for women was outlined by Clara Zetkin in *My Recollections of Lenin*, and was subsequently approved by the Communist International. The Socialist Workers Party has turned this concept upside down to mean special forms of organization outside of the party, which the party dominates.

After dropping the fight against feminism, dropping the broad issues of the women's liberation movement which included working-class issues such as 24-hour day-care centers and equal pay for equal work, the party leadership committed the final murder. *It could not even see a way to keep free and legal abortion in the same demand!* Accordingly, further distortions rapidly began to take form.

Abortion Action Week was frequently motivated by noting its proximity to Mothers Day. Some affiliates actually held their meetings around this event, notably in Canada. Finally, the pages of the *WONAAC Newsletter* became a perfect vote-catcher for liberal bourgeois candidates. On June 1, 1972, the following item appeared:

"Ms Abzug's office worked closely with the WONAAC national staff in drafting this Bill which would make

abortion securely and unquestionably a woman's right." (p. 2)

By June, then, our cadre in WONAAC were not only advocating the two-stage theory of reform, but were actually assisting the bourgeoisie in their efforts to patch up their rotten system!

Independents in the women's movement were thoroughly confused by our political stance. On the one hand, they knew that many SWP women were around the WONAAC offices, and that they were the ones who were pushing this line. Naturally, they assumed that this was a *socialist* line, and they wanted no part of it. If they then attacked SWPers as the key figures in holding back the women's movement, they were called red-baiters. One of these women, Pamela Jo, wrote the following illuminating lines in the *San Francisco Women's Liberation Newsletter*, March 1972:

"The strategy of WONAAC, adapted from formal affiliation with socialist organizations, aims to gain one reform at a time. That's why they ask for legal abortion now and intend to take up the fight for free abortion later. One of the arguments is that the masses of women cannot understand more than one thing at a time. The sexism on this point is obvious, women *can* understand the need for demanding free abortion."

The demonstrations culminating the activities of Abortion Action Week were small and continued to reflect the growing isolation of WONAAC in the women's movement. Including the New York demonstration, less than 3,000 demonstrated nationally. In New York City, the idea that "liberal" politicians would bring out the crowds was multiplied into a trio of "liberals." Mary Lindsay (the mayor's wife), Bella Abzug, and Shirley Chisholm were all invited to speak and appeared as scheduled. Still the crowds stayed away. In Chicago, although a speaker from the mass-based Chicago Women's Liberation Union was present, they did nothing to build the action, but continued in their abortion task force work as their major focus.

The failure of the May 6th demonstrations to draw out significant forces had its impact on the morale of independents as well as our own cadre. The loyal independents on the staff and national coordinating committee had never been educated in the real meaning of women's liberation. They wondered why most feminists wanted nothing to do with WONAAC. Searching for an explanation, they found one in "SWP domination of WONAAC." Without an understanding of the real problems besetting WONAAC, they turned to red-baiting at the 3rd and final WONAAC convention and, for the wrong reasons, opposed the Zimmermann "Fall Action Proposal," on the basis that national focuses had failed and the regional areas had to be built up. Their proposal lost and three staff members and four national coordinators eventually resigned publicly at the conference.

Marxists can find plenty of political fault with the so-called Zimmermann proposal without even examining our organizational behavior. Undoubtedly the May 6th actions had also had their impact on our own leaders. Lobbying was the main interest of the "other" abortion groups. We could see no way to build up our base in a hurry—no way to really have mass demonstrations. And so the Zimmermann Proposal took a giant step in the direction of the "liberal" forces. Anticipating that

"Our fight is necessarily going to be a long fight," Zimmermann proposed the following:

"Call upon WONAAC to step up its support of Congresswoman Bella Abzug's Abortion Rights Act . . . and by projecting a nationwide petition campaign in support of the bill. Call upon WONAAC to send people to the Democratic Party Convention . . . to obtain support . . . from the great number of women who will attend for abortion law repeal and WONAAC's campaigns.

"In particular relation to the conference special attention should be paid to organizing the following discussions at the conference for *implementation after the conference* [omitting a through e]

"(f) *How to do effective lobbying.*"

The SWP leadership had come all the way: how to do effective lobbying! No equivocation here—no confusion! This is Comrade Zimmermann, SWP member, openly proposing one of the favorite sports of the reformists—chasing legislators through the halls of their ivory towers, begging them to support one bill or another. *And this was no slip!*

Naturally, there had to be some rationale for this class-collaborationist work of lobbying. At a New York WONAAC fraction meeting of the SWP, Comrade Hedda Garza, astounded at the proposal, was told by Comrades Ruth R. and Eva C. that "it isn't lobbying if thousands of women go up to Albany." Of course, it was lobbying! Only a few dozen women at a time showed up in Albany and there can be no misinterpretation of what they did: They went from corridor to corridor visiting legislators. This liquidation of our program was also "explained" by Comrade Kipp Dawson in the same issue of the *WONAAC Newsletter*. In answer to an attack on WONAAC for not lobbying earlier in Albany, when anti-abortion legislation had been victorious and was subsequently saved only by Rockefeller's veto, Comrade Dawson wrote:

"When (Hope) Spencer encourages women to lobby their representatives, however, she does not deal with the question of what will make this lobbying effective. How can women be *most effective* in forcing legislators to grant the right to abortion?

"Lobbying is only effective to the degree that there is real power behind the individual lobbyist."

Comrade Dawson continues with her advice for perfecting the system. Nowhere does she explain that we do not subordinate our struggle politically or organizationally to the bourgeoisie—the class enemy—and its representatives. Nowhere does she discuss our uncompromising struggle for the political independence of the working class, the need for extraparliamentary mobilizations of the masses armed with the transitional program. The reasons why lobbying was not done much was because:

"First of all, . . . this would have automatically excluded most women in the city—those who work or have children or could not afford the trip to Albany. Secondly, lobbying isolates women from each other. You go one-by-one or in small groups to confront legislators."

It is obvious that since there was no understanding of the reasons for *not* lobbying, it was easy to change our position on the question. Just get enough women together and it isn't lobbying any more. Of course, if you *can't* get enough women together and you endorse lobbying anyway, no one is at fault.

Shortly before the Supreme Court ruling, the lobbying was stepped up. At a New York State WONAAC conference, the only *workshops* held at the first session were on lobbying techniques chaired, in the main, by women from the Democratic Party. The SWP, obviously in a splendid situation to help plan the workshops, did not propose *any other workshops in conflict with these!* A leaflet calling for legislative hearings in Albany, being organized by Assemblyman Leichter, also called for coming early to visit your legislators. Subsequently, this was removed. A "little mistake" had been made.

Lobbying had become the main focus of the work of WONAAC without so much as a "nay" vote from the Socialist Workers Party cadre. In Minneapolis, in December 1972, a report was given in the party branch and the YSA about another new coalition formed to lobby for a pro-abortion bill pending in the legislature. MWAC joined this coalition. When one party comrade raised the point that the party had a very specific attitude toward lobbying, he was ruled out of order.

In January, without any long hard struggle, the Supreme Court handed down its favorable ruling on abortion. Neither the Socialist Workers Party nor WONAAC was prepared. As Right to Lifers mobilized significant outpourings (over 5,000 in Chicago) chanting "Abort the Court," in many areas WONAAC affiliates responded with "Support the Court," or "Not the Church, Not the State, Women will decide our fate." The latter, of course, was a confused slogan because it *was* the Court that had just decided the issue. *The Militant* proudly displayed photos of these "Support the Court" demonstrations.

#### *Class-Struggle Policy Versus Sectarianism*

The party ranks are told that they have a choice between the "class struggle policy" in WONAAC outlined by Stone and Waters, or the "sectarianism" of the Internationalist Tendency, as charged by Evelyn Reed. We believe that the real choice is instead between an opportunist and adaptationist line of the party in relation to its work in the women's movement, and the genuine "Leninist-Trotskyist" line of the Internationalist Tendency.

The Stone-Waters document claimed that the party advanced a line "and perspective that speaks to the real problems and needs of the working class." If that were true we would have maintained the fight for free and

legal abortion. It claimed that the SWP class struggle policy was based on "Political independence for the individuals and institutions of the ruling class apparatus. . . ." If that were true we would never have given so much as a nod toward lobbying. And, thirdly, it claims that we used "proletarian methods." Catering to feminism and lobbying (one at a time) are certainly not in the category of proletarian methods.

Sectarians abstain from struggles (like the Wohlforth group's abstention from the women's movement). The Internationalist Tendency believes that we should have participated in that struggle with a clear class line.

In the conclusion of the section entitled "The Radicalization of Women," in the article "A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe,'" Comrade Waters scolds the European comrades for refusing to see the centrality of feminism ("women as a distinct social group") and then goes on to comment "ironically . . . the European sections *have* turned toward the rise of the women's liberation movement and drawn some correct lessons from it."

We throw up our hands in exasperation! The real problem seems to be not that our European comrades abstained from the women's movement, but that they didn't play the damaging role in that movement that we managed to play in the United States. They did not isolate themselves from the vanguard layer of the women's movement. Nowhere has our party's intervention been "an important route to penetrating the factories, to reaching the lowest paid and most oppressed sector of the working class," as Comrade Waters indicated would happen. Our party stands isolated, leads no "working masses" and can't find "even if indirectly at first" a "route to penetrating the factories." It has failed to accomplish even its aim of penetrating the women's movement. The method of Waters et al. — the adaptationist and opportunist method which made them capable of supporting feminism and then lobbying — must be scrapped. If it continues, the party will bog down in the intensifying class struggle and we will carry the dead weight of the corpse of WONAAC on its back for many years.

We urge a new analysis of our women's work, as well as the other work of the party. We urge support for the political resolution of the Internationalist Tendency and the resolutions of the International Majority Tendency.

July 28, 1973

# SOVIET ETHNOLOGY—LAST STRONGHOLD OF MATRIARCHALISM

by R. Vernon, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

The ethnic situation in the Soviet Union can support a wide range of ethnographic studies of pre-industrial peoples: Lapps, Komi, Samoyed in the Arctic, a multiplicity of peoples in the Caucasus, advanced pastoralists and agriculturists in Central Asia and among the Mongols, and Tungus, Nivkh, Chukchi, Eskimo in the north far east. Military and tax records on all Siberian peoples dating back to the early 17th century provide material for diachronic studies.

The N. N. Miklukho-Maklai Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences has been in business for almost half a century, and its work provides a test case for the viability of matriarchalism backed up by formal Marxism and vast academic resources, and guaranteed intellectual monopoly by bureaucratic state power.

Soviet ethnography and ethnology made modest advances through the Thirties to the Fifties, with fieldwork on the diverse array of minor Soviet peoples and accumulation and training of cadres. Theory was Marxist-Leninist crude pre-1910 matriarchalist. M. O. Kosven's *Matriarkhat. Istoriya Problemy* [Matriarchate. A History of the Topic], 1948, is a compendium of everything anyone said or wrote on the topic from ancient times to the turn of the century, and ignores all of contemporary social-anthropology (but does not ignore weighty contributions by J. V. Stalin).

As far as I can tell, ethnological, archeological, and anthropological studies in the Soviet Union seem to have escaped the worst of this bureaucratic situation. But that is hard to believe when we take a look at some of the worst, by way of comparison.

N. Y. Marr regime in linguistics. Stalin's fellow Georgian crony N. Y. Marr dominated academic life in linguistics not only to his death in 1934, but for a decade and a half after. Marr developed a proletarian class theory of linguistics tied in with the evolution of language types in step with stages of human social evolution. The earliest stage was that of monosyllabic languages\*, followed by stages of agglutinative and incorporative languages, and the latest and highest stage of inflective languages (Indo-European, Semitic). Different classes developed different language types, moving the historical process along.

\* This is remarkably similar to Meinhof's "theory" of how the Bantu peoples manage to speak highly inflected and agglutinative languages, clearly beyond their mental powers. Meinhof opined that the original languages of the Africans were the monosyllabic types spoken along the Guinea coast in West Africa (Twi, Ewe, Ga, Yoruba, Igbo), and that subsequent invasions by partly white Hamitic and Semitic peoples advanced the lowly Africans to a higher linguistic stage. C. Meinhof, "Der Ful in seiner Bedeutung für die Sprachen der Hamiten, Semiten, und Bantu," *Z. der Deutschen Morgeländischen Gesellschaft*, Bd. 65 (1911).

Even that is conservative compared to the synthesizing genius of the leading 19th century American ethnologist J. W. Powell, who successfully correlated stages of human evolution with evolution in languages, architecture, and music. Powell's stages of music ranged from the lowest, Rhythm, through Melody and Harmony to the highest

Grumbling and dissatisfaction with Marr's findings built up to a groundswell among Soviet linguists by the late Forties. Before the situation got out of hand, J. V. Stalin stepped in and exposed Marr's failures and deviations from Marxism-Leninism in *Marksizm i Voprosy Yazykoznaniiya* [Marxism and problems in linguistics] (1952). Soviet scholars in linguistics were then given the opportunity to come forth in self-criticism, confess their errors in stupidly following Marr's teachings, and gratefully praise Stalin's genius for setting things straight.

T. D. Lysenko regime in genetics. Trofim D. Lysenko became director of the Institute of Genetics of the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1940. A student of the Russian botanists Michurin and Timiryazev, he made their non-acceptance of Mendelian genetics into law and re-enshrined the Lamarckian theory of inheritance of acquired characters, not neglecting to invoke Engels' acceptance of that theory in *Role of Labor in the Transition from Ape to Human*. Soviet geneticists not convinced by his arguments got short shrift on promotions, grants, fringe benefits, publicity, emoluments. If those arguments were not convincing, fellow scientists Beriya and Stalin had more compelling ones.

By 1948, Lysenko reigned supreme in genetics, defending the Marxist-Leninist method in biology against the reactionary followers of Mendel and Morgan.\*\* In his address before the V. I. Lenin Agricultural Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Trofim Denisovich Lysenko outlined the struggle between "two camps, two ideologies—in biology," the camp of reaction and the camp of progress with Marxism-Leninism at the head, and proclaimed the victory of the latter over the forces of darkness that had gained hegemony at the turn of the century. With the death of his scientific patron in March 1953, T. D.'s star was on the wane, and after the 20th Congress of the CPSU Trofim Denisovich was retired back to a plant-grafting laboratory, or someplace.

By the Fifties and early Sixties, the quantity and quality of Soviet scholars in the social-historical sciences show measurable improvements. More topics are covered in research, the first steps are made in correcting L. H. Morgan's crudest errors and in examining their consequences, interchanges with colleagues in the capitalist countries increase. There is an expansion in the volume of ethnographic data on peoples all around the world, available to study by Soviet scholars, including data on Soviet peoples not generally available to colleagues in the capitalist countries. Soviet ethnographers and ethnologists specializing on particular areas of the world came into prominence: Y. P. Averkieva on Pacific Coast Native Americans (she studied under F. Boas in British Columbia and in the Alaka panhandle area circa 1929-1931), S. A. Tokarev on Oceania, B. O. Dolgikh on Arctic Siberia, I. I. Potekhin and D. A. Ol'derogge on Africa, L. A. Fain-

stage, Symphony. Y'all know who got rhythm.

\*\* Thomas Hunt Morgan, discoverer of the Chromosome, 1933 Nobel prize.



berg on the Eskimos, Ch. M. Taksami on his own people—the Nivkh, N. A. Butinov on New Guinea, V. R. Kabo on Australia.

These Soviet scholars are all experts on sniffing out "vestiges" of "matriarchal" structures and customs in their area of study and in building up systems of "vestiges." The patent failure of Morgan's periodization of pre-history ad led to serious rethinking, and attempts at alternate periodizations, specifically of anthropogenesis [evolution of the human physical form in paleoanthropological studies], glottogenesis [evolution of language], and sociogenesis [evolution of human social institutions: community, clan, family] as parallel and interconnected processes. Irmgard Sellnow, an East German ethnologist (*Grundprinzipien einer Periodisierung der Urgeschichte*, Berlin, 1961), has presented a periodization of pre-history which is esteemed highly by Soviet colleagues, although some of her formulations come in for criticism.

#### *Polemic on Sociogenesis*

The first challenge to the matriarchalist establishment in Soviet ethnology, that I can trace, was voiced by N. A. Butinov and V. R. Kabo (*Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, No. 3, 1965). Butinov insisted that "the Marxist theory of pre-history rests on a much more solid foundation than the matriclan," emphasizing prepatriarchal hunting peoples with patrilineal and patrilocal traits: Semang, Aeta, Australians, Bushmen, Kubu—and challenging the prevailing view that all of this could be explained away as effects of surrounding societies. Butinov branded that type of ad hoc reasoning an abandonment of the Morgan-Engels method to begin with, since it amounted to rejecting the ethnographic data. The shocked and indignant reaction by matriarchalists A. I. Pershits, L. A. Fainberg, and N. N. Cheboksarev condemned this irresponsible skepticism, chided Butinov and Kabo on their previous acceptance of standard matriarchalist views, and hinted at their capitulation to patriarchalists and anti-Marxists in the capitalist countries.

Since that time, the dispute has grown into a full-scale open polemic aired in the pages of *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, *Voprosy Istorii*, *Voprosy Filosofii*, and in occasional compendia of articles. The line-up of matriarchalists includes: Averkieva, Fainberg, Kosven, Pershits, Tokarev, Dolgikh, S. P. Tolstov, Cheboksarev, Y. P. Bromley, archeologists P. P. Efimenko, V. I. Ravdokinas, and is led by Y. I. Semenov. Anti-matriarchalist critics include: Butinov, Kabo, V. M. Bakhta, D. V. Gur'ev, I. F. Kuznetsov, and L. V. Danilova.

To present the comrades with a brief view of the opposing views, I yield the floor to L. V. Danilova, since I feel she does a competent and fair job of review of one aspect of the dispute:

"The new trend represented by . . . N. A. Butinov, V. M. Bakhta, V. R. Kabo proceeds from a viewpoint common to all Marxists on primitive society as that stage in the development of society whose principal feature is collectivism. But the specific forms of that collectivism are characterized in a novel way. In the traditional view, the clan is the principal and all-encompassing social organism in primitive society, while the above investigators view the community as the social organism meeting that description. The everyday life of the people takes place . . . within the community. . . . The development of the community and changes in forms of community trace

a progressive motion of primitive society, its transition to the next and higher historical stage. As for clan organization, this is only one of the forms of regulating consanguineal ties and affinal [family-marriage] ties arising at a certain stage of development of primitive society. The clan is recorded as a universal phenomenon only in the period of barbarism. There are grounds for presuming that the matriclan does not necessarily have primacy over the patriclan. Both forms of clan exist independently and in parallel.

"The evolution, role, and place in social structure of the family—the unit cell in which reproduction of humans takes place—is sketched in a different manner from these vantage points. An important component part of this new concept is . . . that the pairing family arose much earlier than is commonly thought. But this approach calls for a revision of the hypotheses on a protracted epoch of "group marriage" and on the role of natural selection in the evolution of affinal relations. The pairing family, while performing certain economic functions, was not self-sufficient or viable outside the community. Only with progress in the development of productive forces, creating the possibility of individualized production, did the family begin to encroach on the role of the community as basic productive unit. But this happened on the eve of the transition to class society. The first form of the family brought into life by purely economic conditions was the monogamic family (and, to a certain extent, its precursor—the extended patriarchal family).

"Citing the primitive community as the basic social unit of primitive society, distinct from the clan (and equally distinct from any other forms of organization of consanguineal and affinal ties), entails more than statement of a concrete historical fact extracted from . . . ethnographic data. This is at the same time a new interpretation of the history of primitive society. Its essence is . . . two important but distinct types of social relations . . . One of them (economic relations) stems from the production of means of subsistence, the other (consanguineal and affinal relations) stems from the reproduction of humans. . . . The clan and the community, and their respective social ties, interact dialectically. Even though the community was a collective based on blood ties and fraternal bonds, production relations had unquestioned primacy within it, while consanguineal relations prevailed outside it, in intercommunity contacts, which eventually took the clan form. Clan bonds thus transformed the isolated primitive communities into an integral social organism, into a society in the broad sense of the word.

"This concept is based on Engels' familiar statement on two types of material production: production of means of subsistence and reproduction of the human species.

"The first reaction to the appearance of this new trend in the science of pre-history was to attempt to question the data and sources on which it was based. But the facts proved too evident and could not be gotten around. At the present time, the polemic revolves around elucidation of the data put into scientific circulation by the representatives of the new trend.

"Y. I. Semenov has come forth with a serious revision of widely entertained views on pre-history. The keystone in the concept put forth by this scientist is defining the human society in process of formation (the primitive horde) in which biosocial regularities are operative . . .

Semenov . . . validly criticizes those attempts at periodization . . . in which the stage of formation of human society is subsumed within primitive-community formation. 'The period of the primitive horde' — Semonov writes — 'unquestionably constituted the period when clan society formed. But the formative process of clan society differs qualitatively and fundamentally from the processes by which [class] societies formed . . . process of changes in an already existing human society. . . .'

"It is clear from this quote that Semenov sees the beginning of the primitive formation coinciding with establishment of the clan system. Presenting the process of sociogenesis . . . as the result of productive activity, Semenov quite consistently assesses clan relations as productive relations. But he also admits that clans do not persist in that form in a single one of the peoples known to science. Consequently, the classical stage of clan structure is assigned by Semenov to a time when dyslocal marriage prevailed. The divergence of community and clan is, in his view, a symptom and a result of the breakdown of clan structure.

". . . Semenov sees the essence of the clan in that it was the first human association all of whose members were bound by social ties. Its appearance on the scene is both the result and the evidence of the fact that productive relations won definitive hegemony over biological relations, and completely displaced the latter from the human collective. Since the human belonged to the economic collective in which he was born, the initial form of the clan could not be other, in Semenov's opinion, than the matrilineal." [L. V. Danilova, "Problems in dispute in the theory of precapitalist societies," in: *Problemy Istorii Dokapitalisticheskikh Obshchestv*, Moscow (1968)]

#### *Evaluation of the Dispute*

Both schools of thought are vigorously developing and presenting their views, and interesting fruitful contributions

are forthcoming from both. At this point, I see no evidence of blatant coercion by the bureaucracy in one direction or the other. The new Soviet matriarchalism is very much different from, and far more sophisticated than, its precursor, and has been developing under the impetus of blows from its critics. The contrast between this discussion, apparently untrammelled, and the "discussions" in the sciences in the Marr-Lyskeko-Stalin period is striking.

Neither of the two conflicting schools can be given justice in this space. Semenov has expounded his views in two major monographs, *Vozniknovenie chelovecheskogo obshchestva*, Krasnoyarsk (1962), and *Kak vzniklo chelovechestvo*, Moscow (1966). So far, scholars in the capitalist countries appear totally oblivious to the existence of the dispute, much less to its significance.

Both schools seem to be characterized by interest in launching sophisticated and nontrivial hypotheses on pre-history, taking the wealth of ethnographic data now available into serious account as restrictions and checks on the validity of their work, and as starting points in many aspects of their work. Their interest in probing and conjecturing into pre-history sets them off in contrast to their most audacious western colleagues. Their respect for the ethnographic data leaves a wide gulf between them and earlier speculators, including earlier Soviet speculators, on sociogenesis.

Pre-history is not the only historical topic worked on by Soviet scholars that is of potential interest to us. Others are doing interesting work on the origins of capitalism in Euro-feudal society, the problem of why only Europe developed feudalism leading to capitalism, Asiatic modes of production, state bureaucracies in the Far East, in southeast Asia, and in the pre-Columbian Americas, social forms in Central Asia, Varieties of pre-capitalist but post-primitive societies around the world.

July 27, 1973

### THE MAITAN-MANDEL-FRANK TENDENCY AS A GUIDE FOR REVOLUTIONISTS: NO IRISH NEED APPLY

by Sally Lemley Moore, Brooklyn Branch,  
New York Local

Ireland was in a prerevolutionary situation in 1972. This country has been one of the three world key areas of revolutionary struggle, along with Vietnam and the Middle East. A balance sheet is necessary to assess what the Fourth International has done in Ireland itself and the work it has done in support of the Irish revolution. If the document "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" is supposed to do this, it totally failed. Ireland is *only* mentioned six times throughout the MMF tendency's document and Germain's "Building a Leninist Party." The Maitan-Mandel-Frank tendency has failed to put forth a program for or in support of the Irish revolution.

What the MMF tendency's documents and the Internationalist Tendency's document have to say or do not

say about Ireland reflects and flows directly from their analysis on Latin America. They have mechanically applied to Ireland the same concept of armed struggle that they hold for Latin America. The current demobilization of the Irish masses is the result of the same policies as those in the MMF tendency and the Internationalist Tendency. This demobilization is the result of a lack of a revolutionary party giving revolutionary direction to the nationalist aspirations of the Irish.

The revolutionary party in Ireland should have a correct understanding of the national question and must combat the physical force or terrorist line advanced by both wings of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The key tasks of Irish revolutionaries today are first to win the demands of the civil rights movement, and second

to build a support campaign in the south. Reunification flows logically out of the civil rights movement, as was proved in the struggle itself. It is the key to the support campaign in the south because it directly poses who the oppressor is — the Protestant Unionists.

### *The Conquest of Ireland*

It is necessary to examine the colonization of Ireland to understand the national question and the need for revolutionaries to defend the nationalist struggles there. The complete conquest and domination of Ireland go back well over 400 years to when the Tudor monarchy and later Cromwell, leading figure of the English bourgeois revolution, began under the name of Protestantism to eliminate the tribal system to steal Irish lands for British lords.

To completely uproot any vestiges of tribalism, the English bourgeoisie committed virtual genocide. Native Irish were hunted to death or sold into slavery for British markets in the West Indies. All lands were confiscated. And this annihilation had the religious justification of Protestantism. The Irish who remained Catholic were regarded as "heathen Canaanites." Protestant colonies loyal to the crown were established on the confiscated lands. Thus began the process of making Ireland a colony totally dependent, economically, politically, and socially on England.

The largest Protestant colony was established in Northern Ireland, Ulster, where the resistance of the tribal chiefs was greatest. This was called the Plantation. The descendants of these settlers form the basic stock of the Unionist population of Northern Ireland, which represents the largest area in the country where a safe majority can be assembled. This is the key to understanding the oppression of the Irish nationalists. British Protestants came to Ireland with the idea of settling the country, and this colonial mentality continues to this day. The Protestants call themselves loyalists or Unionists to differentiate themselves from the Irish. Two rigidly separated societies have existed since the time of the Plantation, one oppressed and the other the oppressor. Religion, which has a stronghold in Ireland, is the formal dividing line. Discrimination against Catholics is carried out in schools, jobs, and housing. The Protestant Unionists reap the best privileges in all these fields. Catholics are kept segregated where they live and work, by the church they attend and the schools they go to. This situation was reinforced by the smallness of the country and the social immobility of the society. Catholic segregation is unlike that of the Blacks in Rhodesia and the Arabs in Palestine which is done along color lines. But the effect is the same: to keep them oppressed. The role of the Unionists is analogous to the role of the white minority in Rhodesia. Both these oppressor castes have shown they are willing to break with the British crown to maintain their privileges.

The only institution that in any way represented the native Irish who survived the British conquerors was the Catholic Church. Even the language of the conquered people, the traditions, and the culture were barely visible after the 17th century. The Penal Code imposed by the British crown did not allow Catholics to vote, hold office, or possess arms, and subjected them to special taxes

and special restraints if they were landowners. Some elements of the Church did join in some struggles for lands and against the Code, but the Church as a whole had no desire whatever to end the domination of England. The Church continuously betrayed the nationalists who saw separation as the answer to Ireland's oppression.

### *Partition*

The principal means by which the self-determination of the Irish nation is denied today is partition. After the suppression of the Easter Uprising in 1916, the British were still confronted by the fact that the majority of the Irish wanted a Free Irish Republic and were mobilizing for it. To head off this demand Lord George of England imposed the Government of Ireland Act in 1920. Its essence was the creation of two parallel legislatures as an alternative to allowing what the majority wanted. These legislatures were both to be wholly subordinated to the Parliament at Westminster and their local powers were severely limited.

"Northern Ireland" was successfully established. It included most of the population anxious to preserve the Union. But attached to them was a large minority who desired inclusion in an Irish Republic. These formed a majority in a wide belt around the southern and western borders of the new jurisdiction. They were part of the majority of the Irish Republic, but their position was rendered ineffective by the imperial decree.

"Southern Ireland" under English rule did not materialize. It was stillborn. The opposition was too intense and it was unanimous. The national revolution was not strong enough, however, to gain a United Irish Republic. A compromise was reached. Twenty-six counties earmarked for southern Ireland became the Irish "Free State" and in this part neocolonial relationships developed.

The desire for separation from England is endemic in the Catholic population in Ireland. Struggle after struggle has occurred for this, and it carries over to this day. This revolutionary tendency has never fully crystallized. There are several reasons for this: the historic peasant character of the country, the isolation, the reactionary climate, forced emigration of the oppressed population, and repression. All these have in the past prevented the development of a homogeneous leadership which could give full expression to the underlying aspirations of the people. This tendency, however, has been and remains the most powerful force in Irish history, which cannot be understood apart from it.

### *The Irish Struggle Today*

The situation today in Northern Ireland is that the Catholics comprise 34 percent of the population and a majority in most cities outside Belfast; yet they are oppressed by the Protestant Ulster State. Unemployment among the Catholics is as high as 27 percent in some cities. Catholics are concentrated in the worst ghettos in Ireland. Property qualifications are set up so that many Irish Catholics are unable to vote. Gerrymandering is commonly practiced to maintain Protestant electoral control over areas where Catholics predominate. The prejudice goes so deep that Protestants look upon Catholics as lazy, treacherous, and inclined to excesses of sensual-

ity.

Out of this situation came a challenge to the reactionary structure of British rule, the civil rights movement. The movement emerged with civil rights demonstrations in 1968, with democratic demands for an end to disfranchisement of the poor and an end to the political and religious discrimination against Catholics. The civil rights movement became a united front of the Catholic population led by militant fighters in direct confrontation with Unionist authorities and the British Army, which were supported to one degree or another by the overwhelming majority of Protestants. The civil rights movement propelled the nationally oppressed Catholic community into violent struggle against Unionism itself—into a national revolution. At the same time it provoked a violent counterrevolutionary response from the Protestants. All the objective conditions existed for a revolution. But the subjective conditions did not exist—a revolutionary leadership capable of taking this process to consummation.

### *Failure of the Nationalist Leadership*

The Irish Republican Army has failed to rise to the historic occasion. An important aspect of this failure evolves from its historic weaknesses. When Republicanism, as embodied in the IRA, developed from the nationalist struggle in 1916-1922, it had a radical and populist character. Its predominant themes were moralistic—loyalty to the republic and making violence a principle, along with abstention from elections. The IRA was largely a romantic paramilitary organization. All these weaknesses carry over to their politics today.

The IRA is the only radical force in Ireland that seems to understand the potential of the nationalist struggle and is trying to lead it. What has been needed by the IRA is a political program and examination of their past campaigns and struggles. But this was only partially done, primarily by the Official wing. They were doomed to commit the same mistakes. These revolve around three points: first, the relation of democratic demands to a revolutionary program; second, the revolutionary character of the national question; third, physical force or terrorism which isolates the leadership from the masses. The IRA failed to understand that the democratic demands of the civil rights movement mobilized masses of Irish nationalists against their oppression and at the same time posed the crucial questions of who should control Ireland and how it should be run. (All of the left failed in this understanding too.) They were all saying that the nationalists should be struggling for socialism, in effect posing this against the *national* struggle. The Officials did not understand that the nationalist majority was oppressed by the Protestant Unionists in Northern Ireland. They considered the Unionists misguided Irish. They continually tried to find means of unity between Catholics and Protestants rather than to consistently fight for the rights of the nationalists. This misunderstanding especially hindered their ability to create a support movement in the south. If a support movement were to develop in the south, it would be a Catholic movement challenging the rule of the Unionists. This is why the demand for reunification of Ireland is important in the campaign in the south. This misunderstanding of the national question underlay a workerist approach. The Officials would counterpose the demands of the nationalists to winning

unity between the Catholics and the Protestant working class. How can Catholics relate to unity with Protestants, when in reality it is the Protestants who are oppressing them? The workerist approach confused the issue of who the oppressor is.

The third point which the IRA had not tackled is the old historical question of physical force, or terrorism. This question seemed to come to the forefront when a split occurred in the IRA in 1970. The Provisional wing maintained the old paramilitary approach. The Officials tried to break away from this. While they correctly turned (for a time) toward the civil rights movement, and participated in elections, they still were unable to break from the physical force tradition. This was indicated by their endorsement of the Aldershot bombing in London in late 1971.

These were the weaknesses of the Republican leaders. What kind of guidance is offered by the MMF tendency in their document as an orientation for our Irish comrades? To do this, we must look the approach in practice of the MMF tendency and the approach in practice of the SWP.

### *Terrorism*

On terrorism, or as it is known to Irish revolutionaries, physical force. This is not a new question in Ireland. It goes back as far as the 1840s. The MMF tendency's guidance to the Irish revolution on this key issue is shown by the actions of the British section of the Fourth International, the International Marxist Group (IMG).

A look at their publications shows that they gave explicit support to the Provisionals' bombing campaign. In the *Red Mole*, November 11, 1972, an article titled "The Politics of the Provisionals" said:

"If we draw up a balance sheet (on the bombing campaign) a very heavy balance is on the positive side. The campaign helped maintain the free areas for much longer than they would have existed by pinning down large numbers of troops."

The *Red Mole* of August 7, 1972, said in an editorial:

"The IRA does not need to force the British Army out at gunpoint, all they need to do is to deny the British any peace; mounting deaths amongst British soldiers, spiralling costs and a deepening political crisis will do the rest."

Denying the British Army peace is nothing other than guerrilla activity. The *Red Mole* also supported an Irish organization called Saor Eire. This organization was no larger than 25 at the most, worked clandestinely and had dubious connections. The principle occupation of this organization was to rob banks to support the revolution. Yet the *Red Mole* published three articles about this group, praising it, and characterizing it as a possible fusion between republicanism and Marxism.

### *Democratic Demands*

We can see that the MMF tendency is turning away from the role of democratic demands assigned to them by the Transitional Program. We can see this in a document "On Theory of Democratic and Transitional Demands and Other Stupidities" by A. Jones, a leading member of the IMG, when he said:

". . . precisely because the bourgeoisie will not fight for the demands of the bourgeois revolution, therefore

it is even more vital that the proletariat denounces the sham of democracy and fights under the banner of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is precisely because the bourgeoisie will not fight for bourgeois democracy that the programme of democracy—the programme of popular front—must be so rigorously fought against."

It is from this understanding of democratic demands that the IMG was unable to build a solidarity movement in Britain. They would always raise the demand "Victory to the IRA" along with "Immediate Withdrawal of British Troops from Ireland," claiming that withdrawal was not enough. Along with these demands they called for unconditional support for armed struggle. What they failed to see was how democratic demands can propel masses into revolutionary motion. In Ireland the democratic demands of the Irish nationalists for an end to political and religious discrimination propelled the Irish masses into a revolutionary struggle that challenged the ruling structure of Ireland.

### *Nationalism*

The MMF tendency has little to say about the unresolved aspects of the national question in Ireland. Is their position Germain's interpretation? He states that nationalism *as a rule* is reactionary in the age of imperialism and the only exceptions are oppressed nationalities who do not have a bourgeoisie. The Internationalist Tendency grants that the national question can play a progressive role, but we are only to give it "critical support." But then they go on to say:

"It did not mean that we should endorse the nationalism of the oppressed, but rather, that while we intransigently fight the nationalism of the oppressor, our attitude is to patiently explain the bankruptcy of nationalism to the liberation fighters of oppressed nations."

How are Irish revolutionists supposed to relate to the national question. If they follow the advice of the MMF

tendency and their American supporters, they will denounce the nationalism of an oppressed people as "bankrupt." We say "no thanks" to such non-Leninist "advice." Thus no guide is offered on *this* key question for Irish revolutionists either.

### *Approach of the SWP*

In contrast to their approach, consider the approach of the SWP. The SWP understood that the key task of the Irish struggle was to build a revolutionary party. We could only intervene gingerly. We cannot substitute ourselves for others. Nevertheless, we propagandized among Republicans, trying to win this vanguard to our program. We explained how democratic demands of the civil rights movement were directly linked to the demand for national unification. We explained in our press how nationalism is related to socialism and how only socialism can solve Ireland's problems. We tried to win Republicans over to our understanding of the national question. We did as much as we could to fight their concept of terrorism. We urged them to build a revolutionary party. We did this in the pages of *Intercontinental Press* and in the pamphlets written by Gerry Foley on the Irish revolution.

The SWP also helped build coalitions in four cities in the United States among Irish-Americans to make the public aware of the struggle in Ireland. We did this by using the two slogans of "Immediate Withdrawal of British Troops" and "End Internment." We saw these as demands that could mobilize the largest movement, as did the slogan "Bring the Troops Home Now" in the antiwar movement. These coalitions carried many demonstrations drawing thousands in support of the Irish struggle.

We can see from these two approaches which is the most useful for the Irish struggle both in Ireland and elsewhere. The MMF tendency's failure to offer guidance in the Irish struggle is obvious.

July 28, 1973

## OUR POSITION OF THE "DEMOCRATIC SECULAR PALESTINE" DEMAND: THE I. T. DISTORTIONS AND THE ACTUAL RECORD

by Peter Buch, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

Even before the sordid revelations of the Barzman letter were made known to the party, it had become evident to many comrades that the unrestrained and rapidly accumulating distortions of the party's actual political positions and practice—as well as the mounting clamor over "unfair" treatment which would be referred to nameless "higher bodies"—were not really intended by the leaders of the Internationalist Tendency to convince the party ranks politically. Rather, they were designed to give "ammunition" to their cothinkers abroad (now revealed as part of a secret faction) and to present a false picture of the SWP to comrades in the international sections whose

remoteness made verification difficult. Another major aim was to group together in their faction as many disgruntled elements as possible with personal grievances against the leadership in order to make a "good showing" of numbers at the convention. Principled questions which might impede such redoubtable unity were avoided or evaded, such as Out Now vs. Sign Now in Vietnam; the nature of Maoism (Stalinist or centrist?); guerrilla warfare in Latin America; and Israeli self-determination.

Distasteful as it is under these circumstances to deal seriously with the strictly factional concoction submitted as the "political counterresolution" of the International-

ist Tendency ("The Building of a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America," SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 31, No. 18), I believe it would be useful to help set the record straight on one particular distortion which will play a much more important role in the international discussion:

"The SWP leadership's adaptation to nationalism also takes another form: tail-ending the petty-bourgeois program and leadership of national liberation struggles. The case of Palestine was the clearest example of this tendency. The SWP uncritically endorsed Al Fateh's call for a Democratic Secular Palestine, without clarifying its class content. In the case of Vietnam [and presumably in the case of Palestine, too—PB], the SWP leadership has confined the party's propaganda to the call for self-determination, without raising the need for the establishment of a workers' state as central to the colonial revolution." ("The Building of a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America," [hereafter BARP], p. 8.)

Further on, the document seems to acknowledge that democratic demands can become algebraic formulas with working-class content if linked to calls for action which mobilize the class in its own interests, as in the battle for a democratic republic in post-war Italy. "However, the very same algebraic formula was put forward without any class content in the call for a 'Democratic Secular Palestine,' which the SWP endorsed at its 1971 convention. This is as incorrect as the Maoist-Stalinist call for a 'New Democracy,' which leads to the subordination of the working class to the bourgeoisie." (BARP, p. 10.)

This is an extremely serious charge. Our international movement was built in large part around the struggle against the Stalinist two-stage theory, taken over from Menshevism, which condemned revolution after revolution to defeat by "subordination of the working class to the bourgeoisie." Is there any basis for this accusation in our position on the Palestinian liberation struggle?

#### *Proof Positive*

Two very selective quotations are apparently sufficient for the I.T. leaders to establish the SWP's abandonment of Trotskyism on this crucial question. Of all the public and internal writings of the party leadership, this is presumably the most damning material they could find.

First are two sentences from the 1971 *National Committee Draft Resolution on Israel and the Arab Revolution*:

"The currently expressed goal of the struggle is the establishment of a democratic, secular Palestine. We give unconditional support to this struggle of the Palestinians for self-determination" (quoted in BARP, p. 10).

The second piece of evidence is a quote from National Committee member Gus Horowitz's *Reply to Comrades Langston, Langston, and Rothschild* (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 29, No. 16, July 1971):

"Bourgeois democratic demands, like that for a democratic, secular Palestine, are a part, in fact a central part, of the revolutionary socialist program. Langston, Langston and Rothschild are wrong when they contend that the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine is the practical expression of 'non-recognition of the existence of antagonistic classes within the Palestinian people'" (quoted in BARP, p. 10).

That's it! Point proved. Q. E. D. Next question!

The quotation from the convention resolution reaffirms the *unconditional* character of our support for the Palestinian struggle. Indeed, and very properly, the very *first* sentence of the resolution makes that basic point:

"1. The Socialist Workers Party gives unconditional support to the national liberation struggles of the Arab peoples against imperialism, that is, we support all these struggles regardless of their current leaderships."

Do we have anything more to say about the "current leaderships" and their policies, the class forces, the need for proletarian leadership, the posing of transitional as well as democratic demands, and the need for Leninist parties in the Arab world? Comrades who do not have the resolution at hand would never know it from the "evidence" in BARP.

The 1971 convention adopted the draft resolution and it appeared in the December 1971 *International Socialist Review* as our official public position. Here is what it says in Part I, Sections 5-7 (*ISR*, Dec. 1971, pp. 30-31):

"5. In the epoch of imperialism, neither the Palestinians in particular, nor the Arab peoples in general, can fully attain the goals of their struggle for national liberation, national economic development, and other democratic tasks, except through the process of permanent revolution. These objectives can only be fully realized and guaranteed by the victory of the working class at the head of the toiling masses, chiefly the peasantry, in a revolution against the imperialists, their Israeli agents, the Arab national bourgeoisie, and Arab feudal remnants. The program of this revolution will combine democratic and transitional demands directed toward the creation of a workers state. This proletarian strategy implies unconditional support for carrying out the democratic tasks. The national bourgeoisie, whether 'progressive' or 'conservative,' cannot lead the struggle for national liberation and democratization to victory over the imperialists, but instead limits, diverts and suppresses it.

"6. To lead the struggle for national liberation to completion through the process of permanent revolution, the creation of mass revolutionary-socialist parties is absolutely essential in both the Arab countries and Israel.

"7. Such parties do not yet exist either in the Arab countries or in Israel. . . . None of the various Palestinian liberation organizations meet the criteria for such revolutionary-socialist parties, in theory, program, or organization. . . . We should maintain an attitude of general support to the Palestinian struggle and in that sense to all the main struggle organizations, reserving full freedom to present our own views on program and other issues.

"8. . . . The dialectical relationship between the Palestinian revolution and the Arab revolution as a whole was graphically illustrated at the time of the 1970 civil war in Jordan. The logic of the Palestinian struggle against Israel led to a situation approximating dual power in Jordan and a new stage in the independence of the Palestinian fighters from the Soviet bureaucracy and those Arab regimes that accepted the Rogers plan. This pitted the Palestinian masses in a revolutionary struggle against the Hussein regime."

The last paragraph refers to the civil war in Jordan where the Palestinian revolutionaries took over the second largest town in the country, Irbid, in what became known as the "first Arab soviet."

### *More Counterevidence*

The reader will forgive, I hope, the lengthy counterquotation to the "counterresolution," but it is both an index to the degree of its distortions and a sign of the validity of the party position that simple quotation from our resolution can so completely refute the I. T. contentions. But for the sake of completeness, we are forced to offer still more counterevidence to the "counterresolution."

In his *Reply to Comrades Langston, Langston, and Rothschild*, Comrade Horowitz says specifically:

"By itself, this demand [for a democratic, secular Palestine — PB] is insufficient. But we do not reject it on that account. To win this self-determination demand, it will be necessary to carry out a revolution culminating in the creation of a workers state, which will be democratic, secular, and more. It will necessitate the creation of a Leninist party to lead the struggle, a party with a consistently revolutionary program, incorporating the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine along with an entire series of democratic and transitional demands. . . . The revolutionary party mobilizes the masses in struggle independently of the national bourgeoisie, not only by raising working class demands, but in large part by its consistent struggle around bourgeois democratic demands. Our opposition to the national bourgeoisie stems not from the fact that it lends occasional support to bourgeois democratic demands, but from the fact that it betrays the struggle for these demands. To make this clear, it is the revolutionary socialist party that must emerge as the champion of the struggle for these democratic demands.

"In short, Langston, Langston and Rothschild *counterpose* the creation of a workers state to the creation of a democratic, secular Palestine. The revolutionary socialist approach is to present the creation of a workers state *as the means of achieving and guaranteeing* the goal of a democratic, secular Palestine" (original emphasis).

### *The Fatah Statement*

The Fatah declaration for a "Democratic Secular Palestine" was published by *The Militant* in October 1970, just as King Hussein was delivering a fearful military setback to the Palestinian fighters. Was the statement preceded by an attack by the editors on the Fatah and its "non-class" position? No. It was published first of all as a service to the readers of *The Militant* and the supporters of the colonial liberation struggle, to present information on the real views and demands of the Palestinian resistance movement, especially in light of the massive distortions, prejudices, and lack of information prevailing about this movement. Furthermore, the document represented a major step forward for the Palestinian movement, away from the call for revenge, the reliance on Arab regimes, and the religious demagoguery and Jew-hatred of the previous self-appointed reactionary spokesmen for their cause. While it did not specify the class character of the new democratic Palestine it envisioned, the statement was actually to the left of the programs of such Stalinist-led movements as the South Vietnamese NLF or the Maoists with their "New Democracy," in that it did *not* insist on the capitalist character of Palestine, as the "bloc of four classes" and two-stage theories of the Stalinists deliberately do. Finally, the statement represented a big blow to the Zionists by exposing their denial of the right of self-determination of a whole nation while

claiming to be a "Jewish liberation movement" themselves. It revealed the "Jewish state," posing as the only true democracy in the region, as a racially and religiously exclusive monstrosity in the 20th century and the Palestinians as the real bearers of human values and progress.

Did we, then, simply welcome the Fatah declaration, adopt it "uncritically," and preach the good news of yet another "consistent" national struggle that was bound to "lead to socialism"? It is true that we didn't come out with both guns blazing at Fatah and the other groups for not demanding the dictatorship of the proletariat. (None of the Palestinian resistance organizations called for a workers state.) But this is not the only way—and not even usually the best way—of criticizing a resistance movement, especially a fairly new one just in the initial process of defining its program, choosing its leadership, and building its ranks. As defenders and partisans of the Palestinian revolution, we "patiently explained" our view of the revolution and what was needed for ultimate victory. Did that constitute criticism? Yes, but it was *friendly* criticism.

In October 1970, the party launched an ambitious national speaking tour which lasted longer than any other in party history, other than perhaps election campaign tours. It featured Peter Buch, who was known as a party writer and speaker on the Mideast question, speaking and debating in defense of the Palestinian revolution to wide audiences around the country and in Canada for nearly six months. The full party program and analysis was presented in Buch's speeches.

One of the special features of the tour was the unprecedented opportunities for Buch and other comrades to engage in extensive discussions with Arab, Iranian, and other Mideast youth on the most critical questions of revolutionary Marxism, including the permanent revolution, the Leninist party, Stalinism, Maoism, reformism, the transitional program, and the Fourth International. The program and traditions of Leninism and Trotskyism had never received so thorough a hearing among these youth.

Also, in November 1970 *The Militant* began a series of eleven articles by Comrades Gus Horowitz and Barry Sheppard entitled "Roots of the Mideast Conflict," in which our basic analysis of the origins and dynamics of the Arab and Palestinian revolutions was laid out for the guidance of the party *prior* to our 1971 convention.

I will cite just a few quotations from this entire series to indicate how we looked upon the unfolding of this revolutionary struggle and its class content, with particular reference to the demand for a democratic secular Palestine.

In the 6th article of the series, entitled "Israel and the Jewish Question," Jan. 15, 1971, the authors state: "Revolutionary socialists support this goal of a democratic Palestine, which is in keeping with one of the basic goals of socialism—to end the oppression of one people by another. . . . For the Israeli Jewish masses, the key to their future lies in breaking with the reactionary politics of Zionism and in fighting alongside the Palestinian Arab masses for the goal of a democratic Palestine. The logic of the struggle, as it is carried through to the end, will be the destruction of the imperialist stranglehold on the Middle East and the creation of workers states. . . ."

The above article puts the Fatah demand in the context of the struggle. The authors cite the demand as ac-

tually favored by the major Palestinian resistance organizations and contrast it to the Arab and Palestinian demagogues, who opposed the revolution and called for massacres of the Jews. They point to the dangerous policy of Zionism as being unable to defend the Jews against their real enemy, imperialism, and explain the Marxist perspective of socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries and political revolution in the bureaucratically deformed workers states as the answer to the anti-Semitic danger. The democratic goals of the Palestinian movement are related to the best interests of the Israeli Jews and are cited as an answer to the racist slanders of the Zionists who accused the Palestinians of favoring Hitler-like genocide.

In the 7th article of the series, on Jan. 22, 1971, by Horowitz and Sheppard, entitled, "Dynamics of the Struggle for National Liberation," they say explicitly:

"The national bourgeoisie in the colonial world has not only proved incapable of carrying through the struggle for national liberation, it has also proved itself incapable of fully realizing the other democratic tasks. . . . Only the masses in the colonial countries, especially the workers and poor farmers, can fully embrace the national liberation struggle as their own and wage a consistent fight for it. In so doing, they naturally raise demands which go far beyond the democratic demands of national liberation but which are necessary to achieve it. . . . To carry out measures like these [the democratic tasks—PB], a socialist revolution is required that culminates in the setting up of a workers state. . . . All of the colonial or neocolonial countries, including the 'revolutionary' Arab countries, which remain capitalist, also remain to one degree or another tied to imperialism and are not able to take effective steps towards economic advancement. . . . Thus revolutionary socialists in the colonial countries do not artificially divide the struggle for national liberation from the struggle for socialism, but see them as combined. A revolutionary-socialist program in the Middle East raises both the democratic demands of national liberation as well as anticapitalist demands, both of which are necessary to mobilize the workers and peasants into a struggle that can win national liberation. To lead such a struggle requires the creation of revolutionary parties of the Leninist type, both in the Arab countries and in Israel. . . . The national struggles of the oppressed people of the world are not separate and apart from the internationalist goals of the socialist revolution. These struggles are a powerful component of the socialist revolution. That is why the Palestinian resistance movement, in struggling intransigently for national liberation, is playing such a revolutionary role."

In the 9th article of the series, entitled "The Palestinian Struggle and the Arab Revolution," Feb. 5, 1971, Comrades Horowitz and Sheppard write:

"The growth of the independent Palestinian movement threatens not only Israel and imperialism but all the bourgeois regimes in the Arab world. . . . The dynamic of mass developments such as this [the civil war in Jordan, the dual power, the Irbid "soviet," etc.—PB] leads beyond the bounds of capitalism. . . . A democratic Palestine will be achieved by a revolution that will inevitably have to lead in a socialist direction."

Is this to be an automatic process, as the I. T. quoters imply is the meaning of our analysis? Horowitz and Sheppard continue:

"The task of carrying through the national liberation struggle to its socialist conclusion requires the creation of mass Leninist parties, both in the Arab states and in Israel. At present no such parties exist, but the process of struggle will create new political realignments in which the ideas of revolutionary socialism will gain a hearing. Out of this process, Leninist parties can be created. . . . The accomplishment of this burning task will be a key to the success of the Palestinian liberation struggle."

A major aspect of the demand for a democratic Palestine was its square counterposition to the proposal of a Palestinian minstate on the West Bank. The resistance leaders dismissed this contemptuously as an offer of a "Palestinostan," modeled after the notorious bantustans of South Africa, which mocked the basic rights of the Palestinians to self-determination.

The September 1971 *ISR* published a speech by Dr. Nabil Sha'ath, a prominent representative of Al Fatah, entitled, "The Palestine of Tomorrow," in which this and other aspects of the "democratic secular Palestine" demand was set forth. The speech was delivered at the Second International Symposium on Palestine, held in Kuwait February 13-17, 1971, under the auspices of the General Union of Palestine Students and the Kuwaiti Graduate Society. The text was taken from the March 23, 1971, issue of *Fateh*, published by the Palestine National Liberation Movement.

In a preface introducing the speech, Gus Horowitz welcomed Sha'ath's contribution as a valuable one to the discussion of the goals of the Palestinian people that was then proceeding intensively among all the fighting organizations. But Comrade Horowitz pointed out that there were several questions on which he felt Sha'ath was in error. Horowitz says:

"Two of these key questions are: (1) What is Arab reaction and what is the relationship between the struggle against Arab reaction and the struggle against Israel and imperialism? and (2) What is the relationship between the democratic goals of the Palestinian resistance movement and socialism?"

"Sha'ath tends to conceive of a rigid division existing between discrete phases of the Palestinian national liberation struggle, rather than seeing them as part of an interrelated and continuous process. . . ."

"A winning strategy for the Palestinian national liberation movement must take account of the dynamic interrelationship between the various aspects of the struggle and the continuity between the struggle for democratic and socialist demands."

". . . 'Arab reaction' is not some vague entity. The forces opposed to a consistent and irreconcilable struggle for national liberation are primarily the Arab national bourgeoisie and the landowning aristocracy. . . ."

". . . national liberation struggles can only be successful when they rely upon the independent strength of the working class and its peasant allies. And a successful struggle waged by these classes will not end by bringing the national bourgeoisie to power; it will continue uninterrupted to a socialist conclusion."

These selected examples from many that could be cited



show to what extent we "abandoned" the traditional Trotskyist approach to the question of the permanent revolution. They also show to what extent the I. T. critics

have really departed from any real-world application—and that's the only one that counts!—of permanent revolution and the Transitional Program.

July 28, 1973

### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE PARTY'S BLACK WORK

by Lynn Henderson, Atlanta Branch

The starting point for any discussion of the Black struggle in capitalist America and the party's intervention in it is the objective fact that the Black population presently is the most radicalized sector of American society. By radicalized, we do not necessarily mean a Marxist or even working-class consciousness, but rather a growing realization, a growing belief that what is necessary is a fundamental change in American society and a growing willingness to engage in struggle towards that end. If this question (the necessity of a fundamental change in American society) was polled to the masses of Americans today, there can be little doubt that the most positive response, both in its mass and as a percent, would come from Black Americans. At present, the realization that there is something fundamentally wrong with American capitalist society is deeper and more widespread among Black Americans than any other mass sector, including workers, students, women, homosexuals, etc.

This presents something of a contradiction which the party and its leadership is not unaware of. Despite the depth and breadth of the radicalization in the Black population, the SWP and the YSA have had limited success in attracting a Black periphery and recruiting Black cadre to the revolutionary movement. This is true despite the fact that of all the organized tendencies in the present radicalization, the SWP and the YSA are virtually the only ones that fully grasp the revolutionary nature and content of Black nationalism. Indeed, our analysis goes quite beyond the position that the struggle of the oppressed Black national minority is a progressive development that revolutionary Marxists are duty-bound to support.

In the coming American revolution, we understand that the struggle of Black Americans for self-determination, the struggle of women for equality, the struggles and demands of the youth, the struggles and demands of all the oppressed minorities and oppressed sectors of American society can only be achieved through a proletarian socialist revolution under the leadership and program of the working class. In turn, all these oppressed sectors of American society in the continuing radicalization and development of their struggles are destined to become important ingredients and allies in the coming American revolution.

However, with respect to the struggle of Black Americans for self-determination, a *unique, reciprocal* relationship exists for the coming American revolution. The Black population, because of its size, because of its almost homogeneous proletarian class character, because of the historical nature of their oppression as a nationality in American society, is assigned a unique position in our analysis of the coming American revolution. Not only is it true that the struggle of Black Americans for self-determination

can only be achieved through a proletarian, socialist revolution under the leadership of the working class, but such a proletarian socialist revolution is *impossible* in the United States except by incorporating the struggle for Black self-determination as an organic, fundamental, combined part of that proletarian socialist revolution. And in this revolution, the Black population "are invoked by the historical developments to become a vanguard of the working class" (L. D. Trotsky). It is in this unique reciprocal relationship that our analysis of the *combined* nature of the American revolution lies. It is precisely because Trotsky grasped so clearly the crucial role of the struggle of Black Americans for self-determination in the American socialist revolution that he was led to warn the American comrades: "If it happens that we in the SWP are not able to find the road to this stratum, then we are not worthy at all. The permanent revolution and all the rest would only be a lie."

There do exist important objective factors over which the party has little immediate control, that affect the present small size of the party's Black periphery and the level of Black recruitment. These have been taken note of and analyzed by the party and the YSA in their recent conventions and plenums. The continuing crisis of leadership in the Black community is one important factor. Another is the lack, for some time now, of any focused, large-scale, nationwide struggle of the Black population in which the revolutionary party could intervene. The unavoidable phenomenon that the growth of Black nationalist consciousness, at least initially, does not result in the most politically radicalized elements in the Black community seeing automatically or easily the necessity for building a multinational Marxist party is another. The quiescence, racism, and job-trust mentality of organized labor over the entire past period is yet another obstacle to radicalizing Blacks developing a consciousness of the central need for a multinational Marxist party based on the working class.

However, I think we are at a point where we can and should do more than take note of the real objective obstacles. Recent SWP and YSA convention and plenum reports indicate that many of our opponents are now attracting significant Black periphery and increasing their recruitment of Black members. To point out that this recruitment is on an extremely low level with a high rate of turnover is to a certain extent begging the question and an insufficient explanation and analysis. The party's attitude in the area of Black work and Black recruitment must be one of continual probing and reevaluation to change what, if it exists for any extended period of time, is an unacceptable situation.

The following points are not presented as a cohesive analysis, but rather as a series of tentative observations, some of which comrades may find more valuable than others in stimulating their own thoughts. In my opinion, we are at the point, that within the context of our correct analysis of Black nationalism and within the present objective situation, the party needs a further discussion aimed at improving the depth and effectiveness of our Black work. The following observations are presented as a contribution to that process.

An important factor in deepening and increasing the effectiveness of our Black work is a conscious, aggressive orientation of the party and the individual branches in the direction of becoming participants in the actual present struggles of Black Americans. This general observation is not a simple, direct and obvious proposition. It has to be lifted out of the realm of truism and cliché by some further observations and discussion.

For example, selling *The Militant* in the Black community or on Black campuses, raising demands in our election campaigns in support of self-determination and community control, holding forums in support of Black struggles, these activities in and of themselves do not represent the necessary level of activity required to attract a Black periphery and recruit Black cadre. In and of themselves, they do not place the revolutionary party in the role and relationship of participant in the actual struggle of Blacks for self-determination. These are fundamental and indispensable activities of the party. But especially with respect to the present stage of the Black struggle, these activities have to be fused with a conscious orientation of direct participation by the party and its units.

Our impressive success in attracting and recruiting the best and most politicalized elements out of the antiwar movement was a direct function of our participant relationship to that movement. We were in no sense outsiders who sold *The Militant* to demonstrators, but demonstrators who sold *The Militant*. Our election campaigns and our candidates were not just revolutionary socialists who wholeheartedly supported the antiwar movement, but participants in that movement, in its actual day-to-day struggles.

We also became a major element in the leadership of the antiwar movement, in fact the decisive element. In the present immediate situation, it is not possible or feasible for the SWP to become the decisive or even major element in the leadership of the Black struggle. But objective conditions have emerged and will continue to emerge at an accelerated pace in which the party, given an aggressive and tactically correct orientation, can significantly increase its participatory relationship to the Black struggle. Such a relationship is essential to any significant increase in the recruitment of Black cadre.

Such a relationship is also essential to resolving the crisis of leadership in the Black struggle. The "Draft Political Resolution" points out that the present stage of the Black struggle has "exposed to view the underlying economic, political and social roots of the oppression of Black people. To begin to deal with these issues requires a program and leadership that goes beyond the opposition to racist laws and practices that characterized the civil rights phase of the Black struggle." Revolutionary Marxists, Trotskyists, are going to have to play an important role in shaping any such successful program and leadership. Having the correct program is not enough. Even the most correct and timely of program, in order

to have weight and acceptance, has to have as its proponents and carriers participants in the actual struggles involved.

The anti-STRESS campaign in Detroit, the support to Black strikes and actions against police brutality in Atlanta and the District One campaign in New York are examples of good initial developments in this direction.

My direct experience has been with the Atlanta situation. The Atlanta branch approximately a year ago began to consciously implement an aggressive orientation of direct participation in the Black struggle. While Atlanta may temporarily have objective opportunities more favorable than some other branches, I believe that many of the results of this experience have general application.

The development of this orientation was not left to the Black work fraction or to those comrades whose particular interest was Black work. Rather, it grew out of intensive discussions in the entire executive committee and branch, and was projected as a major orientation for the entire branch. The orientation was not based on any specific opportunity or struggle situation, but rather on the political evaluation that struggle opportunities were, and would continue to break out, and that the branch beforehand should have a posture of aggressive, imaginative intervention in them as participants.

The general result of this orientation is that the Atlanta branch has more knowledge of and contact with the Black community, and a larger Black periphery than at any previous time. *Militant* sales to Black Atlantans are higher than at any previous time. Not only do we sell as participants in the demonstrations, picket lines and rallies of the Black struggle, but the growing acceptance and recognition of the party as an important participant in the Black struggle makes for higher general sales of *The Militant* on Black campuses and in the Black community. *The Militant's* coverage of Atlanta's Black struggle begins to be written from the point of view of participants. *The Militant* begins, among elements of the Black community, to shed the image, in their eyes, of a white radical paper, and rather begins to be seen as a participant in their actual struggles.

Our election campaigns in Atlanta are strongly integrated into this orientation. Our candidates are participants in the rallies, picket lines and strike meetings of the Black struggle. During the Mead strike, two of our candidates were arrested along with the strikers, and their arrests were used to help build publicity for the strike. An important, and sometimes the major source of media publicity for Black struggles in Atlanta has become news conferences, interviews and actions by our mayoralty candidate. Just in the past few weeks we were able to break through a TV blackout of the strike of Black C & S workers (C & S is the largest banking institution in the Southeast) when Debby Bustin publicly withdrew the campaign account and her personal account from the bank in support of the strike.

Atlanta's forums are often built around whatever struggle is taking place in the Black community and include the leaders of those struggles as major participants in our forums.

The important point to be made is that with such a branchwide orientation, all the activities of the branch begin to take on a more effective and relevant character with respect to Black work. It should be pointed out that such an orientation of aggressive direct participa-

tion in Black struggles is not dependent on large numbers of Black cadre. Up until a few months ago, Atlanta had one Black comrade. We have recently recruited two additional Black comrades to the YSA, and we have two additional contacts who are close to joining.

The "Draft Political Resolution" observes that the nature of the present struggle of Blacks, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans leads to struggles that break out on a local basis. The resolution points out that "branches should be 'looking in their own back yard,' continue to be alert to local opportunities to initiate and participate in such actions." Atlanta's experiences strongly confirm this.

The focus of the oppression of Black people is in their community and at their place of employment. It is police brutality in the community, it is poor housing in the community, it is substandard education in the community, and it is low pay and racist practices on the job that are sparking the increased activity in the Black struggle. The most important manifestation of the Black struggle in the coming immediate period will not be national mobilizations or national demonstrations making demands on the state or calling for the repeal or adoption of some legislation. They will take the form of local struggles growing in size and militancy at times occurring in waves throughout a number of communities. This situation will probably exist for some time. Probably until the level of politicalization reaches the point at which an independent national Black political party has real feasibility or Black unionists and workers move to organize nationally or some other development along these lines.

Comrades should be careful not to conclude that the local nature of these struggles means that they are of lesser importance than struggles that lend themselves more easily to national mobilizations and conferences. The Minneapolis strike, the Auto-Lite strike and the Firestone strike were all "local" struggles. But they were the most important struggles of the 1930s radicalization and its most decisive victories. The political tendency that understands these struggles, immerses itself in them and recruits from them will be in a powerful position in the following crucial stages of the radicalization.

The immediate past political experience of the party has been very much dominated by its work in the antiwar movement. A single-issue movement that manifested itself in action through national mass demonstrations, nationally coordinated mass demonstrations and national conferences. The nature of the antiwar movement led the party into those forms of organization and distribution of personnel appropriate to it.

The question of when an action should be called, what the nature of an action was to be, what the political line and slogans were to be, what our approach to various opponents should be, what our strategy at antiwar conferences should be, all of this could be largely thought out and decided on a national level. One appropriate form of organization that grew out of this was the accumulation in the center of a large number of talented and experienced comrades to carry out these crucial political and organizational tasks.

The Black struggle in its present stage presents the party with a different set of problems from the antiwar movement. It does not lend itself to the same organizational forms and tactics. Branches in Black work are

going to have to take initiatives, think through concrete political situations and act to a much greater degree on a local level than was true for the antiwar movement. The party and its national leadership in Black work has to prepare, encourage and orient the branches in this direction. The national center has to have a flexible, responsive and imaginative approach to the assignment and dispersal of personnel. The center has to be prepared to move quickly into the most important local struggles with personnel, organizational aid and political advice.

Another important characteristic of the antiwar movement and most of the movements that we have been involved in during this radicalization is that their primary political and organizational focus has been the college campus. The antiwar struggle had its inception on the college campuses, its primary political life was on the college campuses and its primary organizational strength was on the college campuses. The major political task and problem of the antiwar struggle was for the campus to *reach out* to the community and the other sectors of American society and mobilize them for national actions and conferences.

There is no antiwar community, there is no women's liberation community, there is no anti-abortion law community—there is a Black community—not only a Black community, but a Black nation. It is in the Black community that the oppression of Black people in capitalist America is focused. Especially as we move beyond the civil rights stage, Black struggles and actions will not have as their political and organizational focus the college campus, not even the Black college campus. This does not mean that Black college and university students will not play an important role in the developing Black struggle. But that role will not be to reach out to the Black community and involve it in struggles that have their inception, focus and political life on the college campuses. Black college and university students will become an important factor in the Black struggle by identifying with and participating in the growing actions and struggles that will come out of and have their political life in the Black community.

Students who are oriented toward the Black community and its struggles can even play an initiating role as seems to be the case in the anti-STRESS campaign in Detroit. The best road for the party and YSA in recruitment of the best Black college and university student activists is by becoming participants in the struggles of the Black community and using our forces and influence on the campus to orient Black students toward these struggles and actions.

Another observation I wish to make deals with the relationship of Black college and university students to other sectors of the radicalizing Black community. A key aspect of the party's success in analyzing the radicalization as it has developed was its early appreciation of the vanguard role that college and university students were playing. In relation to the white population as a whole, by far the most radicalized and politicalized sector of that population has been the college and university students. This is a condition that has existed throughout the radicalization and continues right up to the present. The belief that there is something fundamentally wrong with American capitalist society and a willingness to strug-

gle and engage in action on the basis of that belief is deeper and more widespread among college and university students than any other sector of the white population.

Here we have to be cautious about any mechanical assumption that a precisely similar relationship exists between the Black college and university students and the Black community as a whole. This is especially true as the Black struggle moves beyond the limits of a civil rights struggle. What is certain is that the Black population as a whole is at a much higher level of radicalization than the white population as a whole. What is not certain is that Black college and university students are the vanguard element and most radicalized sector of the Black community. There is growing evidence that as a whole, young Black workers, Black unemployed youth and Black high school students exhibit a more intense rejection of American society and are more willing to struggle and take action on the basis of that rejection than is the case for Black college and university students as a whole.

There are some important factors in the relationship of Black college and university students to the Black community that we have to recognize and weigh. In racist U.S. society a much narrower layer of the Black population has the opportunity to obtain a university education than is true for the white population. It has a much more privileged status. This is, to a certain extent, a conservatizing pressure.

Another factor that has to be recognized and weighed is just what concretely a university education means for a young Black person. If a young Black university student from the ghetto stays out of trouble, keeps his or her scholarship, and gets a degree, they can effect a qualitative change in their lives. The present requirements of tokenism make for a high demand for Black college graduates and means that the young Black college graduate can acquire a relatively good job. What this means, especially for the Black male college student is that in terms of his own personal situation, he is presented with the possibility and opportunity of leaping from the horrors of the ghetto to a significantly improved personal situation. This is a conservatizing pressure.

For many Black college and university students, the campus itself represents a qualitative change in their lives. It represents an escape from the ghetto, from the Black community. It separates the student from the Black community which is, unlike in the antiwar movement or women's liberation movement, the focal point of the Black struggle, the arena from which the Black struggle and its actions emerge. While less strong on the inner-city or community college campuses, this still is a conservatizing pressure.

All of this does not mean that there is not now and will not be in the coming period, radicalized Black college students from which we can do important recruitment. What it does mean, in my opinion, is that right now, unlike in the white population, Black college and university students are not the most radicalized, vanguard element of the Black community. In the wave of actions, strikes, demonstrations that have taken place in Atlanta over the last two years, Black college and university students have not been a majority of the participants

or a majority of the leadership. This is true despite the fact that Atlanta has a large Black university complex and a large Black student population.

The party in its Black work should begin to orient itself in the direction of doing more recruitment and contact work among non-college and university Black youth. It is my impression that this is where our opponents are doing much of their recruitment of Black youth, and this goes a long way toward explaining their greater immediate success in this area.

A final observation deals with recruitment, on the campus, or in the community, or wherever we come into contact with radicalized potential Black cadre. A major achievement of the revolutionary Marxist party in this country was its ability to analyze and understand the revolutionary nature and content of Black nationalism. An understanding of the combined nature of the American revolution is a prerequisite to being able to lead that revolution. The party's call for, and support of, an independent Black political party is an important extension and development of this analysis.

The party has done an excellent job of educating its cadre on the question of Black nationalism and the independent Black political party. As a whole, comrades have a high degree of skill and are completely comfortable in defending and explaining our line on Black nationalism and the independent Black party to contacts and opponents. But given our positions on the revolutionary nature of Black nationalism and the independent Black party, comrades as a whole are not skilled or comfortable or confident in explaining to Black contacts and potential recruits why it is necessary for radicalized Blacks to join a Marxist multinational party in order to make the American revolution. While comrades know in reality that there is no fundamental contradiction between our support of Black nationalism—our support of an independent Black political party—and the need to build a multinational revolutionary Marxist party, comrades do not feel confident, comfortable, and aggressive in explaining to Black contacts that there is no contradiction and convincing them to join the YSA or the SWP. This is especially true of white comrades.

The party as a whole has been somewhat remiss on this question. Of the dozens and dozens of pamphlets and books which we have published on the Black struggle over the past five years, I cannot think of one whose major theme or thesis was explaining the necessity of Blacks joining the multinational Marxist party. Lately, in thinking back over the dozens of forums I have attended in the New York, Chicago, and Atlanta branches, I cannot recall one whose major theme and climax was the necessity of Blacks joining the SWP or the YSA. My memory is probably wrong on both these counts, but not very much wrong. There is a reticence, an uncomfortableness, a nonaggressiveness in our press, in our publications, in our forums, in our personal contact work with regard to Black recruitment that does not exist in any other area—students, women, gays, etc. The party should take immediate steps to correct this. To educate and arm the comrades so that they feel as confident and comfortable in recruiting Blacks and explaining our program to Blacks as with any other sector of the radicalization.

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