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50 cents

FOUR YEARS OF TEACHERS UNION WORK: A BALANCE SHEET

By Paula Rogers, Detroit Branch

June 27, 1975

This article is a balance sheet on our four years of work in a community college local of the American Federation of Teachers.

Several lessons from our experiences may help comrades new to union work, and especially those in newly organized unions.

Our work in the local has ranged from helping to transform a badly disorganized union local into a union more capable of defending its members' interests; from a local whose members had a narrow, "professional" outlook to a higher degree of consciousness of themselves as workers and members of the broader labor movement; from a generally apolitical and asocial conception of the local to a willingness to involve the local in broader social and political movements.

Our participation has greatly deepened our experience in trade union work, and given us entry into and a better understanding of the broader labor movement. On occasion our contacts with other unionists and our authority as a union official made easier organizing activities like the Meat Boycott/Price Fight demonstration, winning support for the Political Rights Defense Fund and the May 17 March on Boston from the state teachers' federation, and playing a leadership role in political fights defending teachers' right to strike.

Transforming the Union Internally

A. The Union When We Joined It.

Of the local's 900 members, mostly liberal and in their late 20's and 30's, 30 percent are Black and 40 percent are female. The local will pass resolutions for all kinds of social issues, with the Blacks sympathetic to nationalism and the women to feminism. They are more prone to support the activism of others than become active themselves.

Like other teacher unions, its social weight is limited by not being in a position to shut down anything critical to the capitalist economy. Students, community and other union allies are therefore critical in its struggles.

The problem of deciding whether they are "professionals" or workers has plagued the local. For the most part, local members have had the attitude that their college degrees conferred on them all knowledge and they resented the suggestion that they could learn anything valuable from others, especially workers.

Two of the local's most critical problems originate from the organization of the college itself: fragmentation of the members and the full-time job trust which I will detail later.

The college has roughly 20 teaching centers scattered around the county as much as 30 miles apart, with instructors driving from center to center to teach, and no

central campus where all can gather. This fragmentation reinforces the tendency for teachers to see themselves as isolated individuals and presents problems for day-to-day union functioning, problems intensified in a strike with the need to shut down 20 building sites to keep out scabs.

The local has no entrenched bureaucratic leadership as no material benefits exist for officers or bargaining team members, and the local has never been a stepping stone to higher union office.

The local had never played an active role in the union movement, as it was organized by college instructors with little experience in unionism and little interest in unionist skills. As the official bargaining agent for 6 years, it has "agency shop" with teachers either paying dues or a service fee collected by check-off by the college.

B. Our Tasks.

We had one comrade in the local in the fall of 1971 and another added in January 1974.

We set two goals. First, to make the local more capable of defending its members and enforcing the contract. Concretely this meant democratizing the union's functioning, promoting cohesiveness by increasing communication, training new leadership and gathering experience in union functioning. Second, to turn the local toward involvement in the broader union movement and in the larger social and political struggles.

For the party this meant an opportunity to play a greater role in the larger union movement than our numerical size would have ordinarily dictated.

C. Full-Time Job Trust.

Discrimination against part-time instructor members is the single most serious problem facing the local. Part-timers outnumber full-timers almost 5 to 1 and teach half the courses. The use of part-timers is both financially and politically beneficial to the College. Part-timers are paid about half the amount per class as full-timers, and receive no fringe benefits. Politically the administration plays one group off against the other which becomes especially clear during contract negotiations when union bargainers are told full-timers must take cuts to afford benefits for part-timers.

The local constitution divides members into two classes: regular (full-time) and "associate" (part-time). A complex weighting of votes was developed which relegates part-timers to an essentially consultative vote. On the critical issues of contract ratification, election of officers and negotiating team, full-timers as a group have 80 percent of the vote and part-timers as a group have 20 percent of the vote!

Part-time members are guaranteed one union office, Second Vice-President, and there is an unwritten "under-

standing" that only full-time members will hold other positions. Part-timers who have run for these offices have been consistently defeated.

Instead of recognizing the fatal divisiveness of this policy, many full-timers see a fundamental contradiction between their interests and those of part-timers. The existence of this job trust mentality has been a constant source of tension and division within the union. It has diminished somewhat as a result of the experience of two strikes. But it remains the single most important obstacle to the effective functioning of the local.

We recognized from the beginning of our participation in the union that the local could only be united and made effective by breaking up the job trust and establishing the equality of all union members.

We have advanced the concept of full union rights for part-time members in various ways: from the floor, in election campaign statements, in contract demands and negotiations. In October 1973, with our help, a new constitution was drafted for the local, which contained important provisions for part-time rights and democratic union functioning, which was presented to the Executive Board for discussion and amendment and ultimate presentation to the membership. The E.B. majority put discussion of the constitution off until an undetermined future time, and we found no avenue from the local floor to force them to act.

In December 1974, at our initiative, Henry Linne, president of the Michigan Federation of Teachers (MFT), was asked for MFT intervention to help resolve the issue. In January 1975, a committee was established under MFT auspices with broad representation from part-timers and full-timers. Its charge was to discuss the draft constitution and to report proposals on resolving the part-time issue in the new constitution. We participated actively in the committee's deliberations. The committee presented its report in March 1975. Although the Executive Board has promised to bring the matter before the membership in the fall, to this date it has not acted.

D. Internal Democracy

Lack of internal democracy has exacerbated all the local's problems. The source of the problem is not the iron hand of a bureaucratic leadership, but rather chaos and disorganization in local functioning.

No experience with unions, and a strong dislike for organizational principles like orderly meetings, clear reports, motions and minutes characterized the instructors who established the local. As a result, few members attended meetings.

In the years of our participation in the local, we have constantly worked to introduce orderly functioning in the union. This is a fundamental prerequisite of democracy, since without it the membership can neither make nor enforce policy decisions, and cannot hold its elected leadership responsible for their actions.

The local has had a rapid changeover in its leadership, with most officers serving only a one-year term. The same is true of the negotiating team.

Local presidents in 1971 and 1972 both reflected and reinforced the chaotic internal local functioning. The president in 1971 was often drunk at meetings. In 1972, the president caused a split on the Executive Board so that it

did not meet for about six months. Local meetings in this period were chaotic and irregular.

Throughout 1972, our comrade participated as actively as possible in local activities, which basically meant regularly attending meetings.

Since the union obviously could not be transformed from the meeting floor, in early 1973 we made the decision to run our comrade for union office. The campaign was educational in thrust, taking up the *kind* of union that was needed, the issues it should address, and what should be done by its elected officers. Our program centered on opposition to the Indochina war and the wage freeze, support for the various actions of the Black liberation and women's liberation movements, increased local participation in the broader union movement, and democratic union functioning: full rights for part-timers, regular, orderly meetings and constitutional reform. Our comrade won the position of second vice-president, the only position open because of restrictions on part-time members.

The new president was as inexperienced as the last, but was at least not as disruptive. The Executive Board and the local met sporadically during the year. Meetings were still chaotic.

Just before the local struck in 1973, the president resigned and the first vice-president became president. Things remained chaotic, because the new president had no experience, had received none in his time on the Executive Board, and assumed the presidency only reluctantly.

The draft constitution we presented to the Executive Board in October 1973 contained important provisions aimed at democratizing and professionalizing the local's functioning, as well as full rights for part-timers. These included establishment of a stewards system, an expanded representative Executive Board, increased membership input and control over contract negotiations, etc.

The chaotic internal functioning of the union had not only prevented its members from exercising control over its policies, it had also prevented the local from carrying out the most elementary tasks of any union: to enforce its contract and defend its members' rights. Even the processing of grievances was disorganized and confused. Different people—president, first vice-president, office secretary or the individual concerned—filed and followed up grievances. Few if any of these people had any experience or training in handling grievances which, combined with the College's unwillingness to settle grievances without a fight, meant that most grievances were lost in arbitration or simply dropped, even when there was a clear violation of the contract. The local had never had a functioning stewards system, or provided any training in elementary union functioning. This lack has hurt the local considerably in communicating with and uniting the membership. The importance of mastering the skills and techniques of union functioning cannot be overemphasized.

In early 1974, we decided that our comrade should seek reelection as second vice-president. Our campaign platform included increased activity in support to the UFW and CLUW; joining the union call to expose the "energy crisis" and to open the books of the oil companies; supporting the formation of a labor party based on the unions; education around the need for a cost-of-living

clause in the local contract; support to students' rights struggles; democratization of the union by establishing full part-time equality, a stewards system, orderly meetings, etc. There was no opposition, and our comrade won the highest vote cast for any candidate.

Internal functioning improved somewhat during 1974, mostly as a result of greater experience of the local leadership.

The central weakness of the Executive Board majority was its attempts to avoid making controversial decisions. This was evident in its inaction on the proposed constitution, and in the majority's refusal to take any *public* position at all on the contract proposed at the ratification meeting! Our comrade was the only voice from the Executive Board to state a position! In shirking the responsibilities of leadership, the Executive Board majority undercut its own authority in the eyes of the membership.

During 1974 we attended various classes and conferences on union issues and union functioning, and encouraged other local members to do the same, though with little success. The knowledge gained has been useful in working to improve local functioning. It has also been valuable in giving us contracts in other unions and a better understanding of the broader union movement.

In January 1975 our orientation was to run for reelection as second vice-president. The opposition was a member who has been almost totally inactive in the union before and since the election. Her platform was solely devoted to the part-time question—with no proposals except a moralistic plea to full-timers to be "nicer". It included a reactionary attack on our comrade's activities "outside" the local, including veiled red-baiting. Our campaign advocated *further* involvement in the broader union movement and social movements, fighting the racist offensive in Boston, defending teacher bargaining rights and the right to strike, and further professionalizing and democratizing union functioning: full union rights for part-timers, a new constitution, a stewards system, etc. Our comrade won the election handily.

The new Executive Board is more combative, made up of people trained in strikes and in the developing local influence by our participation. The board majority is still inexperienced, with the result that minutes, agendas and clear reports are still a problem. Consultation and collaboration among the local leadership is weak. But there seems to be a willingness to work toward more professional functioning.

The local's books are being audited for the first time in the local's history, and serious bookkeeping procedures have been instituted. A stewards system has finally been established, stewards have been elected, and stewards training classes have been held under local auspices with teachers from the Wayne State University Labor School. Most of the stewards are taking their responsibilities very seriously. This is important for improving the union's ability to represent its members in grievances. The stewards system should also improve communication between the local and its members, and begin to train a new layer of leadership for the local. Our comrades have regularly attended the stewards training sessions.

Attendance at local meetings has been picking up steadily over the last year or so, to nearly 70 recently. This has been an uneven but discernible trend, and is an

indication that members are coming to take a greater interest in the union.

E. Winning a Contract: Negotiations and Strike.

The local's internal disorganization has seriously effected the way it handles negotiations and the way it conducts strikes, as would be expected. All the local's internal problems—the full-time job trust, the fragmentation, the "professional" arrogance—are intensified under the pressure of negotiations.

The local has always negotiated one-year contracts, which means that negotiations occupy much of the local's time.

Negotiating teams are elected by the local; the person with the most votes automatically becomes chief negotiator. There are no requirements for experience or expertise.

Once elected, the team develops a strange detachment from the local, and an overwhelming pride in its own usually rather limited powers. It begins to act as if it were divinely inspired and resents input or control from the Executive Board and the rank-and-file membership. We have been working to improve this situation, but it is a slow uphill fight. Our orientation has been to attempt to democratize the negotiations process, keeping the membership informed and trying to keep the negotiating team publicly accountable for its actions. We have tried to accomplish this by educating the membership that it is their right to know the status of negotiations, and by asking questions of negotiators during meetings.

The negotiating team's arrogance toward the membership and the elected local leadership has presented serious problems in each of the local's strikes.

There was no strike in 1972. To convey an idea of contract negotiations, the chief negotiator was, we are told, often stoned at negotiating sessions and when he gave reports to the local. He treated the membership as if they were an alien body trying to impinge on his bailiwick; he conveyed the impression that it was the height of impudence to ask for reports or to ask questions about negotiations. The local worked for three months without a contract; it finally ratified the 1972-73 pact in December 1972.

1973 Negotiations.

The chief negotiator in 1973 had much the same attitude as his predecessor, but there was more pressure from the local for reports on negotiations. He did give reports, but they were so unorganized that no one could understand them.

In the summer of 1973, our comrade was asked to sit in on negotiations by the MFT representative assigned to the local, to represent part-time interests. This was accepted with bad grace by the negotiating team. It was a constant battle on two fronts: 1) to put starch in the backbone of the team and to prevent them from selling out as *early* as they wanted to; and 2) to make sure the position of part-timers was improved.

1973 Strike.

The local was on strike for about a week and a half in 1973. Our comrade was put in charge of press and

publicity, and got out a daily strike newsletter, which was about the only area of the strike that functioned. The strike organizer appointed by the Executive Board didn't function, and little picketing was done. Even so, the strike was successful, morale was high and the school was shut down.

Settlement.

Our comrade opposed the proposed contract settlement because it was clear that we could have won better terms with a few more days' strike. Only a few people joined us in opposing the contract.

Despite the disorganization of the strike, its success did enable the local to win a 6.3 percent wage increase, some improvements for part-timers, and some improvements in the fringe package.

One of our chief criticisms of the contract was the cost-of-living clause, which, while it was called "cost-of-living allowance", was only a one-time \$65 bonus not even added to the base pay. We were able to do some education around what COLA is and why it's important. In fact, it was on our insistence that anything dealing with COLA was put into the contract in the first place. The chief negotiator was opposed to the idea.

1974 Negotiations

Our comrade was asked to attend negotiating sessions in summer of 1974 both to represent part-time interests and because she was the only person who had been at negotiations before.

The local had the same problems with the new chief negotiator as with the previous one, but the membership had by this time become quite insistent about getting reports during negotiations. However, as before, the reports were unintelligible. By this time, though, local members had become suspicious that the reports were *purposefully* unintelligible to conceal the truth. As we attended the negotiating sessions, we saw that the suspicions were justified. Our comrade antagonized the chief negotiator by challenging her reports in local meetings. Local members were divided in their reactions—some supported the counter-reports; others felt it was wrong to challenge the negotiating team.

Presenting clear periodic reports on negotiations is important for two reasons. First, it is the *right* of the membership to have a contract which reflects what they want. For that to happen, the membership must have input in negotiations as they continue. Second, if the union is forced on strike, the membership must know why they are on strike; they must be able to explain the strike issues to themselves and to others. Probably the most serious political weakness in both the local's strikes was the inability of the leadership, especially the negotiating team, to formulate strike issues.

1974 Strike.

The local struck for about four days in 1974. Our comrade was assigned to be strike co-ordinator and to set up and organize strike machinery by the Executive Board. Our orientation was to set up committees which could organize strike work and involve the union ranks in strike

activities. These were committees on picketing, press and publicity, strike support, strike relief and education. Our proposals were unanimously approved by the local.

The Picketing Committee had captains assigned to each teaching center, and members were assigned to picket a specific center for specific hours; the committee had daily meetings to organize its work, and captains called their pickets daily to remind them of their assignments. The Press and Publicity Committee organized getting out a daily newsletter, which was distributed at the daily picket captains meetings and was taken by them to the centers; it covered developments in negotiations, propaganda on strike issues and reports of support from other locals and unions.

The Strike Support Committee, which another comrade chaired, sent messages of support to other striking teachers' locals of both the Michigan Federation of Teachers and the Michigan Education Association, which laid the basis for future good relations with some of these locals. In addition, it solicited statements of support from other teachers' and other union locals, which played an important role in building strike morale. The Strike Relief Committee handled counselling and provided information about loans, credit unions and food stamps. The Education Committee was established to teach scabs to respect union picket lines, but it was never needed.

We also proposed committee chairpeople, which were approved by the local, explained their functions and trained them. They took on their work with great enthusiasm. This helped to involve more people in union leadership responsibilities; for many, the strike activities were their first real contact with the union. *Two of the people who served as committee chairpeople are now union officers.* As a result of her work in the strike, our other comrade has authority and is recognized as a union activist. We also made an important dent in the male chauvinism in the local, since all but one of the committee chairpeople were women. The authority of the chairpeople was accepted without dissent.

The strike machinery worked very well for the duration of the strike. Teachers' morale was high, feeling that they were making an important contribution. The school was shut down.

Settlement.

The proposed contract was unsatisfactory. It was obvious the union could have won more in a longer strike, and we opposed the settlement. Even the short strike enabled the union to win a significant increase for part-time members, and *decreased class load at no decrease in pay for full-time members.*

The COLA clause was the same type as the year before, but increased to \$100. We found a better understanding and more support for our position in support of a COLA clause pegged to the rise in the cost of living.

We got a better hearing for our opposition to the contract than we had the year before. The vote to tentatively ratify the proposed contract and return to work passed by 4/10 of one vote! Actually, a *majority* of members voted it down. It was the *weighted* full-time vote that provided the narrow "majority" in the actual vote.

Although the Executive Board at its meeting voted 4 to 1 to recommend that the membership *turn down* the

contract, the majority of the Board at the last minute refused to state any position to the membership! This was very confusing and demoralizing for the membership. Our comrade was the only member of the Executive Board to state a position of opposition, which won respect even from those who disagreed.

When the full terms of the contract became known later, the local, on recommendation of the entire Executive Board, voted overwhelmingly to reject it. Due to loss of momentum, the local could not mount a strike, and instead set its sights on the 1975-76 contract. The local is working to this day without a contract. The College has implemented its version of the contract, but the local refuses to ratify it.

1975 Negotiations.

Negotiations for the 1975-76 contract are being approached in a more serious fashion than ever before. Our proposals for more collaboration between Executive Board and negotiating team and for more membership input have been more accepted, but personality problems and the traditional arrogance still get in the way of smooth functioning. The local has hired a professional negotiator to clean up and simplify contract language, and even passed a special assessment to pay for it.

The membership has come to expect and demand that it be kept informed of progress during negotiations through periodic reports. The team has agreed to present reports as negotiations continue, though we will have to make sure the reports are clear and understandable.

The Union Looks Outward

Another thrust of our participation has been to work to turn the local to greater involvement in the larger union movement and the movements for social change.

A. Social Movements.

Vietnam

Our earliest political activity in the local was around opposition to the Indochina war. Our comrade participated in the MFT Peace Committee, which our comrades in the Detroit Federation of Teachers had helped found in an earlier period. In summer 1972, we introduced a resolution to the local for presentation to the 1972 AFT Convention calling for immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Vietnam. The resolution passed unanimously.

We also decided to run a candidate for delegate to the 1972 AFT Convention around opposition to the Vietnam war and support for the various actions of the Black liberation and women's liberation movements. Our comrade came in second in a field of six, and was one of the four delegates elected.

At the convention, we worked with other delegates from around the country in the Vietnam Caucus to put the AFT nationally on record for immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Vietnam. Working as part of our national fraction was a valuable experience that carried over into later local work.

Our comrade has also represented the local as a delegate to the 1973 and 1974 AFT Conventions.

Meat Boycott /Price Fight

In spring of 1973, the local endorsed the May 5 demonstration against high prices and wage controls, in the midst of the meat boycott.

Our comrade's recently won position as a union officer made it easier to make contact with other unions and union officials. A broad coalition consisting of different unions, community groups, block clubs and women's organizations was formed to organize the action. It was able to win the official endorsement of the Detroit AFL-CIO. This led to coverage in the union press and the donation of printed leaflets for the action. Our comrade was recognized as the organizer of the action.

We were allowed to use the local's facilities to build the action, which was an important gain for the coalition. We were careful, however, not to abuse the privilege or alienate the local members or interfere with union functioning. Detroit's demonstration on May 5 was one of the larger actions in the country.

Union Defense Guard

One important development of our work in the May 5 action was a union defense guard against attacks by NCLC. This was during their "Operation Mop-Up" campaign. Many of the organizations participating in the coalition had been threatened by NCLC, and at the last minute the May 5 demonstration itself was threatened with attack.

Through our work on the May 5 action, we were able to get union and other community leaders to put together a defense guard composed of unions and other groups threatened with attack. The guard protected the demonstration and various other meetings and events from attack. Two dozen NCLCers actually showed up at the rally, but backed off when they saw the size of the defense guards. It was later on the same day that they attempted a sneak attack on the Socialist Educational Conference, where they were routed.

AFL-CIO Affiliation.

The local made its first contact with the Detroit AFL-CIO in trying to win AFL-CIO support for the May 5 action.

In May, we proposed that the local begin to participate in the broader union movement by affiliating with the Detroit AFL-CIO, which the local approved. Our comrade was appointed to the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO Council as a delegate representing the local. This was significant because it gave entree to the broader union movement in the area. Our comrade has attended meetings regularly since then.

Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW).

In September 1973, the local sent our comrade to a meeting of union women leaders in Chicago as its representative at her request. We attended subsequent meetings which later led to the formation of CLUW.

When the date for the first national conference was set for March 1974, we were able to win the local's support and

that of the MFT Women's Rights Committee. This support enabled us to organize women from many different unions to attend the national conference: we held planning meetings, sent out mailings and distributed donated leaflets, and had a press conference. Due to the inactivity of the national organizers, it was largely as a result of our activities that some fifty Michigan union women attended the conference on buses we organized.

Our comrade attended the national conference as a local representative and was elected one of Michigan's state convenors of CLUW. Our comrade's first column in the MFT monthly paper was a report on the national CLUW conference.

Later our comrade, due to her union position and position in CLUW, was asked to organize the CLUW Southeast Michigan Organizing Conference in July 1974, which attracted about 200 women. Although red-baiting by the CLUW leadership has prevented us from playing a central leadership role since then, our comrades remain active in CLUW.

We have worked to win official union support for CLUW wherever possible. Our comrade introduced a resolution supporting CLUW in the Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO Council, which passed unanimously. The local submitted a resolution drafted by us to the 1974 MFT Convention, which was also passed.

Our activity in CLUW has brought us into contact with many union women and has established our record as activists in support of women's rights.

1974 MFT Convention

The local had not participated in MFT activities because of its provincialism and indifference to matters of no direct and immediate concern to it.

We proposed in spring of 1974 that the local attend its first MFT Convention; the local approved. We had two comrades as delegates, out of fourteen. We had another comrade as delegate from another local, giving us a fraction of three at the convention.

Our orientation at the convention was social and political issues and to win MFT support and endorsement. We introduced in the local resolutions for the convention supporting the UFW, CLUW and the Political Rights Defense Fund. All were passed by the local and submitted by it to the convention. Our resolutions included specific proposals on implementation and a clause directing that if passed the resolution be sent by the MFT to the AFT Convention with a recommendation for similar action. We made sure our delegates attended the committees we thought would discuss our resolutions and lobbied with other committee members to facilitate their passage.

The UFW and CLUW resolutions passed the convention unanimously and with little discussion. A collection was taken at the convention for the UFW.

Our most important political work was in support of the resolution endorsing PRDF. Since we expected reluctance to pass the resolution, we met with the PRDF director prior to the convention to work out a systematic approach. PRDF prepared and distributed a *letter to delegates* explaining the case and the issues involved, so that the delegates could not use ignorance of the case as an excuse for not supporting the resolution. Our convention delegates had *kits* with PRDF materials, and sold buttons and got

endorsers. The resolution passed the convention with little significant opposition and due to our earlier propaganda work, we were able to isolate opponents as anti-civil-libertarians.

Branch comrades aided the fraction by distributing PRDF materials outside the convention. They also sold a few *Militants* and *Young Socialists* and distributed campaign literature.

Student Rights

We have continually stressed the importance to the local of winning student and community allies, by supporting student rights and demands.

The local approved our proposal to protest when the Administration attempted to censor the student newspaper. The local also organized demonstrations with student groups protesting tuition increases and the lack of equipment for the nursing program.

Local activities in support of students have laid the basis for student sympathy and even support for the local in its strikes.

Other Social Issues

The local endorsed the May 17 March on Boston and the April 26 March on Washington. Unfortunately, we have not been able to get active participation by local members.

1975 MFT Convention

The local also sent delegates to the 1975 MFT Convention. Our main participation, around the right to strike, is covered in the appendix to this article. We had three delegates at the convention—two from this local and one seated alternate from another local.

We introduced a resolution in the local for the convention endorsing the May 17 March on Boston. We also made sure we had a comrade on the committee to motivate support. The resolution passed the convention with little opposition.

A resolution condemning the Michigan Supreme Court's decision upholding the firing of striking Crestwood Education Association teachers, also drafted by us and submitted by the local, was passed unanimously by the convention.

One of our comrades was asked by her convention committee to draft a resolution in support of Joanne Little for the committee to present to the convention. The resolution passed unanimously, and \$101 was collected for the defense.

It should be pointed out that this local, due to our political influence, has introduced the *only* resolutions of social and political importance in MFT conventions. Were it not for our participation, no serious political and social questions would have been raised.

Organizers of the May 17 March on Boston passed out leaflets, sold buttons and distributed the *Mobilizer* at the convention. They also passed out copies of the resolution supporting the March which was being considered by the convention.

Branch comrades and campaign supporters sold a few *Militants* and passed out campaign materials, including a letter to delegates announcing campaign speakers for classrooms.

B. Strike Support and the Right to Strike

Strike Support

Our activity around the right to strike began in the fall of 1974 with strike support work for other teachers' unions on strike, notably East Detroit Federation of Teachers, Garden City Education Association, and Crestwood Education Association.

Our orientation was for teachers and other union comrades to participate on picket lines themselves and in various support meetings, representing their unions where possible, and to encourage their unions and local members to get involved.

On our recommendation, the local invited Garden City EA speakers to its meeting to explain their strike. In December, the local passed a resolution approving a sympathy strike if requested by the Crestwood EA, and took a collection for the striking teachers. We participated in these activities as representatives of the local, and found we got a more serious hearing because of our comrade's position as a union officer.

The local had not been attending meetings of the MFT Administrative Board. The Ad Board is the state executive board elected annually at conventions. Its meetings are open to all AFT members, who may speak but not vote or introduce motions. This is not publicized, and meeting notices are sent only to Ad Board members and local presidents, with the result that few people know about the meetings or that they can attend.

Our comrade began attending Ad Board meetings in fall 1974 to find out plans for support activity for striking teachers locals. The MFT called a mass picket line for the East Detroit FT, which was attended by many MFT and MEA locals. We raised the idea of a joint MFT-MEA rally to support all the striking teachers, which the Board took under advisement but never implemented. During the Garden City and Crestwood strikes, we proposed MFT support activities in collaboration with the MEA, but were not able to convince the Board or overcome the factional hostility to joint action with the MEA even to defend teachers under attack.

At other Ad Board meetings we have spoken against the suicidal raiding policy, but were not able to convince people to reject it.

Our main gain in participating in Ad Board meetings was to raise educational points around specific issues, make contact with other leaders and activists in the MFT, and to establish a reputation for our comrade as a consistent activist working to build and strengthen the union.

MFT and the Right to Strike

In late January 1975, our comrade attended an MFT conference on coordinated collective bargaining. Most of the conference centered on the recent experiences of the Crestwood teachers and the threatened state legislation to stop teachers' strikes. We participated actively in the discussion. The conference, although it had no authority to set policy, recommended that the Ad Board adopt a clear position in opposition to *any* limitation of the right to strike, including opposition to compulsory arbitration. The conference represented a broad cross-section of active

unionists from many MFT locals.

The conference was held at a hotel which was also the site of a Republican party conference featuring Michigan's governor William Milliken. During one of the conference breaks, teachers surrounded Milliken and began asking questions. Our comrade participated in the exchange, but not with as much "deference" to the governor, exposing his anti-union, anti-teacher role in the teachers' strikes. She most clearly expressed the teachers' position for the unqualified right to strike, and attacked Milliken's strike-breaking. Our comrade was applauded by the other teachers, and further established her reputation as a militant fighter for teachers' rights.

A discussion opened up in the MFT Ad Board on the attitude the MFT should take to legislation to limit teachers' strikes. Mary Ellen Riordan, Detroit Federation of Teachers president, took the position that teachers should accept some form of compulsory arbitration, since fighting for anything else was politically utopian, given the amount of anti-teacher sentiment that had been whipped up. Henry Linne, MFT president, supported this position. Other Ad Board members, especially those from locals outside of Detroit, opposed this position; they were at first unclear about their position on court-ordered arbitration to settle strikes. We were able to convince them to oppose court-arbitration by pointing to recent teachers' experiences with the courts.

A faction fight developed in the Ad Board. We were able to help organize the pro-teachers-strike forces and participate actively in the discussion. In fact, our comrade provided many of the arguments used by the pro-strike forces in the discussions.

The resolution finally adopted by the Ad Board stated the MFT's support for the unqualified right to strike and its opposition to any form of compulsory arbitration, including that ordered by the courts.

Our orientation was for the MFT to open up a mass public campaign of opposition to the anti-strike legislation geared to win public support for teachers' rights and counteract anti-teacher propaganda. In order to get the idea discussed, we introduced a resolution in the local Executive Board, which was passed and sent to the Ad Board. Our comrade was given time to present and motivate the proposals in the Ad Board, but the motion lost. The Ad Board members felt they should keep their position quiet, hoping not to "provoke" public opposition. They simply did not believe in their own capacity to win support.

The Local and the Right to Strike

The local has, through our comrade's activity, come to participate actively and even play a leading role in MFT discussions on the right to strike.

It is important to point out that our position is the *unanimous* position of the Executive Board of the local, and the nearly unanimous position of the local membership. Our comrade has presented periodic reports to the membership on the on-going discussion in the MFT and the issues involved. The local membership is informed and has repeatedly voted in favor of the positions we have advocated.

For the first time in its history, the local is aware of and involved in issues broader than that of local concern.

1975 MFT Convention

Our activity around the right to strike at the 1975 MFT Convention was a culmination of our past work in the MFT and in the local. A report on the convention is included as an appendix to this article.

OPPONENTS

The Spartacist League and the Communist Party have one person each in the local, but neither attends meetings or participates in any way in the on-going life of the union.

Progressive Labor Party has one member and one close sympathizer in the local. PLP has been in the local as long as we have, but has played an extremely sectarian role.

In 1972, a PLP member or sympathizer was elected local president, and nearly destroyed the local by causing a split in the Executive Board and by refusing to pay affiliation fees for local members. After his election, he indicated his hostility to the highly bureaucratized union movement, and said that he thought unions served no valuable function, which of course raised questions about why he had run for office. He did nothing to improve the union during his term.

Since that time, PLP has not won any elective position in the local, as officer, negotiating team member, or convention delegate.

PLP had not played a significant role as a tendency in the union until the organization of its "Rank-and-File Caucus" at the 1974 AFT Convention. They organized a Caucus within the local during the 1974 strike; about 30 people attended the first meeting. While their stated goal was to unite the local and strengthen it in the strike, they in fact attempted to establish a rival to the official union strike apparatus, with its own demands and its own organization. Their grouping, numbering about 15, played an ultra-left nuisance role.

After the strike, PLP tried to keep its Caucus together, holding monthly forums and meetings for a few months. Its supporters quickly melted away as PLP established that its politics alone would be acceptable in the Caucus. The Caucus has since stopped holding meetings.

In the last months, PLP's sectarianism and ultra-leftism have virtually isolated it in the local. The union called a demonstration at the Administration building to demand more equipment for nursing students and instructors. PLP brought a large contingent of PLP-WAM members to the demonstration with loudspeakers and signs, and virtually took over the demonstration from the union. They gave long speeches about communism, revolution, fighting back, blood-sucking bosses, etc. While the local was not clear enough or well enough organized to maintain control over its own action, local members resented PLP's action and the image it projected of the local.

The local endorsed a March on Lansing for jobs and to restore cutbacks sponsored by a PLP-led "coalition". PLP proceeded to use union facilities to organize the march, including chartering buses. A handful of union members went on the march, and perhaps 20 students. PLP proceeded to misuse the name and authority of the local. It held a press conference and denounced the AFL-CIO and the UAW for not supporting the march. Although the local's name and authority were used to build the march, PLP announced at the rally in Lansing that the demon-

stration was its own. Finally, PLP led the rally in a disruption of the state legislature, throwing paper on legislators' heads. The local, in endorsing the march, had agreed to none of this.

After all this, PLP came to the union and asked it to pay for the chartered buses to Lansing, which the union had never voted to do! When the local leadership, the Executive Board, refused, PLP put out an eight-page attack on the decision, and the local president and our comrade in particular. The attack was so vicious it served to isolate PLP. We put out a response, centering on the political questions of democratic functioning of unions and coalitions, and the misuse of the union's name and authority. The local voted, with two exceptions, not to pay for the chartered buses.

At its next meeting, the local refused to endorse a PLP-called May Day march.

Although PLP says that its goal is to transform the union into a "militant, rank-and-file, fighting organization", it has done nothing to help in the actual process of transforming it. In fact, it has been a barrier to that transformation by its sectarian, ultra-left, anti-union actions.

Our Propaganda

The major weakness in our union activity has been in the area of *Militant* sales and subscriptions. This has improved in the last six months with regular sales at union meetings and at teaching centers, but there is much room for improvement.

We have distributed campaign literature for various of our election campaigns to union members, and have sold tickets to campaign rallies, banquets and barbecues. We have also invited union members to forums. So far, however, no union members have attended party activities.

Summary

In summary, we can see, in the four years of our participation as socialists in this local, a developmental process taking place, an evolution. This has been most noticeable in leadership changes, in union functioning, in the attitude toward negotiations and enforcement of the contract, and in awareness of social and political issues outside immediate local concern.

There have been numerous setbacks and frustrations over the past four years, and there will surely be more. The most critical issue facing the union, equal rights for part-time members, remains to be settled. There is a lot of work left to do.

Both the union and the party have benefitted from our activity in the local.

The party has made a significant contribution to turning the local into a union that can represent and defend its members' interests, and whose members are more aware and concerned about broader union and social issues. The party has played a central role in raising the political consciousness of teachers in the local, and in the Michigan Federation of Teachers, on union and social issues.

In return, the party has been able to put forward parts of its program within the local and through the local, in the broader union movement. Individual party members have benefitted greatly through their experiences working within the local under the party's direction.

Lessons of Our Participation.

We have learned a number of lessons through our activity in the local, which it may be useful for comrades to bear in mind as they approach work in their own unions.

A. Patience

The importance of patience cannot be overemphasized. We can't simply walk into a union situation and expect to turn it around, overnight, or even in the short term.

There is only so much we can teach our fellow union members from our own experience. They have to go through many experiences themselves, and win victories and suffer defeats. Our role is often an educational one, pointing out strengths and weaknesses and drawing out the lessons of the experiences in a friendly collaborative way. This does not mean of course that we will not have disagreements with individual members and with the leadership on specific issues; and we should express our position. But our tone should be that of fellow union members, as part of the union movement. We are not outsiders and we don't want to be seen as such.

This takes time, and a lot of discussions with many individuals—especially when starting from ground zero as with this local.

B. Union Activism.

We should get to know our own union, its structure and functioning. We should participate in it as actively as possible, in collaboration with the party. We will get our best hearing from fellow unionists if we are seen as active builders and supporters of the union.

Just as in any other area of activity, there are skills specific to the union movement in general—and to each local—which we can and should learn. These include how stewards function and how grievances are handled, how meetings are conducted, how motions are made, how negotiations are conducted and how the membership has input into the negotiating process, etc. All of these and others are important for successful participation.

C. Taking Advantage of Openings.

We should be alert for openings for activity, and follow them up aggressively when we get them, and understand the connection between various areas of activity. For example, our work in support of specific teachers' strikes established our reputation for us and made it easier to play a leading role in discussions on the right to strike.

We should be conscious of meeting and talking with other union activists at different functions, about specific union matters and broader political and social questions. This can lay the basis for subsequent collaboration and activity.

D. Union History and Party Activity.

We must become familiar with the history of the union movement in general and of our own union in particular, and especially with the party's analysis of historic developments in the union movement. *Labor's Giant Step* is important in this regard, as are many of the party's other books and pamphlets.

Comrades should pay *special attention* to Farrell Dobbs' books on the Teamsters union. Here we can trace the historic development of a union and see the pressures and forces influencing it. Especially important, however, is the report on the *role* of the revolutionary party in the union and the party's *activity* in the union. There are also very practical ideas that can be gained from it. For example, in designing our 1974 strike organization proposal, we looked at the Dobbs' book for a description of the various tasks that had to be carried out and adapted them to our specific situation.

E. The Party's Role.

Working with the branch leadership and keeping the branch informed is as important in union activity as in any other area. This is a new area of work, full of new problems and challenges as well as new opportunities. Being able to draw on the collective experience of the party locally and nationally is an invaluable asset.

The *Militant* is also an important part of our union work. It explains our politics to our co-workers, gives weekly direction to our own activities, and informs us of the experiences of our comrades nationally.

WHAT THE PARTY'S TURN SHOULD MEAN

By David Keil, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York
Local

June 27, 1975

The May plenum of the National Committee approved a turn in the party's orientation toward increased propaganda among workers and in the trade unions. This turn was projected in the report by Jack Barnes on the Draft Political Resolution and in the party tasks and perspectives report by Barry Sheppard.

Based on the fact that the working class is beginning to be deeply affected and radicalized as a whole in the present economic situation, Jack Barnes said, "There are new opportunities for the party, necessitating a *turn* in our attitudes, consciousness, priorities, and modes of functioning." (*Discussion Bulletin*, 1975, No. 4, p. 3) He emphasized the need to make a turn in our modes of functioning.

Later in the report he pointed to the importance of proletarianizing the party. He recalled a passage in the party's 1965 organizational resolution on this subject, which he said was "something that I think got passed over a little bit." (p. 10)

This turn that the report projected is to be based on the party's traditional Trotskyist program as developed up to now and as outlined in the Draft Political Resolution. Among the important necessary points included in this program which the political report discussed at length is the party's support for maintaining those gains made by women and oppressed nationalities in the area of jobs. When the employers, with the support of the union bureaucracy, attack these gains through discriminatory layoffs under cover of the seniority system, we continue to support the gains as taking higher priority than the formal provisions of seniority. (Milton Alvin, by disagreeing with this point of our program in his article published in *DB* No. 6, therefore disagrees with an essential part of this turn.)

Barry Sheppard's tasks and perspectives report discussed some of the concrete tasks of the party in making the turn. One aim of the turn is to begin the crucial work of laying the basis for a class-struggle left wing in the unions through fraction activity and patient propaganda. His report stated:

"The branch organizers and executive committees should consider how they can help guide comrades seeking jobs into important unions and important industries in their cities. They have to think through the industries and union structures in their areas, and decide where we can do political work in the coming period. We have to pay close attention to this job. Where we have comrades in work places or unions we want to form fractions so they can meet and discuss what they can do, even if all they can do at first is sell the press.

"They should meet and discuss how best to do that. It will lead to taking other campaigns of the party into their unions and work places.

"The norm should be for branches to have trade union work directors; some already have found this useful. . . .

"Now taking these organizational steps will not be of

any value if the branch leaderships don't make an adjustment in their thinking and organization so that they pay political attention to the functioning of these fractions and help the trade union director. So we have to take some organizational steps, change some political priorities and give greater attention to organizing the systematic political guidance of our work in the unions and at workplaces." (p. 18)

Discussing *Militant* sales, his report says, "An area of improvement which we now have to pay serious attention to is the regularization of sales at workplaces and unemployment lines, in addition to keeping them up in the Black community and other places. This is something we must work on." (p. 22) He did not promise immediate spectacular gains, but emphasized the need to begin this work and to prepare the party for the turn during the pre-convention discussion.

These reports, which I have quoted for the purpose of emphasis, motivate a turn in the work of the party sufficiently well. A firm and well-prepared turn is certainly necessary. The party internal discussion this summer should help make it even clearer in everyone's mind what the turn means. The party's needs require that this important proposal be discussed fully without anyone holding back. If there is no opposition to such a turn expressed in the pre-convention discussion then it will have to be concluded that the sentiment in the party is unanimous on this. That would be all the better.

According to a letter by Milton Alvin published in his contribution to the discussion bulletin, some comrades said this spring that our participation in the struggle against racism in Boston is our answer to the economic crisis faced by the working class and that this anti-racist work can be a *substitute* for a shift toward more work in the trade unions.

Of course, our work in helping to build the Student Coalition Against Racism is very important, as Barry Sheppard's report pointed out. But it is not a *substitute* for such a turn as the plenum projected. Rather we should make a greater effort to bring the trade unions into the struggle against racism as part of the turn in our work. This is a life-and-death question for the unions, since they will be unable to combat the employers' attacks if they capitulate to the racist offensive anywhere along the line. Likewise, in the long run, the racist offensive cannot be crushed without the power of the labor movement.

For a Reversal in Priorities of Work

The purpose of this document is to argue that we should make the meaning of the turn even more clear and explicit by stating that in our opinion, trade-union work and propaganda among workers should take higher priority for the Trotskyist movement, as a whole in this country, than work in any other social milieu. This means that we think

it is more important for Trotskyist trade union fractions to be built today than Trotskyist campus fractions such as the YSA is building. Campus fractions should not be neglected, but should be put in a second place to trade union fractions.

In the joint committees which the party functions in along with the YSA, such as sales committees, the party should be in favor of a higher priority being given to union and workplace sales than to campus sales; i.e., there should be more of these sales per week in a city, on the average, than campus sales.

This would help the campus work of the YSA because students are impressed by the power of the working class and radical-minded students are impressed by proletarian parties which have an influence in the working class. Some of these students would join the YSA campus fractions as a result of knowing about the party's trade-union work.

If some comrades disagree with this proposal, they should explain why, in their opinion, campus work should take a higher priority than trade-union work.

It would be easy for the party to set about the task of putting the highest priority on trade-union fractions. It is not directly responsible for campus fractions anyway; this job the YSA has set itself. While the party cannot decide what the YSA's priorities will be, since the YSA is organizationally independent and makes its own decisions, the party can decide what its own members will do. The party can decide, for example, whether to assign a party member to the YSA, which bases its work on the campuses and high schools, or to assign the member to party work. Thus the party can effectively decide that the social layer in which the Trotskyist movement does the most propaganda and recruitment work is the organized working class.

Furthermore, through fraternal political discussion, the party can undoubtedly convince the YSA that this orientation is correct. The YSA for itself might continue its campus orientation, but could be convinced that the highest joint priority is trade-union work. Just as joint sales committees now often send working comrades to the campuses to sell, these committees could send some student comrades to plant gates.

It is just a question of deciding our priorities.

If the turn projected by the May plenum is taken in this way, it will mean a reversal in the priorities of the party in that respect. In the past, we have viewed the campuses as the main and most fruitful area of propaganda and recruitment for the Trotskyist movement in this country, even though the YSA has taken most of the direct organizational responsibility for this campus work. Now we should reverse this priority.

In the tasks and perspectives report to the plenum, Barry Sheppard named four things the projected turn is not. This helped to more clearly and correctly define the turn. He did not say exactly how the turn would affect our student orientation, however. The convention should make it clear that the turn means a reversal of the student orientation.

There are good reasons, both in the current situation and from a long-term strategic point of view, for giving top priority to propaganda work in the working class. The mass actions in the street today are being carried out by labor, not students. Workers are at least as receptive to socialist ideas as any other part of the population.

Students are not mobilizing massively and independent of the labor movement.

In the New York City budget crisis, for example, those Black and Puerto Rican students who have mobilized against the cutbacks are in a dead end under the leadership of the Maoist Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization, which projects isolated ultraleft actions. The student government bureaucrats have spent their time lobbying in Albany and their organizations have been powerless in face of the cuts.

The municipal workers, on the other hand, despite their leadership, headed by Victor Gotbaum, equally as rotten as the students' Maoist leadership, have been able to get their union, District Council 37 of AFSCME, to call a demonstration June 4 at which ten thousand people marched. District 37 mobilized massively for April 26 and has lent vital help to the parents of School District One who are struggling for Puerto Rican, Black and Chinese control of the schools.

Whereas the masses of students and their organizations have been relatively inactive in face of the worst attack in years on their right to an education, the labor movement has begun to respond. The party, seeking to organize support for the idea of a demonstration June 28 against the cutbacks and layoffs, found that two union locals were willing to help initiate the call. The party's work in the unions has been quite successful so far and shows what it will be like throughout the party once the turn has been made, taking into consideration that the opportunities right now in New York City are exceptional.

Our efforts to organize a mass response among students have been less successful. The head of the city-wide student government organization was too busy lobbying to attend meetings to discuss the June 28 idea, though he let his name be used. Only New York SCAR, an organization having influence but lacking a mass organizational base, and the YSA, came forth from the campuses to actively support this action. These facts indicate that the students will mobilize massively only when they can clearly see the labor movement taking the lead.

This contrast between students' response and workers' response to the New York crisis reflects the fact that workers exhibit, in periods of social crisis, higher *social* combativity and consciousness than students. (This trait is not at every moment expressed as higher *political* consciousness; on questions such as Vietnam, the students are sometimes ahead of the workers.) This higher social combativity and consciousness are related to the better discipline and organization which workers have despite the heavy hand of the union bureaucracy. The students, socially powerless, divided, atomized and suspended between classes, only move when they see a strong social force, such as the labor movement, the Black masses or the Vietnamese peasantry, to ally themselves with.

Our strategic goal is to become a mass proletarian party. Yet we have only begun to establish a base in the labor movement or even become well-informed about it on a regular local basis in every branch. We have a proletarian programmatic and strategic orientation, but we have yet to begin to become proletarianized in our composition. This is undoubtedly why Jack Barnes emphasized this task in his political report and referred to the proletarianization section of the 1965 resolution as having been "passed over a little bit."

Our composition is predominantly members of marginal layers of the working class, with some branches being exceptions. Hence our main task of recruitment today is to deepen our roots in the labor movement through propaganda directed toward working people.

This can lay the basis for future colonialization of basic industry and key unions when and where it becomes appropriate.

Earlier Discussion On This Question

In the 1973 pre-convention discussion, I and Ninure Saunders wrote a document entitled "For a Full Discussion of the Trade Union Question and Aggressive Implementation of the PC Resolution." (SWP *DB*, 1973, No. 33.) Unfortunately, we submitted this document at the end of the discussion period and it thus could not be discussed in the branches.

It argued for "a shift in our practical orientation" in favor of more trade-union work and related work. It said, "The work is sporadic, inconsistent, and often depends on individual initiative. But the objective situation requires that it become regular."

We based our opinions in part on the viewpoint expressed in a discussion article by Peng Shu-tse, "Return to the Road of Trotskyism," which appeared in 1969. Peng wrote that despite the fact that the student work of the world movement was largely determined by objective circumstances, "nevertheless, our past work in and orientation to the working class had not been what it should have been. Therefore, the reorientation toward and integration into the working class is the most urgent task facing our movement today." Compared with the movement's proletarian orientation, "The student movement must be considered secondary and subordinate," according to Peng. (*International Information Bulletin*, No. 5 in 1969, p. 21; also published in *Discussion on Latin America*.)

Ninure Saunders and I believed that such a reorientation was necessary for the Trotskyist movement in this country as well as others. In our article we called for a full discussion of trade-union and related work at the 1973 convention, "not only in the trade-union panel, but in the delegate sessions as well."

No discussion such as we suggested took place in the plenary sessions, though a good trade union panel was held. (See *Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 4 in 1973.) At this trade union panel, Mike Lux, representing the *Militant* business office, said that it was necessary to systematically expand plant-gate sales, calling them an "important part of the spring sales campaign" and saying we needed a "well-organized and absolutely regular sales effort." (p. 4) In this, he undoubtedly reflected the views of the central party leadership. Salesletters from the business office subsequently sent out (e.g., Dec. 1, 1973 and June 14, 1974) and the results of the Fall 1974 sales drive indicate that the party fell quite short of the goals laid out by Mike Lux, despite persistent efforts of the national center to make sales at workplaces a major part of the *Militant* sales campaigns in the branches.

These efforts would have had more success, in my opinion, if a discussion of the party's priorities and the importance of trade union related work had taken place in the delegated sessions at the 1973 convention, as we suggested. Such a discussion would have helped remove one of the obstacles in the way of regularizing this work,

which was the inertia in some of the branches, especially inertia resulting from the incorrect priority given to student work, based on certain incorrect ideas about students. The 1973 document by Ninure Saunders and myself discussed some of these misconceptions.

Some of these ideas seem to have been corrected now and do not appear in the draft political resolution. For example, the idea that students have an increasingly significant amount of "social weight" has been left out—correctly, in my opinion, since students play no role in production (as the resolution points out) and the only sense in which their weight has been increased due to numbers is *politically*, not socially.

In addition, the resolution points out that the student milieu will differentiate itself in the class struggle. The students are not an inherently revolutionary social group, unlike the workers. The role of students changes, sometimes rapidly, as well. The section of the resolution on students (pp. 13-14) thus marks a further step forward for the party in the field of theory. It would not even be necessary to discuss this question at all today if all the misconceptions had been abandoned and if the plenum had decided to explicitly place priority on work in the working class. But not all the misconceptions have been put aside and the meaning of the turn is not yet explicit enough, in my opinion. Basing themselves on these misconceptions, some comrades could take the turn to mean something other than what it should.

A Better Definition of the Working Class Is Needed

The 1975 draft Political Resolution indicates correctly that students are not workers. This correct view of students differs from the views of Ernest Mandel as expressed in an article in *The Black Dwarf*, July 5, 1968. (This newspaper, distributed by the members of the International Marxist Group, the British organization of the Fourth International, had as its front-page headline, in two-inch bold-face capital letters, the concise affirmation, "Students: The New Revolutionary Vanguard.") In this article, Mandel went so far as to state that "students are workers."

Our draft resolution, despite its correct analysis of students and its fully correct thrust, nevertheless makes a concession to the theory on which Mandel based his extravagant claim that "students are workers." It defines the working class in such a way as to include some layers which would more correctly be classified as middle-class. For example, it states on page 13, "At the one end, sizable numbers of teachers, technicians, service workers, government employees, etc., are really for the most part skilled, usually salaried workers." This, of course, is true. But the apparent reason given that these people are workers is that "They have no perspective of ever being able to make their living other than by selling their labor power to industry or the government. Their goal, in good times or bad, is not to open their own little school or laboratory somewhere. Growing numbers are willing to consider the idea that the solution to the social and economic squeeze they feel is to organize as part of the union movement and fight collectively—using labor's methods of struggle—to better their condition."

Of course, some of these sectors, such as many service employees, are part of the working class. But this is not

because they have no perspective of becoming independent proprietors and must work for someone else. It is because they must sell labor power to someone else *and* because they perform a kind of task that can be useful to society. Either they *are* productive workers or they *could* be socially productive workers, if their skills could be put to use by a reorganized society. This means that people whose job skill is useful only to aid the process of exploitation are not workers but agents of capital. The draft resolution correctly discusses these layers as part of the middle class. In doing so, it implicitly abandons in practice the incorrect definition, quoted above, which it had given to the working class. This definition should be abandoned explicitly as well by removing it from the resolution text and rewriting the short passage.

Having no perspective for making a living as one's own boss with "one's own little school or laboratory somewhere" is not an acid test for defining a worker; Jack Barnes' report on the draft political resolution pointed out that many workers once hoped to save enough money to return to the land where they were raised as farmers. These people, despite their hopes to become farmers, were nevertheless still workers as long as they worked for a boss as workers.

The recent doctors' strikes show that organizing collectively is not a decisive criterion for workers. Middle-class people learn from and imitate the workers sometimes. But they are still middle-class. The draft resolution correctly notes that the doctors' actions show the potential of young members of middle-class layers to move sharply to the left.

In summary, one can work for a boss, have no perspective of ceasing to work for a boss, and organize collectively and still not be a worker. Cops, university professors, state functionaries on all levels, all levels of management, etc., etc.—all these are middle-class layers of people who work for someone else. Functionaries and members of the intelligentsia in general on all levels are forced so much by their jobs to internalize capitalist ideology that they would have to enter completely different fields in order to become useful to society. When there are exceptions, our job is to try to recruit them, so that the working class can benefit from their abilities. But we do not recruit people by incorrectly telling them that they are workers.

So the resolution's definition of workers is not adequate as it is stated. Discussion and revisions are needed, within the general line of the resolution. This theoretical error, in my opinion, was probably picked up from the writings of Ernest Mandel, especially from his theory of the "proletarianization of intellectual labor." In the *Black Dwarf* article cited above, Mandel classified certain layers as workers which are more accurately classified as petty-bourgeois layers. He said, "What the student revolt represents on a much broader social and historic scale is the colossal transformation of the productive forces which Marx foresaw in his *Grundrisse* (Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy); the reintegration of intellectual labour into productive labour, men's intellectual capacities becoming the prime productive force in society.

"This is still embryonic and is unrealisable within the framework of capitalist society but it is already powerfully announcing itself."

This passage is perhaps plausible in its own confusing way. Possibly Mandel only means here that students are

beginning to see that their intellectual talents could be employed usefully, but not under capitalism. But then Mandel indicates that these students actually *do* become workers: "... as a result of profound changes in intellectual employment the majority of university graduates will no longer be bosses, or professionals, or even direct agents of the bosses with strictly supervisory functions, but white-collar employees of the state or industry, and thus part of the great mass of salaried workers." Since Mandel gives us no statistics to show that most university graduates become clerks, typists, etc., we are forced to conclude that in his opinion *all* employees except "bosses, or professionals, or direct agents of the bosses with strictly supervisory functions"—are workers. Presumably supervisors who also perform some useful work as well as "strictly supervisory functions" are part of the working class, in Mandel's opinion. I would not agree.

To my knowledge, Mandel has furthermore not explained the seeming contradiction between this view of his and the analysis by Trotsky in the essay "The Communist Manifesto Today" (1937). Trotsky wrote that Marx and Engels had made errors about the proletarianization of the petty bourgeoisie:

"4. Basing themselves primarily on the example of the 'industrial revolution' in England, the authors of the *Manifesto* pictured far too unilaterally the process of liquidation of the intermediate classes, as a wholesale proletarianization of crafts, petty trades, and peasantry. In point of fact, the elemental forces of competition have far from completed this simultaneously progressive and barbarous work. Capitalism has ruined the petty bourgeoisie at a much faster rate than it has proletarianized it. Furthermore, the bourgeois state has long directed its conscious policy toward the artificial maintenance of petty bourgeois strata. At the opposite pole, the growth of technology and the rationalization of large scale industry engenders chronic unemployment and obstructs the proletarianization of the petty bourgeoisie. Concurrently, the development of capitalism has accelerated in the extreme the growth of legions of technicians, administrators, commercial employees, in short, the so-called 'new middle class.' In consequence, the intermediate classes, to whose disappearance the *Manifesto* so categorically refers, comprise even in a country as highly industrialized as Germany about one-half of the population. However, the artificial preservation of antiquated petty bourgeois strata nowise mitigates the social contradictions, but, on the contrary, invests them with an especial malignancy, and together with the permanent army of the unemployed constitutes the most malevolent expression of the *decay* of capitalism." (*The Age of Permanent Revolution*, Dell, 1964, pp. 291-92.)

Mandel says that intellectual training produces large layers of employees who he defines as workers. Trotsky says that capitalism artificially fosters "growing legions" of middle-class people—"technicians, administrators, commercial employees."

Was Trotsky wrong here, in Mandel's opinion? Has the "third industrial revolution" and its novel product, the epoch of "neo-capitalism," made Trotsky's analysis obsolete? This warrants some discussion. The draft political resolution makes a good beginning by noting that capitalism, in addition to forcing many middle layers out of existence and reducing the weight relatively of the middle class, also fosters a petty bourgeoisie in the "cracks

and crevices of production." But it is also necessary to re-examine Mandel's theories, which to my knowledge have never come under the close critical Marxist scrutiny which they deserve.

Mandel directly relates his conception of petty-bourgeois "intellectual workers" to his analysis of students. Following his view, the student milieu would be proletarian, not petty-bourgeois, because most students become workers. When socialists devote their main propaganda and recruitment to the student movement, as the sections of the Fourth International did in the 1960s, they immerse themselves in a proletarian milieu, not a petty-bourgeois one, according to the logic of Mandel's theory. Hence, instead of trying to recruit from this alien class milieu by *breaking* students from its influences, the Fourth International has *adapted* to the student milieu, believing it to be proletarian.

Our own party has made errors of orientation in the past due to our failure to reject Mandel's wrong theories, which comrades have been educated to accept. Nevertheless, our party has been too deeply rooted in its proletarian tradition to make any serious adaptations in program and strategy.

Of course, the party of the working class must offer a solution to the problems of all oppressed social layers, whether they are workers or petty bourgeois. Otherwise, these layers will go to the capitalist side. But we must also be able to distinguish between the two categories. In addition, as Jack Barnes pointed out, we should try to see which petty-bourgeois layers will go with the revolution and which cannot be won over; to distinguish "between a cop and a computer programmer."

For example, we must think more clearly about teachers. Not all teachers are workers, even if they "cannot set up their own little schools." This question is significant for our student work, because a large percentage of students become teachers. We need to know what class milieu they are headed for.

Teachers play a double role in the society. On the one hand, they pass on knowledge, technique and culture to children—a useful and necessary task from the point of view of the working class. For this reason, we call for increased funding for education, even capitalist education.

On the other hand, part of a teacher's job is to *discipline* and *indoctrinate* the future work force. This is one function of all capitalist education. In this way the role of teachers is in part similar to that of prison guards, cops, foremen and bourgeois professors and publicists, on a small scale.

Of course, many teachers, especially young ones, refuse to play this role, as the capitalist system of ideology falls apart. Other teachers, epitomized by Albert Shanker, learn to play their role well and in consequence are promoted to tenured and administrative positions, or else take their place in the union bureaucracy.

Teachers who are unable to give up their habits in playing this part of their general social role will have to find other callings in a post-capitalist society.

These habits are often quite tenacious because teachers are under job pressure to *internalize* the reactionary side of their function. Unlike some members of the working class who indirectly help the capitalists exploit other workers in one way or another—e.g., by making bullets or printing capitalist propaganda—teachers must learn the reactionary ideological material and pass it on themselves. They must directly confront the oppressed as representatives of the oppressor. Here there are exceptions. Some teachers survive as teachers despite their refusal to teach obedience, helplessness and loyalty, just as some students of economics succeed in graduating even though they are Marxists.

The reactionary side of the social role of teachers is incorporated into the nature of the teaching profession itself, therefore. Workers in the printing or arms industries could use their skills for useful, socially productive purposes in a reconverted socialized economy. But teachers who have learned their real job well will have a hard time doing this.

The double social role played by teachers means that as a whole they are more a petty-bourgeois layer than a part of the working class. Perhaps one dividing line between teachers who could be called salaried workers and teachers who are in the middle class is indicated by the tenure system.

By no means are teachers workers simply because they receive a salary and are dependent on their jobs.

The dual nature of teachers explains the dual role of the American Federation of Teachers and its New York affiliate, the United Federation of Teachers. Contrary to the socially progressive role of other trade unions, which are defense organizations of the working class (despite their thoroughly reactionary present leaderships and the reactionary *political* role which the leaderships often force on the unions), the UFT has spent more energy and money fighting the oppressed nationalities than defending the legitimate interests of teachers. It consistently defends the high pay scales of teachers who have joined the petty bourgeoisie, but hardly at all defends the interests of the lower paid teachers. In this the UFT has gone beyond any other trade-union type organization.

The dual role of teachers as a social group will have to be taken into consideration in both our campus work and our teacher-fraction work.

Conclusion

The turn outlined in the plenum political report and tasks and perspectives report, based on the party's program as reflected in the political resolution, deserves full support. But it should mean not only a *shift* in priorities, which can be interpreted different ways by different people; it must also mean a *reversal* of certain of our past priorities. The priority which has been given to campus work up to now must instead be given to trade-union work and propaganda toward working people.

SOME DATA ON FEMALE CANNIBALISM

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June 30, 1975

In 1973, in a series of articles (DB Vol. 31, No. 20; DB Vol. 31, No. 34; under the name R. Vernon), I motivated a complete break from the varieties of utopian antiscientific pseudo-anthropology promoted by the more backward Soviet anthropologists and in the SWP by Evelyn Reed. That effectively absolves me of any responsibility before the party for the damage being done to the party through its association, now public and blatant, with Reed's utopian fantasies and her attacks on science.

In DB Vol. 31, No. 32, E. Reed offered a rebuttal which is incredibly shallow and facetious. She did not attempt to make a single point of scientific value, and devoted her efforts to an *ad hominem* counterattack, imputing to me some overpowering need to "take flight from the study of origins" out of fear of disturbing matriarchalist revelations. According to Reed, I had simply capitulated to "empiricism" and joined the *conspiracy* against her.

This rebuttal by Reed is significant in that she openly rejected scientific methodology, making it clear that she is not concerned about empirical facts when these do not fit into her utopian system, she sees no need to verify her conjectures against empirical data. She equates *empirical science* with bourgeois *empiricism*.

In so doing, Reed effectively breaks not only with bourgeois social scientists (including Lewis H. Morgan), but also with Marx and Engels, and breaks with materialism (with dialectical materialism and with mechanical materialism). It is not possible to be a materialist while wantonly, arbitrarily, and systematically rejecting empirical data not to one's liking.

If this break from materialism and from science, this plunge into utopian rationalism, were not clear enough from Reed's 1973 article, she labors to remove all doubt in her magnum opus, the utopian anti-materialist *Women's Evolution*. Here Reed even lays bare the line of utopian pseudo-scientists and obscurantists from whom she traces ideological descent (Bachofen, Crawley, Lord Raglan, above all the charlatan Briffault).

Reed's book is convincing only to those who are anthropologically illiterate (who are ignorant of the basic scientific methods used in social anthropology, of the main findings, and of the disputes current within the science today) and to those who are *scientifically illiterate* (ignorant of the fundamental methods and aims of scientific inquiry in general), provided they are favorably biased (pro-Marxist and/or pro-feminist). [There is no end of people who do or would oppose Reed's views because of their strong anti-Marxist and/or anti-feminist bias, and who couldn't care less about social anthropology or any other science. Those people can be ignored for the purpose of this discussion.]

Reed's utopian pseudo-anthropology seems to be enormously popular in the SWP, in both the ranks and leadership. There is a serious gap in the understanding of materialism and science, particularly scientific methodology applied outside the political arena, which leaves the

party open to this peculiar type of pseudoscientific faddism, and allows the gestation within a party dedicated to materialism (and applying materialism in its political work and theory far better than any rival political tendencies) of an *antiscientific cult*—in an area which is clearly outside the range of competence of the party.

This susceptibility to *komchvanstvo* ("communist swagger"—Lenin's scathing term for amateurish half-baked pretensions in unfamiliar areas of technology and science by communists who think their acquaintance with Marxism gives them an automatic passport into other areas of knowledge where they are actually beyond their depth) and charlatanism will have to be faced up to, analyzed, and insofar as possible eradicated. That is going to be a difficult, embarrassing, and painful job.

The Cannibalism Hoax

A central point to the development of Reed's utopian "anthropology" is a conjectural universal sex-differentiated tabu in human diet: only men eating products of the big-game hunt, and in particular only men consuming human flesh, women being alien to cannibalism whether as feasters, culinary technicians, or meals, in a pattern central to the process of transforming anthropoid Pongids into *Homo sapiens*.

The Morgan-Murdock¹ comparative method of research in social anthropology, which I recommend highly, utilizes these two fundamental techniques:

1) study of existing and/or reliably attested primitive societies to provide empirical data for the testing of hypotheses on human institutions and customs and relationships. Reliable ethnographic data on primitive societies provide almost the only scientific testing ground or "laboratory" for verification or refutation of these hypotheses, particularly hypotheses on pre-history;

2) collecting, comparing, and correlating ethnographic data from the entire world. Hypotheses attempting to account for prehistoric human activity, customs, beliefs, institutions, development, are strengthened if buttressed by supporting data from all over the (primitive) world, weakened and refuted if supported only by erratic and random instances or consistently refuted by worldwide ethnographic data. Data on hunting and gathering peoples (pre-agricultural, pre-horticultural, pre-pastoral) are particularly important and crucial for evaluations of hypotheses seeking to probe into prehistory. The greater the time-depth of the retrodictions, the more universally

¹Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society*, 1877; G.P. Murdock, *Social Structure*, 1949; G.P. Murdock, *World Ethnographic Atlas*; for discussions, see also: M. Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory*, 1968 chapters 6-7, 21-23; D. Kaplan, R. Manners, *Culture Theory*, 1972; N. Naroll, F. Naroll, *Main Currents in Cultural Anthropology*, 1973, chapters 3 and 10.

consistent the ethnographic data have to be to sustain the hypotheses.

XIX century ethnology (Morgan, Tylor, McLennan, Main) frequently erred in assuming far too great a time depth in their speculations. Even the most primitive peoples available for study in the XIX and XX centuries (or for that matter for the past several thousand years) are fully developed *Homo sapiens*, removed by tens and perhaps hundreds of millenia from any "missing links." At best, data on Australian aborigines offer grounds for insights into the life of prehistoric humanity ten to twenty thousand years ago (Mesolithic or very late Paleolithic).

Reed makes no distinctions between retrodictions of astoundingly great time depth (back past *Homo sapiens* through hundreds of thousands to millions of years) or of shallower time depth, and is not concerned about the reliability of her "voluminous data," giving top billing to fellow-utopians (Crawley, Lippert, Briffault, Thomson, Raglan, Frobenius) but also culling scraps from genuine scientists (Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard, Radcliffe-Brown) where fittable into her system.

Reed's sensationalist retrodictions on sex-differentiated cannibalism (only men feast; women never eat human flesh, are never eaten, are inviolate from physical attack whether for purposes of cannibalism or otherwise, *WE* pp. 68-73, 277-80) posit an enormous time depth (hundreds of thousands, even millions, of years) and correspondingly demand universal support from worldwide ethnographic data on a comparative-historical basis, particularly data on hunting/gathering peoples ("savages," in Morgan's terminology). No such support is forthcoming.

Reed deals in an irresponsible and slipshod manner with the immensely complex and crucial problem of the human family. Nowhere can a reader get a reliable picture of what scientific thinking and disputes on the subject are from her writing. There is no evidence that she keeps up with disputes and developments on this topic within the science either, on any scope commensurate with the pretensions of her universal diachronic utopia.

The same applies to her non-discussion of the totemic complex, a less complicated subject. It seems (*WE*, p. 35) that Reed has herself never even read the basic work on "totemism" by Goldenweiser². In any case, she does not inform her readers of what scientists' views are on the question, why they consider "totemism" to be an invalid abstraction, and what counterarguments she can marshal (the burden of proof is on her) to re-establish "totemism" as a useful abstraction.

Reed's bibliographic index is revealing of her amateurishness. There is not a single reference to the periodical literature of the science, or of related sciences (except for *Scientific American*, which is usually the only periodical amateurs ever get around to reading on scientific topics.).

Cannibalism, at least the limited aspect of it tackled in *WE*, is a much simpler matter, and offers a test of the validity of Reed's utopian "anthropology" that even those totally ignorant of social anthropology (that includes the

overwhelming majority of her supporters inside and outside the party) can appreciate.

Aside from unreliable sources (Briffault, Crawley, Lippert), Reed mentions two sources deserving of close attention. A. Métraux is an anthropologist, and has done intensive ethnohistorical work on Polynesia (Easter Islands-Rapanui) and on XVI-XVII century documentation of cannibalism among Tupi-Guarani Indians of Brazil. The Brazil data come from different and independent sources that corroborate each other quite well. Garry Hogg is not an anthropologist, and tends to be sensationalist and naively ethnocentric. (I am circulating inquiries to several scientists on their evaluation of Hogg and his book.) It is not clear whether Reed ever read through Hogg's book, from which she cites a quote (*WE*, p. 35, Hogg p. 7). She apparently has read the shorter Métraux article (a translated excerpt in *Readings in Anthropology*, ed. Hoebel), but very selectively, and perhaps some of the major article (in French: *La Religion des Tupinambas*, Paris 1928) from which it was excerpted.

M.W. Young's *Fighting with Food* (Cambridge U., 1971) is not cited by Reed, and is a work by an anthropologist making an intensive study limited to one Melanesian area (Goodenough Island in the D-Entrecasteaux archipelago, east of New Guinea).

I am making available xeroxes of the original of some of this material to Pathfinder Press and to the National Committee.

This textual material, restoring women to their rightful place among our cannibal ancestors, and recovering part of the "Hidden History" covered up or ignored by Reed, makes grisly and gruesome reading. But nowhere near as gruesome as encouraging the party to make an ass of itself in public by espousing utopian antiscientific fantasy systems that can be blown apart with great ease.

* * *

Readings in Anthropology, E. Hoebel, J. Jennings, E. Smith edit. Excerpt Métraux, from *Handbook of South American Indians*, Bur. Amer. Ethnol. Bull. 143, vol. 3 (1948).

p. 154: ". . . The following morning the prisoner was dragged to the plaza by some old women . . . Old women, painted black and red, with necklaces of human teeth, darted out of their huts carrying newly painted vases to receive the victim's blood and entrails. . . . The prisoner's wife shed a few tears over his body and then joined in the cannibalistic banquet. Old women rushed to drink the warm blood, and children were invited to dip their hands in it. Mothers would smear their nipples with blood so that even babies could have a taste of it. The body, cut into quarters, was roasted on a barbecue, and the old women, who were the most eager for human flesh, licked the grease running along the sticks . . ."

Alfred Métraux, *l'Anthropophagie rituelle des Tupinamba*, appearing in *La Religion des Tupinamba*, Paris 1928, pp. 124-169, and in *Religions et Magies Indiennes d'Amerique du Sud*, Gallimard 1967. The pages indicated below are from the 1967 text. Translation is mine. Métraux' XVI-XVII century sources are cited later on.

p. 46: ". . . Before leaving the battlefield, they finished off the wounded and carved up the dead. The roasted limbs

²A. Goldenweiser, *Totemism, an Analytical Study*, Col. U. Ph.D. thesis; J. Amer. Folklore Vol. 23 (1910); A. Goldenweiser, Form and content in totemism, Amer. Anthropologist, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1918); available as reprint A-301 from Bobbs-Merrill Co.

were devoured in place or, after barbecuing, were carried off to the village. The Tupinamba cut off the genital organs of the women and children massacred when the village was attacked, and gave these to their wives. The latter barbecued them and served them to their husbands as a holiday meal."

p. 47: ". . . Approaching the village, if the band ran into women in the fields they would force the prisoner to yell 'I, your meal, am arriving.'"

[Evelyn Reed (*WE* p. 278) offers a clumsy explanation for this "cryptic" remark, which does not fit nicely into her schema. The only thing "cryptic", as we shall see, is why, or how long, Reed's self-deception or hoax could be expected to escape detection.]

p. 51: "Yves D'Evreux, cites the case of a slave whose masters came often to visit, so great was their affection for him. He had been captured while a small child. His mother had been eaten and the same fate awaited him. The certainty of his premature death did nothing to alter the love he felt for his adoptive parents."

p. 51: "The return of a runaway was accompanied by the same manifestations of hostility as attended his capture. The old women accosted him, each one hitting her mouth with the palm of her hand and shrieking: We will eat him up, he is ours."

[These mutually corroborating accounts are drawn from: d'Evreux, *Voyage dans le nord du Brésil fait durant les années 1613 et 1614*, Leipzig-Paris 1864; Hans Staden [held prisoner five years by Tupinamba] *Warhafftige Historia und Beschreibung einer Landschafft der Wilden, Nacketen, Grimmigen Menschenfresser Leuthen in der Newen Welt America gelegen* (n.d.; contemporary of Thevet); A. Thevet, *La Cosmographie Universelle*, Paris 1575].

pp. 52-53: "The children who were clubbed to death before Thevet's eyes were six and seven years of age respectively. These 'enemy children' had been raised like the village children until they were old enough to be eaten. They were then sent to their maternal uncle or, if such were not available, to some other relative of the mother in her paternal line. . . . The sacrifice of the child followed the usual rituals, and usually took place in the presence of the father, who was killed the next day. The mother was one of the first to taste the flesh of her children. Cases are cited, however, in which a woman attempted to save a child and have it adopted by her group. Other mothers, anticipating the fate that awaited their progeny, had themselves aborted. Alfonse de Saintonge writes that daughters were spared, being of the same sex as their mother. This assertion is in doubt, since Thevet saw a small girl put to death, and our best authors do not indicate any difference in the treatment inflicted on the children of either sex."

p. 65 [Thevet]: "The matador smashed his head, and the blood gushing from it was soon recovered by an old woman, who collected the blood in an old gourd . . . the blood was drunk while hot. As soon as he expired, an old woman ran a firebrand into his anus, so that nothing would be lost from the body, and they immediately carried the body onto a bonfire prepared prior to his death . . . The most horrible and most cruel act I have ever heard of was then committed in our presence by an old woman . . . As soon as one of the little children, only seven years old, a child of one of the girls married to the executed prisoner, as soon as he was killed, this woman cut off his head and

sucked out the brains through the hole . . . The daughter was six years old, the son seven, when they were killed in the presence of their father."

pp. 65-66: "The wife of the sacrificed captive approached the body and shed a few purely ritual tears, after which her grief dissipated and she was one of the first to taste the flesh of her husband.

"Children were encouraged to touch the cadaver and moisten their hands in the blood. Their body, arms, and thighs were daubed with the blood, and they were told: You now have revenge on the enemy, take this revenge my child. He is one of those who made you an orphan by killing your father. Mothers urged the children to treat the enemies as they had seen their elders do. So that their infants could take part, mothers smeared their breasts or the tips of their breasts with the blood.

"The cadaver was browned in the fire, singed, and scraped by hand until it became 'cleaner and whiter than a suckling pig.' One man cut off the legs and arms flush to the torso. Four women seized the four limbs and ran with them around the huts 'uttering loud shouts of joy.' . . .

"The quarters were roasted on the spit and culinary tasks assigned to the old women who showed their joy in frenzied excitement 'and the old women are especially eager' notes Claude d'Abbeville, 'and cannot be satiated . . .' They lick the grease running down the sticks holding the spit, and express their satisfaction by constantly repeating *ygatou* 'it's good.' Some women go so far as to anoint their face, mouth, and hands with the grease of the dead man and to lick up all the blood they find. Nothing was left to waste: the guts were boiled in water and eaten by the men, the broth was drunk by the women. The tongue, the brain, and some other parts of the body were reserved for the young, the skull flesh for the adults, and the sexual organs for the women . . ."

[Claude d'Abbeville, *Histoire de la mission des Peres capucins en l'Isle de Maragnon et terres circonvoisines ou est traicte des singularitez admirables des Moeurs merveilles des Indiens habitans de ce pais*, Paris 1614].

"Generally, the old men and old women were found to be particularly greedy for human flesh. They hoarded roasted portions as mementos for later celebrations in case no new enemy was killed for a while . . ."

p. 68: "A myth transcribed by Pigafetta [Antonio Pigafetta, *Primo viaggio intorno al globo terracqueo*, Milan 1800] describes the origin of cannibalism as strict application of the reciprocity principle. 'They sometimes eat human flesh, but only that of their enemies. They don't eat it for the taste, but in obedience to a custom which, according to their sayings, began in the following manner: an old mother had an only son who was killed by enemies; some time later, the murderer of her son was taken prisoner and brought before the mother; to avenge her son, she pounced on the prisoner like a savage beast and, yelling, tore off his shoulder . . ."

p. 72: "The Guarayu who emigrated from Paraguay at the same time as their ancestors the Chiriguano remained cannibals until a fairly recent date, toward the end of the XIX century. 'When they take a prisoner in battle,' a Jesuit missionary narrates, 'they tie him to a tree during the holiday celebration after painting him red and black, decorate him with feathers . . . the women run up (after the prisoner's head is smashed) and, horrors, devour his

stiff and still lukewarm limbs with gusto, tearing him apart in an undescrivable fashion."

[end of citations from Métraux. Equivalent text also available in: A. Métraux, *A Religião dos Tupinambas e suas relações com a das demais tribus Tupi-Guaranis*, Campanhia Editora Nacional, São Paulo 1959, pp. 226-284.]

Garry Hogg's *Cannibalism and Human Sacrifice*, Citadel Press, NY 1966, offers information on the relationship between women and cannibalism which I classify below by area of the world and page numbers:

Women feasting: Fiji 24, 28, 29; Aztecs 47; KwakIutl 64; Amazon basin 72, 80; Nigeria 83, 84, 90, 92; Sierra Leone 100; Kongo 106, 107; Borneo 126; New Guinea 129, 133, 135, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142; Melanesia 148, 151, 152, 153; Polynesia: Maori 185; Rapanui 164 ("rarely").

Women eaten: Fiji 25, 28, 29, 33, 34, 40; Aztecs 44, 47, 48, 49; KwakIutl 67; Amazon basin 70; Nigeria 84, 87, 89; Sierra Leone 96, 98-100; Kongo 103, 104, 106, 108, 109, 115; Borneo 122; New Guinea 133, 138-141; Melanesia 149, 151, 152; Maori 185.

Women restricted or tabued (as cannibals or as meals, however mildly or conditionally): Fiji 34; Nigeria 83, 84, 86, 90; Sierra Leone 94; Kongo 107; Borneo 126; Polynesia: Tonga 160; Tapanui 164.

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Fiji p. 34: [A.P. Rice, *American Antiquarian*, vol. 32 (1910)] ". . . great heaps of human bones lay whitening in the sun—a sign of how many bodies had been thus offered to the gods. Women, however, were not allowed to take part in the awful banquet, yet women's bodies were considered better for cooking than men, and the thighs and arms were looked upon as the favorite portions. So delicious was human flesh held to be, that the highest praise that could be given to other food was to say: 'It is as good as *bakolo*'."

Aztecs p. 44: "At the time of the harvest festival, a female victim was flayed and her skin brought ceremonially to the temple, either to Teteoinnan [Earth-Mother] or of Centeotl, the Goddess of Maize. The skin was worn by the officiating priest, who for the ritual assumed the identity of the goddess . . ."

p. 72: [H.W. Bates, *The Naturalist on the Amazons* [river] 1863, on the Majeronas tribe] ". . . They are a fierce, indomitable and hostile people . . . they are also cannibals . . . She was decidedly the best-humoured and, to all appearances, the kindest-hearted specimen of her race I had yet seen. . . . Yet I heard this artless maiden relate, in the coolest manner possible, how she ate a portion of the bodies of the young men whom her tribe had roasted . . ."

p. 83: [C. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, 1925] ". . . Women, however, were not permitted to eat human flesh, and it was not permissible for married men to eat the flesh of women who had been killed during an attack on a village. But wifeless old men might eat the flesh of a woman with impunity."

p. 90: [C. Meek] "In some tribes it was forbidden for women and children to partake of human flesh; in others, for example among the Kalabari, the eldest sister of the hut was forced to taste it, however strongly she might protest. Among the Abadja, the whole body of anyone slain was ordinarily taken back to the village and there consumed, though it was tabu to eat women or children."

Kongo, p. 108: [H. Ward, *A Voice from the Congo*, 1910] "Proportionately, a greater number of men than women fall victims to cannibalism, the reason being that women who are still young are esteemed as being of greater value by reason of their utility in growing and cooking food." [compare this to Hogg, p. 34, on Fiji, above].

Borneo, pp. 125-26: [F. Maynard, A. Dumas, *The Whalers*, 1937] "The flesh is always eaten raw, or grilled at the place of punishment, and the use of palm wine and other strong liquors is strongly interdicted at these judicial feasts, where the men alone have the right to be present. Sometimes also they collect the blood in bamboo stems. In defiance of the law, the women use a thousand subterfuges, and employ all their seductions, in order to share in this secret and horrible feast."

p. 1301 New Guinea: [Rev. G. Chalmers, *Life and Work in New Guinea*, 1895] ". . . the ten bodies were taken out of the canoes and put on the river bank. And the women cooked them, and pronounced them good. And after a while, the men also said that the flesh was good. And from that day till now, the men and women of these tribes have always said that the flesh of human beings is better than the flesh of any other animal." [this is a myth—an "origins" legend—the women appearing as the social leaders introducing cannibalism—the mirror opposite of Evelyn Reed's myth! Compare Métraux p. 68, above]

pp. 140-41, New Guinea: "A man or woman killed and eaten otherwise than as payment for the death of a clansman was called *Idaidiga* . . . All members of the tribe who had attained the age of puberty, whether male or female, were permitted to eat of this flesh, though it appears that the women did not invariably avail themselves of the privilege."

pp. 151-52 [A. P. Rice]: ". . . the women of the tribes used to pick out the best-covered corpses on the field of battle and dress them for the ovens while the warriors were still engaged in killing others. . . . On this island, too, there was no prohibition against women partaking of human flesh. Nor was there any tabu against the eating of the corpse of a chief. On the other hand, if the corpse of a chief was an offer, it was obligatory that every man, woman, and even small child must receive at least a mouthful. Another important tabu on this island concerned the corpses of women. If by any chance the body of a woman happened to be included in the feast, then however far demand exceeded supply, the torso must be cast away and only the arms and legs divided into portions."

p. 153: [H. Romilly, *The Western Pacific and New Guinea*, 1886] ". . . the women . . . had made fires and were out boiling large pots of water . . . The women all this time were laughing and joking, discussing the points of each man . . . the body was then placed on the mat and 'cleaned'—some of the more perishable parts being thrown to the women as one throws scraps to the dogs. These were barely warmed at the fire before they were devoured . . ."

p. 160: [W. Mariner, *An Account of the Natives of Tonga Islands*, 1827] ". . . when some tribesmen have returned from a foray, and it is known to others in their village that they have indulged in such inhuman practices, most persons who know of it, particularly the women, avoid them. They call out to them: 'Ia-whe moe ky-tangata!' This means: 'Keep off! You are eaters of human flesh!'"

p. 163: [A. P. Rice] "With this tribe, as with many others, the bodies of women were in great demand. . . ."

p. 164: Rapanui (Easter Isl.) [A. Métraux, *Easter Island*,

1957] "Cannibal feasts were held in secluded spots, and women and children were rarely admitted . . . Women and children were the principal victims of these inveterate cannibals . . . The men, women and children who were captured were eaten . . ."

p. 179 *Maori*: [F. Maynard] "There is usually a suspension of fighting after the death of the first chief to fall in combat . . . The party which has not lost that leader claims the body of the defunct. If the others are intimidated, they yield it at once, and in addition, the chief's wife, who is immediately put to death; she even voluntarily yields herself up, if she loved her husband. The priests cut up the corpses, divide them into fragments, and eat some . . ."

p. 181: [Maori quoted in: Tregear, *The Maori Race* 1904] ". . . On the way I was speaking to a red-haired girl who had just been caught out in the open . . . As we came back, I saw the head of the red-haired girl lying in the ferns by the side of the track. Further on, we overtook one of the Waihou men carrying a back-load of the flesh, which he was taking to our camp to cook for food. The arms of the girl were round his neck, whilst the body was on his back."

p. 182 *Maori*: "Uenuku ate the heart of his wife, who had committed adultery."

p. 183 *Maori*: [A. P. Rice] "He seized the young girl, took her to his hut, killed her in cold blood; cut up her body in the traditional manner, and then invited his friends to partake with him in a meal, the chief and most favoured dish of which consisted of this young Maori girl"

[end of citations from Hogg]

Young, *Fighting with Food* p. 49: "Under what conditions intervillage marriage took place in the pre-contact era can only be surmised . . . Courtship in villages other than their own is even today a hazardous undertaking for Goodenough youths. It must have been so much more so in the past that it was probably kept to a bare minimum. Apparently some females captured in war were married instead of being eaten . . ."

[Here we have enough data, though limited to one area, to satisfy anyone who wants to go into orbit with Comrade Reed desperately enough. All that is required is to pick out the pattern of data to your liking, ignore all the rest of it, and you too can be a wild speculator, but nothing resembling a scientist.]

Please bear with me for one more: A. Deacon, *Malekula, a Vanishing People in the New Hebrides*, 1934: "It seems that only men may eat the bodies of men, but women are not wholly deprived of the privilege of being cannibals, for they are allowed to consume the bodies of women. These, however, are not reserved for women only; although men will never eat a sow, they are not debarred from eating the female of their own species, and when once they have eaten any part of a woman's body, that body becomes *ileo* (sacred) so that it is reserved for men alone, and no woman may eat of it." (p. 230)

* * *

I have gone out of my way to find ethnographic data which, in isolation, lend limited support to at least some aspects of Reed's rickety utopian-rationalist anti-materialist fantasy on women and cannibalism. The

Tongan example (not general to Polynesia) and a couple of West African cases cited in Hogg show that at least someplace in the world women were forbidden from taking active part in cannibal feasts (although they might take part involuntarily in the grisly passive sense) or refused to take part, but Polynesia and West Africa are fairly well advanced, agricultural, differentiated with social stratification, and in more cases than not well on the road to statehood by the time of contact with Europeans.

Reed has an escape hatch (*WE*, p. 280) which can be invoked (if no scientists are around) to account for the truly voluminous data indicating that women were *not* universally (or even generally) inviolate and immune to victimization in cannibal societies, in the recent past or in the remote past a fortiori:

[Reed] "In the massacres that followed the introduction of guns and modern methods of warfare into primitive regions, there is evidence that women and children were killed, in some instances even eaten. But these were aberrations that came with the decay of the tribal system."

This pathetic escape hatch has no scientific value, is not warranted by the empirical data, and is handed down as a Revelation *ex cathedra*, like many (or most) other arguments in Reed's system. I would not be so rash as to suggest that none of Reed's supporters will join her in squirming through that escape hatch in their desperation to hang onto Reed's utopia. Antiscientific cults don't always die—and they don't necessarily fade away readily upon exposure—certainly not if there are compelling social, psychological, and/or political reasons for their existence and persistence.

As far as I know, there is no general collection of worldwide data on cannibalism correlated with which sex figures at which end of the table in which cultures. Such data do not figure in the earlier World Ethnographic Atlas, and I do not believe they are being assembled in Human Relations Area Files or other data banks. It is certainly not a pressing research topic; the data I exhibit above clearly demonstrate that both sexes are well represented on both sides of the pot or oven in all parts of the world where cannibalism has been attested and fairly reliably described. There are no doubt some interesting hypotheses that could be launched on the broad subject of cannibalism, hypotheses which even if refuted would stimulate much useful research. Reed's lame hypothesis, the foundation stone of her whole book, does not even have the merit of being able to stimulate fruitful research in the course of its being tested. The data refuting it are lying all around the map waiting to be picked up.

I have no difficulty understanding why nonscientists (or at least non-anthropologists) who are biased pro-Marxist, pro-feminist, or just plain pro-underdog would find Reed's Revelation attractive, even irresistible. It always feels good to see the tables turned on the oppressor group in some cute way. Even while recognizing that the view falls somewhat short of scientific accuracy, we still enjoy it when Black nationalists rap about Blacks wearing silks while Europeans were living in caves gulping down raw meat or each other, especially if this drives some white racist clean up the wall in a paroxysm of discomfort. I would love to see the contortions on the face of some incurable MCP who blows a gut while reading or hearing Reed's rap about only men being cannibals etc., if the party did not have to take responsibility implicitly (and now explicitly: DB vol. 33, No. 4, p. 20) for this debauchery

of science. A practical joke or a put-on by any independent feminist that riles, convulses, infuriates, exasperates, and blows the misogynic mind of any vintage sexist is all to the good, but not when done in the name of the party, at the expense of the party, which must subscribe to materialism and science, and which—while not obliged to master other sciences than Marxist macroeconomics and politics—at least must not slip into antiscientific, utopian rationalist positions and attitudes.

Still less permissible is it for the party to engage in activities typical of a lunatic-fringe nut cult, with comrades who are ignorant not only of the science in question but of scientific methodology in general running around badgering scientists for not giving their stamp of approval to this pseudoscientific fad, implying that any and all scientists who are not impressed by this pseudo-anthropology are part of a conspiracy against women, “evolution,” Morgan-Marx-Engels, “theory” [!], and Evelyn Reed.

Is all this komchvanstvo crap necessary? To the revolution? to the SWP? To women? To Reed? [Comrades will still respect her as she is—there is no need for her to pose as an anthropologist nor for us to palm her off as one.] It certainly hasn't been necessary to me. I openly repudiated this type of komchvanstvo before the party two years ago and have no reason to regret doing so.

I have limited this paper to discussion of the utopian view of cannibalism and women, but nothing much better is in store from some of Reed's utopian conjectures on incest, on priority of the matriline (with time-depths not clearly stated but jumbled haphazardly), and on that horrible bugaboo, source of all evil, the unspeakable and detestable NUCLEAR FAMILY.

We need more knowledge about the family, and also more knowledge about invalid nonsense about the family

popular among Marxists and feminists. We do not need utopian myths, paroxysmic hatred of the very words “nuclear family”, illusions that the nuclear family only popped up into existence a short while ago historically, or that it can be puffed out, “abolished,” etc. with ease by some gimmick. If we are to deal with the technical subject at all, it should be at least at the level of current bourgeois family sociology and especially current social anthropology dealing with the topic, not at the amateurish level we are at now. (That Marx and Engels are not to blame for *our* (incl. Reed's) current errors and blunders I pointed out DB Vol. 31 No. 20, pp. 18-20. Marx and Engels did the best they could, and did well, attaining at least the level of the science of their day in that area. It is not their fault if we remain below the level of science of our day in the area of family sociology.)

Our susceptibility to komchvanstvo is something we are going to have to analyze painstakingly and resolutely. I have something to contribute on that subject, since I battled with and overcame my own weaknesses in that area in the 1971-1973 period.

Another important area is the relationship between Marxist methodology as we apply it in areas familiar to us and the best of scientific methodology as applied in the physical sciences and in the most mature social sciences (in my opinion, some sectors in social anthropology have made enormous strides forward in developing scientific theory and contributing to the development of philosophy of science), the strengths and weaknesses in both areas in practice; relationship between materialism and empirical science; what we reject about some currents in bourgeois empiricism and what we reject about some currents in bourgeois empiricism and what we [should] share in common with them [e.g., rejection of utopian rationalism and medieval scholasticism, etc.].

WHAT WE MEAN BY THE "LONG DETOUR" A Comment on Comrade Steve Bloom's Article

By Les Evans, Brooklyn Branch, N.Y. Local

June 30, 1975

Comrade Steven Bloom, in his article "For a Further Clarification of the 'Long Detour' (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 33, No. 3, June 1975), questions whether there are valid grounds for stating, as the SWP leadership and the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction have done, that the period of postwar social overturns of capitalist property relations being led by nonproletarian forces, ranging from the Stalinists to the Cuban July 26 Movement, is drawing to a close. Citing a passage from Gus Horowitz's report on Vietnam at the August 1973 SWP convention (IIDB, Vol. X, No. 15), Steve draws the conclusion that "The historical detour as seen here is predominantly a geographic one, concentrating on the underdeveloped world and the countryside, rather than on the classical form of insurrection involving the urban working classes." (p. 21)

This, he contends, is one-sided.

Comrade Bloom points out, in criticizing the "geographical" theory of the detour that not all of the social overturns occurred in underdeveloped countries. Capitalism was also abolished in Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. Hence it seem unwarranted to place restrictions on the development of revolutionary situations in any part of the world even where the leadership by default may be in the hands of reformist parties.

The real question, as Steve views it, is not so much the objective one, inasmuch as we are moving into a new period of revolutionary upsurge, of which the world recession is a harbinger, but the subjective question of the rapidity with which parties of the Fourth International can be built to win mass leadership in the coming class conflicts. He writes:

"If the driving force behind the historical detour is the crisis of leadership, can we state that the detour is coming to an end without at the same time deciding that the crisis of leadership has been resolved? No. Until Leninist parties are built on a mass scale, there will be no end to the long detour." (pp. 21-22)

He concludes that ". . . the long detour will be with us until a mass revolutionary workers party is in a position to lead a struggle for power. Until then, every revolutionary upsurge will be headed by alien class forces." (p. 22)

It is important to delimit this difference of opinion and its consequences for our perspectives. Comrade Bloom is concerned, as are the leaders of the LTF, with probing the social forces in motion to set the boundaries of this process. He does not conclude, as does Comrade Rousset, that parties such as the Vietnamese CP have broken with Stalinism and come over to the revolutionary proletarian camp through their empirical practice. ". . . the occasional stumbling to success of a revolutionary upsurge with a petty-bourgeois leadership" does not mean, he writes, "that the building of mass revolutionary parties is not essential."

Nevertheless, an important difference of estimate remains. For Comrade Bloom the detour is above all a

product of the crisis of leadership, of the small size of the Fourth International, and until that deficiency of leadership is rectified the Stalinist and petty-bourgeois nationalist parties will continue, as they have in the past quarter century, to lead the working class mostly to defeats, but here and there, as the revolutionary crisis deepens, to produce qualified victories.

For the LTF, while it does not exclude the possibility of such overturns in the future, the conditions that permitted the long series of such deformed revolutions in the aftermath of World War II no longer exist and will not be resurrected by the radicalization now unfolding.

It is not fully clear to me from Comrade Bloom's article whether this divergent estimate flows from an actual disagreement or from a misunderstanding. His statement of the LTF case leaves out most of the actual arguments that have been presented and is highly schematic in its treatment of what is left. It is simply not true, for example, that the Stalinist-led overturns of capitalism since World War II are explained by the LFT primarily on geographical grounds or that the theory fails to encompass Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia.

It is curious on this score Comrade Bloom cites primarily Gus Horowitz's report, which deals mainly with Vietnam and presents the question of the detour only in the form of summary conclusions, rather than dealing at greater length with the LTF world political resolution of January 1974 (from which he quotes only a sentence on the working class moving to the fore) or the article by George Johnson and Fred Feldman in the April 1974 *International Socialist Review*, which he does not mention at all.

It is axiomatic, of course, that if the Fourth International was made up of mass parties that revolutionary upsurges would not fall under the leadership of petty-bourgeois tendencies, in or outside of the workers' movement. Under such circumstances there would be no detour. We can also agree with Comrade Bloom, that if the Fourth International should fail to build a mass party in a particular country as a revolutionary crisis develops, that the working class will in all likelihood fall under the leadership of one of the petty-bourgeois tendencies that operates in the workers' movement. But it most decidedly does not follow that such eventualities can be expected to produce a certain quota of successful, if deformed, socialist revolutions. And when we speak of a detour, we are not talking about the conditions that permit the working class to fall under the leadership of petty-bourgeois Stalinist or nationalist forces, but the conditions that permitted *the overthrow of capitalism* despite such a leadership. Here truisms and abstractions that are good for all time are not useful. What is required is a historically specific analysis of what happened and why.

The crisis of proletarian leadership is hardly a new phenomenon in world politics. But until the end of World War II it did not result in victories but only in defeats. The

Russian Marxists were a minority not only in relation to the petty-bourgeois Narodniks but also in relation to the petty-bourgeois Mensheviks, whose program on many important counts approximates that of the Stalinist parties today. Trotsky spoke in the 1930s of the crisis of leadership, but not of a detour that would permit the success of the proletarian revolution under auspices other than that of the revolutionary Marxist party. We must first of all recognize that we are dealing with a new phenomenon in world history, which was made possible by the crisis of leadership but which will not necessarily continue only because the crisis of leadership is not resolved in time in a specific country.

In my opinion, Comrade Bloom's principal error in approaching this question is methodological. He combines a somewhat fatalistic view of the objective process (the depth of the revolution itself will spontaneously drive toward the solution of the problem of leadership and program) with an abstract and voluntarist estimate of the capacities of the reformist parties in the field (carried on the wave of new upsurges they will in a reasonable number of cases decide to opt for power, followed up by nationalizations and the creation of a planned economy). This approach leaves out politics, the concrete evolution of these kinds of forces in an actual historical setting.

Let us take the case of the Stalinist parties first, inasmuch as with the exception of Cuba it was such parties that headed all of the postwar overturns we are discussing. Also, because the recent victory of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam provides a certain empirical grounds for assuming that other Stalinist parties are likely to repeat this experience in the future.

Comrade Steve mentions "unusual historical circumstances" that permitted the Stalinist victories, but he seems to be under the impression that this refers only to the "relative ease with which social transformations can be instituted in the colonial world" (p. 22)—the geographical theory of deformed workers' states. In the LTF world political resolution, however, this is not what was pointed out. There it was stated:

"Under the exceptional conditions provided by the invasion of Japanese imperialism and World War II, and under a spontaneous mass upsurge seldom if ever matched in history in its elemental force, the peasant armies that arose in a striking parallel to the ancient revolutionary pattern in China were able to defeat the reactionary forces headed by Chiang Kai-shek and bring the Maoist leadership to power." (*Dynamics of World Revolution Today*, p. 123, emphasis added.)

Johnson and Feldman, in their April 1974 article, made an even more striking generalization that did not at all rest on the geographical factor of the colonial revolution or the weakness of the colonial bourgeoisie. They wrote:

"In every single case where a Stalinist party took power, it was a country that had been completely or in part under Axis occupation and the occupation government had collapsed entirely with the defeat of Germany and Japan, leaving a power vacuum." (April 1974 *ISR*, pp. 41-42.)

This collapse of the old bourgeois regime, leaving the patriotic Stalinist parties at the head of bourgeois-democratic independence movements and a territory, but without a credible bourgeois government with which to collaborate was a necessary, though not sufficient condition for their struggle for power. In France, Italy, and

Greece similar conditions prevailed and there the Stalinists participated in the reconstruction of the bourgeois state.

As Johnson and Feldman point out, the Stalinist parties that did finally overturn capitalism were pushed into this struggle only after the initiation of the cold war in 1946-47. Until then Stalin preserved capitalist property relations in Eastern Europe despite the military rout of the profascist governments. Mao held out until 1947 for participation as a minority in a capitalist coalition government with Chiang Kai-shek and it was Chiang, not Mao, who began the civil war with an offensive against Mao's forces in July 1946. In Vietnam Ho Chi Minh had proclaimed a bourgeois-democratic republic (after the Japanese occupiers had declared the country independent when Japan's defeat in the war became inevitable).

These conditions suggest that it took more than the revolutionary upsurge alone to propel such parties onto the course they finally followed. Incidentally, the Vietnam conflict began in this period and under this impetus and despite its long duration was essentially a product of it.

Today, in deference to the Soviet nuclear arsenal, among other reasons, the world bourgeoisie has embarked on a policy of detente. This certainly does not predispose any Stalinist party not already locked in a conflict from which it cannot extricate itself to follow in the footsteps of Mao and Ho Chi Minh. All the more so in that Mao and Ho's successors are now urging them to seek alliances with bourgeois parties and governments in the traditional Stalinist pattern.

The "geographical" factor does enter into the picture, but not in the way envisioned by Comrade Bloom. It is not the primary reason for the Stalinist victories at the end of World War II, but it is a factor in the lack of growth of revolutionary Marxist parties in the industrially advanced countries during this time. It is, therefore, a part of the total picture of what we mean when we speak of a detour, but should not be confused with the question Steve concentrates on: the revolutionary capacities of the Stalinist and nationalist parties.

The colonial revolution and its leadership also sprang from the concrete historical circumstances of World War II: the decisive weakening of the old colonial empires, the growth of influence of the Soviet Union as a result of its victory over German imperialism, the relative quiescence of the industrial working class in the advanced countries as a result of the Stalinist betrayal in Western Europe and the long economic boom.

What should be noted here is the two-sided character of the experience through which we have gone. Although immense energies have been expended in the colonial world by masses struggling for independence and a social system responsive to their needs, the results in practice have not been as positive. Without the example of a mobilized working class to draw on, or a mass revolutionary Marxist party, the leadership in most of colonial and semicolonial countries passed to peasant-oriented forces inspired by the Chinese revolution. These were not by any means all Stalinist parties. We saw the peasant guerrilla struggle against the Dutch in Indonesia led by the bourgeois nationalist Sukarno, the Algerian revolution of the mid-1950s led by the left-wing petty-bourgeois FLN, the Bolivian revolution of 1952, etc.

Because of the illusions created by the Soviet defeat of Nazi Germany and the Chinese victory—alongside the genuine inspiration these events provided, which should not be lost sight of—these movements ended at best in victories that secured formal national political independence but failed to break their countries free from neocolonialist exploitation. What is happening today is a profound shift in the attitudes of the masses, in the advanced as well as the colonial sectors, marked by the revival of working-class militancy in the advanced countries and by a process in the colonial world of the absorption of a long and painful experience with “two-stage revolution,” alliances with the national bourgeoisie, and peasant guerrilla warfare.

Comrade Bloom seems to dismiss this shift in the focus of the world revolution as a mere change of scene: “While it is important to take note of and discuss this increasing importance of the urban working class in the world revolutionary process,” he writes, “this is only one aspect of the subject as it relates to the long detour. It seems to me that the fundamental character of the phenomenon is missed when discussed simply in this light, and that a serious miscalculation is made in marking the detour’s end.” And from here he goes on to the thesis that the detour is just another way of saying “crisis of proletarian leadership.”

But we should not be too hasty here. What is really implied when we conclude that the last few years have seen a revival of working-class militancy in the advanced industrial countries—and in the cities of the semicolonial world as well? Doesn’t this signify the end of the whole series of unique circumstances in which the postwar social overturns were rooted? And at the same time doesn’t it pose the very conditions in which the parties adhering to the Fourth International have their opportunity to overcome the crisis of leadership? This is not “only one aspect” of the subject but the very heart of it.

It was never the appearance of revolutionary crisis alone that propelled the Stalinist or petty-bourgeois nationalist parties beyond their programs and real interests at the end of World War II. No such party has ever overturned capitalist property relations on the basis of a mass urban workers’ upsurge of the kind we are now witnessing in Portugal. All but one of the social overturns we have seen since 1945 have been carried out by movements headed by Stalinist parties. Are there any serious grounds to expect repetitions of this pattern in the future? The demoralization of the European working class caused by the Stalinist betrayal at the end of the war is over. The prestige of the Soviet Union has fallen greatly since 1945. The Chinese bureaucracy has made no serious attempt to construct parties committed to the Maoist line. Nowhere in the world today, outside of Indochina, which is a powderkeg left by World War II, is there a Stalinist party left in the anomalous position of playing the role of loyal bourgeois opposition without a bourgeoisie. The bourgeois governments of both advanced and colonial countries that were shattered by the Axis occupation have been rebuilt. The cold war has been replaced by detente.

Urban workers’ revolutions are won or lost by a revolutionary party’s ability to maneuver with entrenched bourgeois parties and military formations. Even when these are shaken by a workers’ upsurge they retain some

grip on the political process. There is no room here for unconscious stumbling into power on the basis of a bourgeois-democratic program. Under these circumstances everything conciliatory to the bourgeoisie, everything counterrevolutionary in the social position of the Stalinist parasite on the Chinese and Soviet workers’ states, comes to the fore.

Thus we are not talking about “only one aspect of the subject” when we state that the center of gravity of the revolutionary process has shifted back to the working class. We are also stating the conditions under which the Stalinist and petty-bourgeois radical parties can lead only to defeats. This is more than an abstract generality. It is the concrete experience of the last years, from the role of the French CP in May-June 1968 to the betrayal of the Chilean working class into the hands of Pinochet’s butchers in 1973, to the Portuguese CP’s capitulation to the bourgeois-military MFA today.

But what of the other side of the question? If Marxism is correct in its view of the revolutionary capacities of the working class, isn’t it precisely in the period that is opening up today that we can expect to build mass revolutionary Marxist parties? I believe that Comrade Steve is wrong to suppose that the radicalization we are now facing will result in further deformed socialist revolutions. But we should also carefully avoid any tendency to project a hypothetical situation in which the revolutionary crisis deepens while the revolutionary Marxist parties remain propaganda nucleuses as they are today. We will ourselves be an active factor—the crucial, indispensable one—in the period ahead. Our estimate of the workers’ radicalization beginning today in the United States leads us to the perspective of the growth of the SWP into a mass workers’ party. Doesn’t it follow that even short of a socialist victory in the United States that our movement will become an objective factor in influencing revolutionists in other countries to adopt the Leninist strategy of party building and help to undercut the influence of Stalinist and Castroist tendencies in the workers’ movement?

Within the framework of this general estimate there is no reason to categorically deny the possibility that in some isolated case what has happened in the past may occur again. The Cuban revolution was an example. But it should be kept in mind that it was the *only* example that did not arise out of the Axis collapse in World War II and the Stalinist “left turn” during the cold war. Attempts to emulate this example in Latin America in the last sixteen years, on the basis of rural or urban guerrilla warfare, have produced only defeats. There is no evidence that new centrist or left-wing petty-bourgeois groupings or parties anywhere in the world are being forged into “adequate instruments” to carry through socialist overturns. The role of the MIR in Chile was instructive in this regard.

The big contests shaping up today in Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East are urban and proletarian class struggles where such a leadership has small chance of maneuvering to successful revolution without a party and with a program restricted to the implementation of bourgeois democracy by revolutionary means. It is in these contests that the Fourth International will have its opportunity.