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March 14, 1971

by Betsey Stone

The resolution on the women's liberation movement, which will be presented for vote at the SWP national convention, will be the first SWP resolution on the feminist movement. It will include a discussion of our basic position, including such questions as the relationship between capitalism and female oppression, the role of the family, the relationship between the feminist movement and struggles around other issues, including nationalist struggles, and an analysis of the roots and potential of the feminist movement today.

All these topics have been taken up by our movement before -- in the report to the plenum last March, at the Oberlin educational conference, at the recent YSA convention, and in numerous articles in The Militant and International Socialist Review. So, although they will be included in the resolution, I'm not going to go into them in detail again in the report to this plenum. Instead, I want to concentrate on an analysis of the situation today in the women's movement.

Our strategy in regard to the feminist movement is based on the central ideas contained in the Transitional Program. We believe that the key way people are brought into motion against this system is through struggles around concrete issues and demands which relate to their needs. We do not believe that masses of people will become involved in revolutionary struggle through being won over by argument alone to the abstract idea of socialism.

The struggle to overturn capitalism is a process, whereby the power and confidence of the masses is built up over time through struggle. The culmination of this process is the contest for state power. Each battle to change, or take control of the institutions of society is a basic part of this process, part of mobilizing the masses in struggle.

Already, in the short history of the feminist movement, we have seen the correctness of this mass action approach. The greatest steps forward taken by the movement have come when it began to relate to, and fight around, issues of concern to masses of women.

Through our activities in building the feminist movement with this mass perspective, the YSA and SWP have

contributed significantly to the growth of the movement -- both ideologically and numerically. In preparing this report, I tried to assess as accurately as possible the role we have played even in the short history of the movement, and we can say with assurance that it has been a decisive one. As just one example, without our participation with the perspective of making the movement visible by mobilizing women around feminist demands, August 26 would never have been the mass mobilization that it was.

We, along with other forces, fought successfully to have August 26 based on concrete demands which could appeal to masses of women. We also played an important role in publicizing and building the action. And since August 26 we have participated, along with other forces, in carrying out activities which have been responsible for bringing tens of thousands of new women into the movement. We have helped build coalitions, campus groups, city-wide groups and various kinds of actions, including the whole series of large women's liberation conferences and actions this spring.

One of the reasons we have been able to play this role has been the fact that we have participated in the movement with the idea that we have a great deal to learn, as well as to contribute. For example, when we attended the First Congress to Unite Women -- which was one of the earliest gatherings of women where some of the basic demands of the movement were hammered out -- we attended with the idea of learning as well as contributing. We immediately supported the demands raised by that conference and we began to work to help build a movement based on fighting for them. At the Congress to Unite Women, and other similar early conferences and meetings, we also began to absorb the confidence and strength that comes from participating in a movement where women unite together against common oppression.

On the basis of the ideas and demands that began to grow out of the movement, we helped build the movement into a mass movement, based on action. We helped organize consciousness-raising activities in such a way that the largest number of women could begin to take part. We saw consciousness-raising not only as an activity to be carried out by small groups, but something that could take place in

large groups as well -- at conferences, over the radio and TV, and anywhere women happen to get together. Most importantly, we saw that consciousness-raising was not an end in itself but is a vital part of laying the basis for taking action against female oppression.

### Mass Action Debate

The rapid growth of the feminist movement -- and August 26 in particular -- initiated a debate within the movement over the question of the mass action perspective. In many instances, this debate has centered around the question of the role played by the YSA and SWP as proponents of mass action in the movement, and has included red-baiting attacks on us. After August 26, a number of women's liberation newspapers attacked August 26, reacting to it in a sectarian manner, and combined their attacks with charges that the SWP was "taking over" the movement. Other journals and individual women have defended mass actions, have participated in building continuing actions, and have defended the SWP and YSA against red-baiting.

It is important to understand that these debates and discussions have developed because there are a whole number of political tendencies within the feminist movement who are opposed to building a mass fighting women's movement which struggles around issues of concern to women. Because the SWP is the most consistent national political tendency which fights for such a mass-action perspective, these tendencies often use red-baiting to cloud over the real issues, and to prejudice people against our participation and ideas.

SWP and YSA members have been pictured by these tendencies as socialist dupes of the "male-dominated" left, coming in to "infiltrate," to "subvert" and to "take over" the feminist movement. It is important for us to explain what is behind these attacks. We should explain that they have nothing whatsoever to do with "take overs" or infiltration. On the contrary, our record of being the best fighters for democratic procedures within the movement is impeccable. Nor do such charges actually stem from the fact that the SWP and YSA are organizations which men as well as women belong to.

We should explain what red-baiting is -- that it is an attempt to use the anti-socialist prejudices inculcated into this society by the ruling class to discredit a revolutionary organization and the program it fights for. The implication that socialists enter movements, such as the feminist

movement, not because we support the goals of those movements, but because we want to subvert and use them for unnamed nefarious ends is an idea right out of the McCarthyism of the 1950's.

The truth is that, as revolutionaries, the SWP and YSA are the most consistent supporters of the perspective of building an independent, democratic feminist movement. And, unlike many organizations participating in the movement today, we see no contradiction between a perspective of building the independent feminist movement and building the revolutionary socialist party.

We also need to point out the logic of trying to discredit or exclude from the movement the ideas of certain women because they belong to organizations which contain men, or associate with men in other ways. There are many women in the movement who belong to such organizations -- Black women who belong to Black organizations, trade union women, women who belong to various political parties and organizations, socialist women, as well as the tens of millions of women who live with men. Ironically, some of the red-baiters who charge the SWP women with being "male-dominated" belong to organizations with men in them themselves. It is our program they disagree with, not the fact that men and women together have formulated that program.

What is at stake in the debates within the movement are very basic political differences over how best to build the movement, and it is of greatest importance that there be a clear, calm, open political debate of these issues, so that the greatest number of women possible can be informed about the real issues, and can help participate in determining the strategy of the movement, not on the basis of prejudice or hearsay, but on the basis of a complete and open discussion.

Briefly, I want to discuss the various anti-mass-action tendencies which have been involved in this red-baiting, to consider the ideas they have and the roles they are playing in the movement. They can be divided, roughly, into four different categories:

The first category is those ultraleft women coming out of the new left or ex-SDS milieu. The second category includes two kinds of idealist utopians: counter-institutionists, and what can be designated as "living-room feminists." The third is the traditional type reformists and liberals. The fourth category includes the various reformist socialist tendencies, the

largest of these being the Communist Party.

### "New Lefters"

Many ex-SDSers, and others from the "new left" milieu, carry into the feminist movement the sectarian and ultraleft views of the new left. Many of these women were founders of the first feminist groups in their areas after they split from SDS, and to this day they still have influence in such women's liberation newspapers such as Off Our Backs.

The ideology of this grouping has gone through considerable flux and change, but there are a number of main ideas which characterize their approach which are familiar to us from our experiences in the antiwar movement:

They tend to want to find short cuts around the long, hard job of building a mass movement by organizing struggles around the basic demands of women, such as child care, equal pay, etc.; and they counterpose struggling around "anti-imperialist" or "pro-socialist" ideas. Often they insist that in order to be effective, the feminist movement must, from its very inception, be consciously socialist or anti-capitalist. This orientation is evident in the "anti-imperialist" conferences being organized in Canada in April, and in formations like the Chicago Women's Liberation Union, which has written into its statement of purpose that all members must be anti-capitalist.

Another characteristic of these forces is the attempt to turn the women's liberation movement into a movement which basically orients towards issues and demands other than feminist demands. For example, at one point last fall, some groups turned all their energies toward organizing for the Black Panther Party convention in Washington, and discontinued activities which would bring new women into the feminist movement. Many of these women also reject student struggles around feminist issues on the grounds that they are not oriented to the most oppressed layers of women.

### The Idealists

The second major group has been quite aptly designated as "living-room feminism." The main characteristic of this tendency is that they want to make the movement a substitute for the failure of society to create an unalienated personal life. They orient toward making women's centers into livingroom-like areas, where small groups can meet together in

supposedly unalienated relationships, and they tend to get nervous when more women get together than could fit into a livingroom.

Cell-16 in Boston is probably one of the best examples of this tendency to reject any kind of large-scale organization of women. Last November they split from the Female Liberation group in Boston, specifically because they said that Female Liberation was getting too big. They wanted their group to be small and pure, and said that the new women coming into Female Liberation were "impeding its efficiency and diluting its message." After they split, they refused to let any additional members into their cell.

Common among livingroom feminists is a hostility to materialist explanations of female oppression. They tend to say that the oppression of women has grown up in society, not as a result of class oppression, but because men took advantage of the fact that women had the children in order to make slaves of them. They often see the oppression of women as being the basis for all the different types of oppression in society. The Redstockings Manifesto is an example of this approach. It says: "All other forms of exploitation and oppression (racism, capitalism, imperialism, etc.) are extensions of male supremacy: men dominate women, a few men dominate the rest."

Because many of these women think that female oppression stems not from class oppression, but from the fact that men obtain some short-term benefits from oppressing women -- living-room feminism tends to concentrate on small-group consciousness-raising as the chief method for changing society. They believe that liberation can come from changing peoples' minds, as opposed to changing social institutions. This is reflected in their attitude toward the Black liberation movement as well. In Redstockings, one of the most important ways of relating to the Black movement was to have consciousness-raising to overcome one's own "white-skin privilege."

In relation to the question of renouncing privileges, and attempting to create a perfect, unalienated atmosphere within the movement -- the living-room feminists and the new left women often have much in common. Both emphasize the necessity of intellectually understanding one's oppression -- and tend to counterpose this to mass action. Both reacted to August 26 in a sectarian manner. They felt that the women marching there were "low level," and didn't understand their full oppression. They felt that the demands raised

on August 26 "weren't radical enough." Both also tended to reject alliances around August 26 with groups such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), because they felt that these women might contaminate the demonstration with their reformist ideas.

Related to the livingroom feminist approach is the perspective of changing society by building counter-institutions. Both of these tendencies -- the livingroom feminists and the counter-institutionists -- tend toward utopianism, because they try to create islands of a perfect new society, within the context of the old society. The West Coast women's liberation newspaper, Everywoman, is one of the newspapers which tends to carry articles emphasizing a counter-institutionist approach. They put forward the view that women should not make demands on the government to set up such things as child care centers, but that women in the movement should use their own resources to set up child care centers, as well as abortion counseling, private women's liberation health clinics, clothing exchanges, food co-ops, loan societies, etc. Other women have a similar kind of orientation toward creating living communes and collectives.

Such activities may be able to help a few women survive on a day-to-day basis. But the building of counter-institutions is no alternative, and is often a conscious retreat from, the fight for control of the vast resources of this society, so that these can be used for the benefit of all women. The women's liberation movement, by itself, cannot provide for the needs of women. Any attempt to do so leads to peaceful coexistence with female oppression and with capitalism in general.

### The Liberals

The third basic political tendency within the movement is composed of the traditional liberals and reformists. That is, those women who rely on the Democratic and Republican parties to change things. Most prominent among these non-socialist reformists are women in NOW, and such politicians as Bella Abzug. Recently, for the first time that I know of, a group within the newer women's liberation forces has also decided to work through the Democratic Party. In New York, a group within the Radical Feminists decided to orient toward working in the New Democratic Coalition.

Many of these women in the movement -- who orient at one time or another to the Democratic Party either through lobbying or campaigning for a political candidate -- are women who

can be involved in building independent mass actions around basic women's liberation demands. As a matter of fact we've found, as in the antiwar movement, that although these people will sometimes switch back and forth -- depending on whether it's an election year or not -- it is more easy to win them to a mass action perspective than it is to win some of the ultra-lefts. Some of these women are very serious, and as they are convinced through their experience that the Democratic Party is a deadend, we can expect they will be won away from their present reformist orientation.

### CP, PL, IS

Now, what about our "socialist" opponents? Without exception, all of them, to one degree or another, have exhibited nervousness about the women's liberation movement because of their fundamentally reformist perspectives.

Progressive Labor completely rejects the feminist movement on the basis that the only valid struggles are those which are waged by workers, as workers.

IS has a more confused approach, which changes from time to time and is different in different parts of the country. But, all of their groups have a tendency to question the legitimacy of feminism if "working" women are not involved. They underestimate the role which students and young women out of the student milieu can play in initiating and building the movement, and they try to orient mainly to what they conceive of as struggles which relate to working women.

The Communist Party, in a whole series of articles and statements, has shown quite openly its nervousness, if not outright hostility, toward feminism. Their attitude is expressed most clearly in their assertions that the feminist struggle is less important than other movements, and in their reactionary defense of, and romanticization of, the family.

The Communist Party's hostile attitude toward feminism flows from their general perspective of supporting the Soviet bureaucracy's attempts to coexist peacefully with world capitalism. For one thing, feminism represents a challenge to the situation of women in the Soviet Union. It doesn't take a feminist very long to figure out that the role played by women in Soviet society is not what we are fighting for.

Secondly, the CP fears all potential mass struggles in this country which could pose a real threat to the

ruling class and upset the world equilibrium of the "great powers." The Communist Party does not see this period as a time when forces can be built up independent of the ruling class, in order to work toward actually making a revolution against that class. As they see it, the perspective we have before us in this country is not one of revolution, but of assuring the ascendancy of the liberal, pro-peaceful-coexistence wing of the capitalist class. They think of all independent movements against oppression in terms of how they can channel them into acting in support of, and as a pressure on, the liberal wing of the capitalist class. They are afraid of feminism because -- like nationalism -- it poses itself so sharply against not only the conservatives, but the liberals as well.

An example of this is the potential impact of feminism on the union movement. The CP looks at the unions in terms of trying to make them more like they were in the thirties and forties, when the CP played a strong role in the leadership of the industrial unions and used them as pressure groups on the Democratic Party. We have a different view. We believe that the union movement must be transformed and revolutionized under the impact of the movements for social change today, such as the feminist movement.

What the CP fears most is a mass, fighting women's movement which mobilizes masses of working women, in struggle for "unreasonable" demands which the capitalist liberals cannot meet. And they are the strongest opponents of the perspective of building such a movement. We know that as the movement grows bigger, they will adapt to it more and more and their opposition will become more subtle. They will use both sectarian, ultraleft, and utopian tactics to cover up their reformism. Already they show signs of supporting the perspective of concentration on building counter-institutions, and they have not spoken out against the exclusionary and ultraleft aspects of the anti-imperialist conferences in Canada. They have attempted to subordinate the movement to other struggles, and they have tried to orient the movement toward giving support to Democratic Party candidates such as Shirley Chisholm and Bella Abzug.

All of the four political groupings which I've described are united in one way: they are all opposed to building the feminist movement in a way which could attract masses of women and orient them toward independent struggle. The new left, the livingroom feminists and the counter-institutionists all

either organize in such a way as to keep the movement invisible to the masses of women, or around issues which do not relate to their concrete needs. The reformists, instead of building a mass movement, look to the Democratic Party and existing political forces to give women liberation.

These are the forces which we and other women who support mass action have been contending with and fighting against in order to create a viable mass movement. And it's clear that we will continue to have to take them on. For regardless of the differences between them, all these tendencies are united in their orientation to finding ultraleft, reformist, or utopian alternatives to building a mass movement struggling around women's demands.

What is the relationship of forces, right now, between these tendencies and the mass action forces? Around the time of August 26, the ultralefts and the utopians had a very strong influence in the movement, because many of the groups had been founded by them. But things have changed considerably since that time. The movement has grown much larger. Strong campus groups have emerged in many areas, and these have turned out to be vital bases for building strong city-wide women's liberation groups.

Second, city-wide coalitions with action perspectives have been built, often through conscious struggle against opponents of mass action. Broad action coalitions, most of them centered on the abortion fight, exist in many cities including Washington, Chicago, Boston, the Twin Cities, and New York, with statewide coalitions existing in Michigan, Texas, Colorado, and Indiana.

Third, some of the organizations which opposed an action perspective have either disintegrated or have been won over. A whole series of new viable feminist organizations and actions have been built since August 26. One indication of this was the success of International Women's Day.

#### The Abortion Struggle

Around the country we have participated in actions built around all the central demands of the movement. We've participated in fighting for women's studies, in demonstrations against sexism in advertising, in high school women's rights struggles. We've helped organize Black, Chicana and other Third World women's activities and groups, and we have organized

to support struggles opposing discrimination against women on the job -- such as the present struggle of the maids at Berkeley and working women in Denver. Child care is another issue we have helped to organize around, especially in fighting for child care centers on campuses.

However, it is the abortion fight which has emerged as the central issue around which women are organizing. None of the other issues, including child care, has yet attracted such large numbers of women and such enthusiasm. Abortion projects and coalitions have sprung up all over the country -- in Indiana, Connecticut, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Maine, North Dakota, Missouri, as well as the places I mentioned earlier. And there are probably many other places that we don't know about yet. Many of these groups are reaching out to very broad layers of women, including church groups, unions and Black groups. At least three trade unions have passed resolutions at national conventions in the past year in favor of the right of women to abortion. The issue of abortion has also come to the fore in many of the emerging women's liberation struggles in other countries -- for example in Belgium, Holland, England, France, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

Within the U.S., in response to the pro-abortion struggles, opposition to the right to abortion is also building up through the efforts of reactionary groups. The Catholic Church in particular is investing huge sums of money in this effort, taking out advertisements in newspapers, and even organizing demonstrations.

It is clearer than ever before that the women's liberation movement should intervene decisively in this growing national ferment and discussion over the issue of abortion, to put forward the position of the feminist movement, to demonstrate the power of women, and to build a nationwide abortion movement which can have a real impact in winning gains for women. As things stand now, all the campaigns around this issue are occurring on a state-by-state basis. The types of laws being introduced differ from state to state, although there is a general trend toward more liberal laws being introduced as a result of the pressure of the movement. No state yet has passed a law for total repeal, which is the position being put forward by almost all the women's liberation coalitions.

The importance of the women's liberation movement intervening deci-

sively and clearly to lead a campaign for total repeal, for free abortion on demand, and for no forced sterilization was illustrated by something that occurred in Denver. An abortion reform bill was introduced into the Colorado legislature under the title of "population control." The fact that the abortion issue was mixed up with the population control issue not only hurt the abortion cause, but went totally against our whole basic concept of the right of women to control their own bodies.

The fact that the right to abortion was connected with the idea of population control made it much easier for anti-abortion forces to rally people to their side, because they could demagogically point to the bill as a threat to each individual's right to decide. As a result, there was a demonstration of 1,000 anti-abortion forces in Denver in late December organized by the Catholic Laymen and the Right to Life Committee.

Of course, the fact that changes are being made, and victories are being won on the abortion issue is not the only reason women are organizing around it. The right to control over your body is absolutely fundamental to any kind of freedom for women at all.

Abortion is an issue that affects millions of women in the most immediate way. Victories around this issue will be very important in showing the growing power of the women's liberation movement, in proving to masses of women that the feminist movement is a serious movement fighting around issues which are of concern to all women. Moreover, if we are actually able to make abortions available to women, this will have a tremendously liberating effect and help to raise the whole movement to a higher level. A fight around the issue of abortion could also serve as an inspiration and an example for struggles over other issues.

The abortion repeal movement has reached a kind of turning point and it is important that, for all these reasons, a more coordinated and massive campaign on the issue of abortion be organized on a national level. Such a campaign could have many different aspects to it, and activities -- such as abortion hearings, statewide demonstrations, conferences, etc. -- but it should build toward some kind of demonstration which could be a national show of strength of women around this issue. We feel that by concentrating on this issue we can take the next, powerful, step forward in the women's liberation movement.

The first step toward initiating

such a campaign would be some kind of national abortion conference, where the campaign could be launched.

In launching such a campaign, women in the movement will have to wage a fight against those who will oppose it, as well as against the doubts of those who have never participated in this kind of mobilization before. This means giving women confidence in themselves, confidence in the fact that the movement can have an impact on this country. That there are large numbers of new women who are not involved in the movement today who can be reached and brought into the movement on the basis of such a struggle.

The larger this movement becomes, the more women there are who don't feel like subordinating their struggle to any other struggle, and who want to fight and win victories which will help women. Many women are looking for and will be enthusiastic about the perspective of such a national campaign. The large number of new women who have come into the movement over the past months has changed the relationship of forces between the mass action and anti-mass action orientations.

In addition, many of the organizations set up by the new left and living-room feminists are in a state of disarray because they lack a perspective for reaching out and winning new women, or they are considering changing their orientation. For example, Redstockings has disappeared. Bread and Roses is in a state of crisis due to opposition to mass action and their concentration on finding liberation through small-scale organizing such as building collectives, communes and through creating a kind of women's culture in small groups. The once very large Chicago Women's Liberation Union is deeply divided over the question of perspectives for the movement.

Many of these tendencies are running aground on the contradictions of their own positions. But, as we have learned in the antiwar movement, just because they have trouble organizing something on their own doesn't mean that when someone else gets something going, they won't be there to oppose it and try to break it up. We know that if any kind of national campaign is to be successful, we will have to fight for it, and work with others to politically educate and inspire women about this perspective.

Now, in addition to fighting nationally for the right of women to abortion, there are a whole series of other specific tasks which we should

work on in the coming period.

April 24

First of all, in the next month and a half, top priority must be given to building the women's contingents for April 24. There are tremendous openings in this area. During previous actions, with a few exceptions, there has not been much success in organizing women's task forces and contingents in antiwar demonstrations. This is partly because many of the new left founders of the women's liberation movement were opponents of the antiwar movement and opposed antiwar demonstrations, and they brought their prejudice against them into the feminist movement. In addition, while the feminist movement was still not very well established, it was much easier for those who opposed mass action against the war to be successful in convincing new women that joining an antiwar campaign meant dissolving the feminist movement into the antiwar movement.

In building for April 24, however, we have seen a big growth of enthusiasm about the idea of demonstrating, as women, against the war. A national women's contingent has been set up with the sole purpose of organizing activities around the 24th. It has already been endorsed by many feminist groups and a broad spectrum of women. Campus women's liberation organizations have been particularly enthusiastic. Special leaflets, posters and buttons are being issued. The idea of the contingent has received a good response at many of the antiwar workshops at women's liberation conferences. Local women's contingents are being organized. And a significant number of women who used to be hostile to broad mass actions have been involved for the first time.

There is another thing that is very important politically about building the United Women's Contingent. It is a part of the battle to win the women's liberation movement to a perspective of mass action. Women who see the need for mass action against the war are going to be among the best builders of a mass feminist movement around concrete demands of concern to women. And vice versa. It is most often those women opposed to building broad women's liberation actions around feminist demands who are also opposed to the United Women's Contingent.

What is already clear is that April 24 will probably be the largest demonstration of women since August 26, and we should throw ourselves into building it with that in mind.

The abortion campaigns and building

the women's contingent are in no way exclusive. While they will be the focus of much immediate activity, we should continue all the various activities we are carrying out in the movement on a local level -- building campus and high school groups, building coalitions and citywide women's liberation groups.

### Black Women's Liberation and Chicana Liberation

Another very important area of activity is Third World women's liberation. There continues to be more and more interest among Black women in the feminist movement. The Phoenix Organization of Women in New York has been one of the most dramatic examples of this. More and more literature is coming out on this subject, and there is a big debate going on within the nationalist movement of feminism. Many of the reformist organizations have cooperated with the capitalist press to launch a big campaign -- which the ultralefts have joined -- to convince Black women that women's liberation is a middle-class movement which has nothing to do with them.

At the same time, more and more Black women are putting forward the position that feminist ideas are deeply relevant to them, and SWPers and YSAers have been in the forefront of this. One of the places where this debate has been carried on has been in the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit. At first the League ridiculed women's liberation and equated it with "free love." But then, some of the women in the organization began to seriously consider the ideas of women's liberation, partly as a result of the work of our comrades in putting forward Black feminist ideas, and selling The Militant, which carried articles on Black women's liberation.

We want to continue to participate in this debate over Black feminism. We want to continue to discuss it in The Militant and to sponsor forums and meetings around it. Several Black women comrades have made short tours discussing this, and this should continue. We are also participating in Black women's campus groups, and in a number of areas are organizing Third World women's actions and Third World participation in broader coalitions.

In the Chicano movement, we also see new forces getting interested in women's liberation. A Chicana conference is being organized in Houston this spring. And the Chicano press more and more mentions the participation of Chicanas in the activities of the movement. We should continue not only to cover this growing movement in The Militant, but also to participate to the greatest extent in building it.

### Other Tasks

Another task we have concerns sales

of our literature. In the past months we've put out a tremendous amount of literature about women's liberation, including regular articles in The Militant and ISR, a whole series of pamphlets, and two books. Selling subscriptions and individual copies of The Militant is especially important because this is the place where we have a week-by-week analysis of the perspectives for the movement, where we can help build national campaigns, answer attacks, take part in discussions and raise general consciousness about the roots and causes of the oppression of women. And it brings readers our analyses of all the basic political issues of today. Already it's clear that The Militant is being read by hundreds of activists in the movement. At the March 6-7 conference in New York, for example, 98 subscriptions to The Militant, several hundred single copies, and 52 subscriptions to the ISR were sold.

Comrades in most areas in the country have set up regular women's liberation classes, both external and internal. We have also had a series of women's liberation tours -- by Evelyn Reed and Linda Jenness.

One important area we need to improve on is to be sure that comrades regularly read the women's liberation press, including the papers put out by tendencies which we disagree with. The national office has sent out a list of some of the key newspapers, magazines and books on women's liberation which the branches should carry in their bookstores, and we will try to keep this up to date.

Another big area of work has been, and will continue to be, building the women's liberation aspect of our election campaigns. In the past year, we have run some campaigns which have had an important effect in winning new women to the ideas of the feminist movement and to the SWP. Our candidates -- both men and women -- have become known as campaigners for women's liberation.

Finally, significant numbers of activists in the women's liberation movement have begun to join the SWP and YSA. We have an especially important job in educating these new forces, giving them a thorough grounding in our program, and integrating them into all aspects of the life of the party. Many are attracted to our movement because of our support to feminism; our job is to educate them as revolutionary politicians in the fullest sense.

### The Revolutionary Party

In the last part of this report, I want to take up some questions concerning the relationship of feminist consciousness to the functioning of the party. When you have a movement

growing as rapidly as the feminist movement, and having such an impact on our party because of our deep involvement in it, there are naturally many new questions that are raised.

The women's liberation movement is changing our party in many ways, not only in regard to our political understanding, but it is also affecting the personal lives of individual comrades. For women comrades, it has meant that we have more confidence in ourselves. Many women comrades have begun to take themselves more seriously, to feel that their contributions to the movement are important, and that they can take more responsibility in the movement. In this sense alone, the women's liberation movement has already contributed to the growth of the revolutionary socialist movement.

This discovery of ourselves as human beings can be a deep-going emotional experience for women comrades. Some of us feel at home with ourselves for the first time in our lives. There was a comment on this in a recent article in the New York Times book review section, which I thought was pretty descriptive. The author wrote: "Suddenly it was a great time to be a women.... It was as if we had been born on Jupiter and had suddenly arrived on earth, weighing 200 pounds less and breathing the atmosphere we were meant for.... Every woman who enters in can grow, breathe, stretch, find her capacities, shed fear, acquire discipline, become whole, a female human being."

At the same time, feminist consciousness gives us a deeper understanding of how impossible it is for us, living under capitalist society, to be really free -- psychologically, socially, or economically. For no matter how much we learn about the roots of our oppression, we still live in this same oppressive society, and, in addition, we find that we ourselves have already been so psychologically affected by this society that there are also great limits to the degree to which we can change. A very good description of this situation appeared in Meredith Tax's article in Notes From the Second Year. She says:

"We have to face the fact that pieces have been cut out of us to make us fit into this society. We have to try to imagine what we could have been if we hadn't been taught from birth that we are stupid, unable to analyze anything, 'intuitive,' passive, physically weak, hysterical, overemotional, dependent by nature, incapable of defending ourselves against any attack, fit only to be the housekeeper, sex object, and emotional service center for some man,

or men and children.... We have had our mental and emotional feet bound for thousands of years. And the fact that some of the pieces that have been cut out of us are ones we can never replace or reconstruct -- an ego, self-confidence, an ability to make choices -- is the most difficult of all to deal with.... Only by realizing what we might have been, can we imagine how different women in a post-revolutionary society might be able to be. But knowing that we cannot achieve this ourselves... that we can see what has gone wrong within ourselves, and still be unable to put it permanently right -- this is very painful and discouraging. But it is necessary: it is this realization that makes it evident that there really are no individual solutions to woman's oppression, no way that one can float free of our society and its conditioning. This pain is what makes us realize, in our everyday lives, that social change is absolutely necessary."

What Meredith Tax says here in regard to women, also applies to the way class society crippled all of us -- men and women. Not only have we all been affected deeply by sexism, but also by racism, and such things as competitiveness, intellectual snobbery, selfishness and all the general pettyness, prejudices, and rottenness of this society.

How does this affect the party? Number one, we know that it is important for us, with our deeper consciousness, to change any obvious chauvinist practices within our movement. We are already doing this. We now use words such as chairwoman or chairperson, for instance, and we expect people to take these changes seriously. We do not tolerate the use of chauvinist terms -- like chick, bitch, etc. -- and when a chauvinist remark is made, this should be pointed out to the comrade. In the past, if a comrade consciously and repeatedly used a racist epithet, the party brought this to the person's attention, and if the comrade failed to understand that such behavior is impermissible in a revolutionary party, disciplinary action was taken. The same serious attitude should be applied to obvious chauvinist remarks and jokes about women.

In addition, both men and women comrades should read some of the consciousness-raising literature coming out of the movement. For example, Notes From the Second Year (the second two articles are especially useful) and articles by such writers as Dana Densmore.

At the same time, the changes

that we make must be seen in the context that every one of us is going to continue to be affected to one degree or another by the sexism of this society, and it is impossible for us to completely overcome this. Unconscious prejudiced attitudes in regard to women, gay people, Black people, and other groupings, are going to exist in our movement from now until after the revolution, and probably the faster we grow, the more this will be so. So, we do not expect to be able to create any kind of perfect understanding or perfect personal relationships between comrades in the party.

This fact, that it is impossible to create such human relationships -- either within the revolutionary party or within the women's liberation movement -- is related to how we look at and define the words sister and comrade.

### Sisterhood and Comradeship

We see both sisterhood and comradeship as political concepts. That is, sisterhood is the common bond of identification between sisters that flows from the fact that all women suffer a common oppression. But, because of the deep class differences and divisions, because of national differences and all the other differences between women, it does not mean that all sisters like each other, or feel personally close to each other. This is a mistake sometimes made in the feminist movement and it is a mistake we don't want to make either in that movement or in the party. Some women assume that a close personal bond between all sisters can be a natural outgrowth of the struggle, and sometimes what I call phoney sisterhood results from this. The idea grows up that to have political debates and differences, or to vote each other down is "unsisterly." Or you find a hesitancy about the idea of forming political coalitions and alliances with women you cannot personally identify with.

We believe sisterhood is a real and powerful thing. But it doesn't mean the same as friendship, and it doesn't mean an end to political differences between women of different backgrounds and classes. It doesn't mean, for example, that someone who works as a maid has any great love for the woman who employs her. What it does mean is that, whether they are conscious of it or not, these women do have certain political objectives in common, because of the fact that they are both oppressed as women.

Some of the same rules apply to comradeship. That is, comradeship is a bond which united all of us who are in agreement on a perspective of building a Marxist party to overthrow capitalism. It

is this political perspective which unites us, and comradeship is not the same as friendship. As a matter of fact, one of the most difficult tasks of the party is to unite the most disparate and personally different types of people together around a common program. This takes some doing, since this means uniting people from the most different backgrounds: rich, poor, Black, Chicano, white, young, old, men and women, etc. The divisions between us which capitalism creates will never be overcome in this society except on a political basis.

Both sisterhood and comradeship stem from the purpose of the women's liberation movement and the revolutionary party. Both these movements can only be vehicles for winning liberation. Neither are sufficient to provide that liberation themselves under this society.

It is our political program which unites us. For this reason, the SWP is not a federation of groups with differing interests, each competing against the other for cadres and resources. We have a single program and decide on our program and our priorities in common. We know that to make a revolution, people with different backgrounds and experiences in different struggles must work closely together as a team on a day-to-day basis if these struggles are to be brought together and united in a way so as to be able to take on the capitalist state. This is the meaning of the Leninist party.

In some branches the question has come up: what about forming consciousness-raising classes within the party for the comrades. We have discouraged this, because we think the best way to learn about consciousness-raising and feminism is to do it within the living feminist movement, and for male comrades, to participate in public activities, such as forums, election campaigns, reading the literature of the movement, and attending women's liberation functions which are open to men.

Moreover, to set up consciousness-raising groups within the movement has a number of dangers. Most important of these is that it immediately sets up the situation where comrades begin to discuss and judge each other's personal lives. Doug Jenness gave a very good class in Atlanta last summer on the subject "What the Party is and What the Party is Not," which I think dealt very well with the implications of allowing such practices to develop within the party.

## The Stalinist School of Self-Criticism

Doug pointed out that "there are radical organizations that put a high premium on the notion that their individual members should cleanse themselves from the sins of white racism and male chauvinism. This cleansing process may take the form of confessionals, which is really what the Stalinist version of criticism and self-criticism means. Usually the way this method works is that one or more leaders relegate to themselves the role of true interpreters of what actions or expressions are male chauvinist and racist, and they demand confessionals from those who violate these standards. If carried to extremes, it can disrupt the day-to-day political work of the organization.

"Let's look at one concrete example. In 1965, the Progressive Labor Party adopted a resolution entitled, 'Resolution on the Status of Women.' Did it discuss the oppression of women in our society and a program which could end it? No. Not a word about this. Rather, the resolution concentrates on the problem of male chauvinism within the Progressive Labor Party. They say: 'Men should be encouraged to share domestic tasks on an equal basis in order to free women for political work. Regional conferences of women every six months or so should be convened, to discuss and evolve solutions to the practice of male-chauvinism, and women's problems in doing political work.' 'Male-chauvinism in PL cannot be tolerated, and is considered counter-revolutionary.'

"Not only are men brought to order by this resolution, but also women: 'Women must not indulge in socially-acceptable exploitation and manipulation of males to avoid things which are their own responsibility to do, and engage in various forms of self-indulgence. Capriciousness and consumption habits, these hurt other people, and represent kinds of backward behavior undesirable in anyone, especially a revolutionary communist.' 'Women in leadership roles must avoid falling into the trap of helplessness when work becomes difficult, looking to a man to bale her out because he is a man.'

"We reject the approach of Stalinist groups like PL and RYM, who by applying their therapeutic measures of criticism and self-criticism, turn the organizations members in on themselves, pitting one against the other in a constant battle of accusations and confessions. What kind of self-confidence can new members achieve if every time they open their mouths

they are called white-supremacists or male chauvinists? What kind of political education can they receive? What kind of teamwork and unity can be achieved in such an organization? At the heart of the method of criticism and self-criticism is the liberal notion that the personal salvation of its members is necessary in order to make the party an instrument capable of leading the mass movement."

I think that Doug put his finger on an important point when he stated that this criticism and self-criticism is really a liberal thing. What does it mean? It means you're trying to make people feel guilty about themselves and their past, instead of concentrating on what the real material roots of these problems are and how they can be changed. For revolutionaries, the important thing is not what you think, or whether your mind is "pure," but how you act to change the situation. And as a matter of fact, it is those people who understand most profoundly that it is the system that is responsible, who will be the ones who will be able to change their personal attitudes the most.

Liberals really do feel that they are responsible for racism, and male chauvinism. They blame racism on people, not on the system, and they think the solution is in changing people's minds. The same goes for new lefters who are always talking about "skin privilege." We consider this guilt to be an anti-revolutionary emotion. Nothing is accomplished by it, except for those people who want to hide the real issues and manipulate people, the way the Stalinists and Panthers do.

What unites us in the party is our political program, and in connection with our program for women's liberation, we expect that both men and women comrades will participate in working out that program. We don't expect men to identify with us psychologically or to know how it feels to be a woman -- we'd get mad if they asserted that they could. But male comrades can and have already participated a lot in our political discussions and decisions about women's liberation. The politics of the women's liberation struggle is not something only women can understand. The basic political realities are no different than any other social struggle and the broad collective experiences of the party as a whole are of central importance in working out our general orientation.

There is a common phrase we hear in the women's movement, and that is the phrase "the personal is political."

This means that many of the personal problems that women had previously thought of as individual problems, really stem from a social oppression that we all experience. Here again, we should be sure that this concept is not interpreted within the party in the wrong way. That is, personal relationships between people are not the business of the movement.

We feel strongly that the personal life of each comrade must be just that: the comrade's own personal business. This party does not try to tell people what friends they may have, who they should live with, whether or not they should get married, whether they should have children, what they should wear, whether they should wear make-up or not, how much money they should spend on recreation, how they should have fun, or other similar things. The only exception to this is if a comrade's personal actions affect the political tasks of the party.

### Child Care

There is another question I want to take up in relation to the party, and this is child care for party members and sympathizers with children. We want parents, both female and male comrades, with children to be active in the revolutionary movement. We realize that parents face extra difficulties and burdens in this society because of the lack of social facilities for the care of children. Traditionally, most of these extra burdens have fallen on women, and have especially discouraged women with children from participating fully in revolutionary activity.

There are a number of concrete things we can do, and are doing, in this regard. We can encourage cooperation between parents to watch each other's children during party activities, we can provide facilities where children can be watched by parents or volunteers at party conventions or other important party functions such as branch meetings. Individual comrades can volunteer to watch the children of other comrades, to free them, if necessary, for party work.

In instances where the party has been able to afford it, comrades with children who have worked for the party full time have received extra expense money to help meet the additional financial burden.

At the same time, we approach the problem of child care with the understanding that the question of whether or not people have children, or how they raise them, is not a party matter, but a personal one. Raising

children is very time consuming, and it will continue to be so until a successful social revolution is able to provide the necessary resources for full time child care facilities for everyone.

In the meantime, the party itself cannot take responsibility for the care of comrade's children. The party itself cannot make up for, or solve, the enormous social inequities and problems created by capitalism. This applies to many things in addition to child care -- like unemployment, medical care, housing, education, etc. We do whatever possible to help comrades solve such problems, but we cannot make the party responsible for solving them.

When the question of providing child care during branch activities comes up, it must be considered carefully, according to the concrete situation. Are there adequate facilities where children can play or will their presence disrupt the branch activity? What can be gained by making facilities available, and asking for volunteers to watch children? Are there alternative solutions?

Whatever decision is made, participation by comrades in staffing the child care facilities must be voluntary. That is comrades cannot be required or obligated to take care of other comrades' children. To do so would create all kinds of problems and resentments against those comrades with children. If the branch were responsible for taking care of comrades' children, branch members would begin to feel the party should have some say over whether people have children or not.

That may sound strange, but I have seen problems of this kind develop, especially in smaller branches with few people to take care of all the branch responsibilities. In one branch, when a number of comrades became pregnant, other comrades resented very much the extra burden they feared would be imposed on the branch in caring for the children.

The question of providing child care for non-SWP functions, or functions open to the public, is more complicated. We certainly should help with child care at women's liberation conferences, antiwar conferences, and other public events where it is decided that it would be good to provide these facilities. But, we must also be very careful when we take responsibility for other people's children. In functions sponsored by the SWP, we must be especially careful that proper care will be provided

for the children, and that competent comrades are in charge. A lot of people don't know anything about caring for children. They panic when faced with a screaming or crying child. Or their negligence, or lack of experience, could cause a child to get hurt. Non-members might resent the party for this, or we could even get into a situation where the party could be sued by such a parent.

Before any decisions are made, or drifted into, the benefits to the party should be concretely weighed against the time and energy expended. If it is decided to provide facilities in some cases, they should be adequate, staffed by volunteer personnel, and competent people should be responsible.

We cannot create the conditions of the future society within our movement. This is true not only in regard to the raising of children but in other areas as well. Trotsky wrote in Problems of Life that revolutionaries are very strange people: We are more conscious than others in the society we live in, but we aren't yet like the socialist people we envision in the future. We are a kind of "in-between" people. It can sometimes be discouraging to realize how, personally, we are a whole lot more like capitalist human beings, than socialist ones. But, as revolutionaries, we don't dwell on that. Instead, we turn outward and get our inspiration and fulfillment through realizing that by creating a

revolutionary party, we can actually make it possible to get rid of the old society and create a new one.

I have taken quite a bit of time to deal with some of these questions of internal party relationships not because they have posed a big problem for us, but because the growth of the feminist movement has reraised in a new form some of these old questions which the party has discussed and worked out an attitude toward before. Many of these questions I have discussed have been raised in one or another branch, and because they are real and important questions affecting the life of the party, they will come up in others. It is important to think them through carefully and clearly.

The growth of the feminist movement is a development of great historical importance. It will certainly be one of the central components of the coming American revolution. But the movement is still in its infancy and the key job we have before us is to help spur its growth and political development. The tasks we have outlined for ourselves around the abortion campaign, building the women's contingents for April 24, Third World women's liberation, building campus groups, city-wide groups, and broad action coalitions, as well as continuing education, will help assure, to the best of our ability, the continued progress of the feminist movement and the realization of its tremendous potential.

March 13, 1971

by Joe Hansen

I.

The purpose of my report is to indicate how the current internal discussion in the Trotskyist movement is proceeding, what our thinking is on this problem as of now, and what objectives we can realistically set for ourselves in relation to the next world congress of the Fourth International.

All of you will no doubt have received, read, and formed your own preliminary opinions on several recent items: International Information Bulletin No. 6, October 1970, and International Information Bulletin No. 2, January 1971.

In addition to this we have the fresh information that Peter Camejo has presented in his report.

Before considering the internal discussion more specifically, I should like to say a few words about the context in which it is taking place.

This is the continued development internationally of favorable openings for our movement. The process is quite uneven, with checkered ups and downs, particularly in relation to the capacity of the Trotskyist forces in some countries to take full advantage of the opportunities and to avoid unnecessary defeats. But the turn is unmistakable.

It has been registered by such developments as the swift growth of the Trotskyist movement in France since May-June 1968.

Another indicator was the conference held last November 21-22 in Brussels, which was publicized as a "Rally of European Revolutionaries" under the slogan "Forward to a Red Europe." The actual attendance was well over 3,000 persons, mostly student youth.

The most recent development of this kind was a sudden upsurge last month of the high school students in Paris. For three days at least 10,000 of them engaged in street demonstrations in face of a ban issued by the police. By the time of the final demonstrations, our comrades were exercising effective leadership of the actions and they managed to do it without any showdown with the police.

As a whole, the European sector of our movement is expanding, with new groups in various countries de-

claring their adherence to the Fourth International.

In other areas, too, the Trotskyist movement is perceptibly gaining in influence and prestige.

This holds for Japan, Ceylon, Australia, India, and New Zealand. The latter country is especially notable in that for the first time in the history of our movement an active group has appeared there that is getting out a regular publication on a clear programmatic basis.

From Pete's report it is quite obvious, too, that in Latin America some of the problems are those associated with growth and favorable objective situations.

As for the United States and Canada, our growth has been such as to compel even highly prejudiced commentators in the bourgeois press to acknowledge it. Even a top government official, who is recognized as an authority in such matters, has cried alarm over the growth of the Young Socialist Alliance. I refer, of course, to J. Edgar Hoover.

The new rise of Trotskyism has been registered in a different way by the attention now paid it by the Stalinists, beginning with the Kremlin.

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The current differences that have arisen in the world Trotskyist movement thus occur under circumstances that are different from those we had to contend with in the past, when we were faced with quiescence in the class struggle, even stagnation, or when we were isolated by a powerful, monolithic, Stalinist movement, and were confronted with the severe problem of survival as the inheritors and transmitters of the program of revolutionary socialism.

This new and promising context, however, does not make the differences that have arisen less important. In fact they gain in immediacy.

What the favorable objective turn does do, in my opinion, is facilitate the testing out of the differences by the course of events and therefore their resolution in a shorter period than was possible in some of the unfavorable situations of the past.

In any case, the existence of a favorable context and the actual growth

of our movement are elements that must constantly be borne in mind in assessing the internal discussion and its development.

## II.

At the last world congress, one of the differences concerned how to judge the so-called cultural revolution in China.

The fact that the "cultural revolution" was over by then helped somewhat in removing the urgency of the differences. A bigger help was the fact that agreement was reached on the need for a political revolution in China to establish proletarian democracy.

Some differences remained, however. These included differences over the nature of Stalinism, or at least of certain Stalinist parties, and over the character of Mao's foreign policy.

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On the question of the world Trotskyist movement orienting toward the radicalizing youth, general agreement was reached, although differences were expressed by some of the delegates on some points. I think that events have settled this question so convincingly that it is doubtful that there will be much further dispute on this issue, although it is not excluded.

The main difference at the last world congress thus centered over the Latin-American resolution, which elevated guerrilla warfare from the status of a tactic to a "strategy."

In our view this represented an adaptation to ultraleftism. Still worse, it put in question the strategy of party building as the key to success in the revolutionary struggle for socialism. We held, moreover, that the new line could not be confined to Latin America. It was almost certain to be disorienting not only there but elsewhere.

I think that events since the last world congress have confirmed this judgment. Our movement suffered a couple of bad defeats in Latin America. Besides this, the immediate political situation changed in Peru, Bolivia and Chile in a way quite different from the projections made at the last world congress by the authors of the resolution.

Last June we submitted a preliminary document, calling attention to some of the developments and how they testified to the erroneousness of the line on guerrilla warfare adopted by the last world congress.

The response of the majority was to enter into a vigorous defense of that line. Two contributions, as I have mentioned, have been made by the majority on this question up to now, one by Comrade Livio Maitan and the other by Comrades Ernest Germain and Martine Knoeller. My impression is that the two contributions have served to deepen the error.

I am now working on a reply to the two articles. The reply, I am afraid, will turn out to be rather extensive.

I will not attempt to outline it here beyond saying that the reply will deal with more than just Latin America.

For instance, I propose to take up the claim of these comrades that their line on guerrilla warfare stands in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky and prove that this is not so, in fact quite the opposite.

In general, I will seek to show mistaken was their contention that the question of guerrilla warfare and its relation to party building was of primary concern only to our own ranks in Latin America; how the position of other currents impels us to take a public stand on the priorities of guerrilla warfare and party building; how this question has come to confront us in various areas outside of Latin America; and how the line adopted at the last world congress on this subject has been reflected by adaptation to ultraleftism inside our movement, most clearly in Britain.

We can expect that the Latin-American comrades will have something to say on this subject. Hugo Blanco has already made several short but quite cogent contributions.

For our Latin-American comrades, the question has been posed with extraordinary sharpness. For those that become involved in guerrilla warfare, it is a question of life and death, as we have seen. This follows from the fact that very small forces make a direct challenge to the capitalist state power under very unfavorable conditions, that is, in separation from the masses and even in face of the demobilization of the masses. This is the source of the sharpness of the issue inside the world Trotskyist movement and why a correct resolution of the question is so important.

## III.

Since the world congress, the leadership of the British section has made considerable concessions to ultra-

leftism. This led to the formation of a tendency that sought to combat the ultraleft trend. The tendency contributed various documents in the discussion prior to the March 1970 conference of the IMG (the International Marxist Group).

In our opinion, they stated the issues rather well. You can judge this for yourselves from the documents of both sides which we included in the Internal Information Bulletin last October.

Among the differences that arose before the March 1970 conference several were quite indicative of the two contrasting trends in thinking.

First of all there was the question of what to do about work in support of the Vietnamese revolution.

The minority favored continuing the efforts at mobilizing mass marches like the one that had been such a conspicuous success on October 27, 1968. The leadership of the IMG, the minority argued, had not only let this work slide but had changed the line of the IMG to favor small demonstrations of a rather sectarian nature.

Against this, the majority argued, in substance, that circumstances had changed, that it was no longer possible to mobilize mass demonstrations because the antiwar movement itself had ebbed, besides which the 1968 mass demonstration was something of a fluke.

The minority, however, maintained their position and held that something deeper was involved -- the whole problem of building a revolutionary party in Britain -- and that this was shown additionally by other issues that had arisen.

A key one was the Labour party. What attitude should be taken toward it in the next elections?

The majority took a line of considering that a victory for the Tories would represent only a "marginal defeat" for the British working class and the revolutionary socialist movement. A Labour victory was preferable from the viewpoint of exposing the right-wing clique holding power in the British Labour party but in no case would the IMG work for a Labour party victory.

The minority held that such a view showed an incorrect appreciation of the nature of the Labour party and of the attitude of the mass of British workers toward it. They argued that the majority had moved toward an ultra-left sectarian position on the Labour party.

Some differences over party-building concepts and tasks also came up for discussion.

The minority held that to set up a weekly newspaper like The Red Mole under ambiguous sponsorship was bad for party building in as much as it did not speak out clearly for Trotskyism in the style of The Militant or Rouge. In this respect The Red Mole resembled the previous left-centrist publication The Week even though the political line being followed was ultraleftist.

The building of a cadre organization was also hampered by the majority line of setting up amorphous "Red Circles" around The Red Mole.

Another item was the majority orientation for the IMG expressed in the formula "From a Propaganda Group to a League for Revolutionary Action." The minority sought clarification from the majority as to the meaning of this vague formula but met with an unsatisfactory response.

In my own opinion, the formula can best be understood in the light of some of the things said by Comrade Livio Maitan in the contribution he made before the last world congress "An Insufficient Document." This was the letter, you will recall, in which he stated that the Trotskyist movement was now faced with the historic necessity of proving itself in action; the letter in which he held that everything now hinges on the Fourth International making a "breakthrough" -- his prime choice being Bolivia.

The argumentation advanced by the comrades of the majority in Britain displays the same feeling of being up against the wall and under the necessity of making an extraordinary forced march, of finding some way, through superhuman effort, of building a party in a hurry. In short the majority comrades in Britain are trying to find a shortcut.

A conspicuous public consequence of the majority position in the IMG came when Wilson on May 18 suddenly set the general election for thirty days later. The IMG's participation in the election -- if it can be called that -- was already under a heavy cloud since it had been launched by The Red Mole through a main feature article by Robin Blackburn in the April 15 issue. Blackburn is not a member of the IMG but is a member of the editorial board of The Red Mole. The article he wrote on the Labour party in connection with the election was entitled "Let It Bleed."

This article flatly called the Labour party a bourgeois party pure and simple, not different in essence from the Conservative party.

The next issue of The Red Mole, dated May 1, carried virtually nothing on the election, being preoccupied with guerrilla warfare in Latin America and the usefulness of the tactic of kidnappings.

In the May 14 issue, the editorial board published a letter from Pat Jordan, the secretary of the IMG, in which the main point was that he had some differences with Robin Blackburn and would write them up as soon as he had time.

Comrade Jordan's article appeared in the following issue, June 1. The article could hardly be called a smashing reply to Robin Blackburn. Comrade Jordan praised Blackburn but said that unlike him he did not consider the Labour party to be a bourgeois party like the Democratic party in the U.S. Moreover, unlike Blackburn, he favored a Labour party victory. But Comrade Jordan made clear that all the same he would not call for a Labour party vote.

In the same issue, a clearer line was indicated by the cartoon strip. This showed masses of moles gleefully trashing a placard reading "Vote Labour!"

Several other items should be noted. During the events in Québec last October and November, The Red Mole carried an editorial applauding the tactics followed by the FLQ.

This created a real problem for our Canadian comrades. They were in the thick of things in Québec and were one of the targets in the repression. Our Canadian comrades defended the FLQ against the with-hunters but made a careful differentiation as to tactics, rejecting the terroristic methods employed by the FLQ.

When The Red Mole was received in Canada, the Canadian Trotskyists had no choice but to indicate publicly that they took a different stand.

Similarly, in a television program taped in England but broadcast throughout Canada during the witch-hunt, Comrade Tariq Ali, in reply to some quite provocative questions, took a position that could only be interpreted as very favorable to the use of terrorism.

These two incidents were very revealing as to the views of the majority in the IMG on the question of

guerrilla warfare -- not in Latin America, but in an advanced capitalist country.

I am not of the opinion that the majority leaders in the IMG bear sole responsibility for this ultra-leftism. They are trying to carry out the "turn" that was adopted at the last world congress, merely applying it as best they can to the situation in Britain, although perhaps a bit overenthusiastically.

Finally, I should like to remind the comrades of copies of correspondence with the majority leadership of the IMG that were recently sent out to members of the National Committee. These deal with an organizational question concerning the right of one of the leading comrades of the minority to make a living in an occupation at which he is quite skilled -- selling books. The majority considers that he is doing this in violation of discipline. His view -- and we agree with him -- is that he is being subjected to organizational reprisals because of his minority position.

We hope that this matter will be satisfactorily settled at the coming IMG conference in April. However we cannot honestly say that we are free of doubts.

As part of the discussion preceding the April IMG conference, both the majority and minority are preparing, if they have not already mimeographed, fresh documents. We do not have any recent information on this because of the postal strike. However, it could well be that further differences have appeared.

One area of possible new differences relates to work in the Women's Liberation Struggle in Britain which now appears to be making considerable headway, judging from reports in the press.

But we will have to wait for the documents before we can say that any differences comparable to the others have appeared in this field.

#### IV.

I will turn now to the December 1970 meeting of the International Executive Committee.

Various reports were made there, but I will skip these in order to come to the main question relating to the internal discussion.

One of the decisions of the IEC was to postpone the next world congress for another year. It was

originally scheduled to be held this year.

The purpose of the postponement is to allow ample time for the pre-congress discussion.

The IEC formally opened the pre-congress discussion and set a tentative agenda. This includes the following points:

1. The situation in Latin America and our tasks.
2. The Chinese "cultural revolution."
3. The question of the youth.
4. The statutes of the Fourth International.
5. The new rise of workers struggles in Western Europe.
6. The situation in the Middle East and the Arab revolution.
7. The question of the Women's Liberation Struggle.

The IEC scheduled another plenum for next summer at which a more precise agenda will be decided on. In other words, the agenda is open for the addition of more points.

The discussion articles are to be translated into four languages: French, English, Spanish, German.

In addition, the IEC began the preliminary work of setting up a joint fund to help assure the largest possible representation at the congress, particularly from distant areas that have little money.

## V.

In beginning my report, I mentioned the context in which the discussion in the world Trotskyist movement is taking place -- an expansion of opportunities connected most directly, as we are all aware, with the worldwide radicalization of the youth.

We have to bear this in mind in considering our objectives in the unfolding discussion. We also have to bear in mind certain limitations on what we can accomplish.

I bring this up, because I know how impatient comrades can feel after they have made up their minds on the issues. They would at least like to have a definite idea of the most likely outcome and, if possible, a timetable.

We should never forget that a series of circumstances exists over which we have no control.

For example, we are faced with the legal question of organizational ties to the Fourth International. If

we were a section of the Fourth International, we could speak and act in a different way on various topics.

Another example is the reactionary legislation that bars most foreign leftists from residing in the United States or even visiting it. This legislation serves as an iron curtain barring leftists from other countries getting a close-up view of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance and how we operate. And because they are denied this close-up view, it is easy for them to get misconceptions and it is exceedingly difficult to overcome them and to convey a true picture.

Parallel restrictions barring residence and free travel exist in other countries, although in some of them not to such a degree as in "free" America.

That is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to transfer experience in the world Trotskyist movement -- for us to learn from other areas, for them to learn from us.

This leads to a simple conclusion that we must not forget: under these conditions, it is not possible for the world Trotskyist movement to utilize its maximum resources to construct an international center, or even to develop the effective international educational system our movement requires to develop its cadres to the degree we should like.

A further conclusion follows: it is exceedingly difficult to resolve the problem of international leadership.

My own opinion on this is that it will prove to be a continuing problem of a troublesome nature for some time to come. I doubt very much that any easy solutions or shortcuts will be found in this.

If we bear these objective limitations in mind, it appears to me that in the current discussion we should not attempt to achieve more than some rather modest goals. I will list them:

1. A full and free discussion aimed at clarifying the issues that have arisen and any new ones that might arise logically in the course of the debate.

This boils down in part to a practical question of the translation and distribution of documents.

We have agreed to see that they get out in English; and I am sure that

we will achieve this. The French versions have been undertaken by the comrades in Paris, Brussels, and Lausanne. The Spanish by the comrades in Paris, Brussels, and Latin America; and the German by the German, Swiss, and Luxembourg comrades.

We are very concerned about this question in as much as we found at the last world congress that some of the delegates were not familiar with the documents, not having received them. Some of the documents were not translated into French, Spanish, or German until after the congress.

2. Reversal of the decision at the last congress that raised engagement in armed struggle from a tactic to a strategy. We want guerrilla warfare to be placed in the category of an auxiliary in the struggle for a successful socialist revolution.

This may be hotly contested by some of the leading comrades of the majority in view of the fact that they consider the decision on guerrilla war to have been one of the main achievements of the last world congress, if not the principal one.

Also we should not assume that because some of the comrades most immediately and directly affected by that line have since become dissatisfied with it -- and this includes various comrades in Latin America -- that they will necessarily agree to reversing the decision of the last world congress. They may take an abstentionist position. Or decide to wait longer, to let it be subjected to further testing.

In addition, some of the new recruits in various areas may not agree with our arguments as yet. We hope that they will become convinced, but it would not be realistic to count on it until further events throw a still more glaring light on the question.

As things stand now, however, the position we took on guerrilla war at the last world congress has gained substantially. We have a good chance in a full and free discussion, in my opinion, to win this objective of correcting the error made in 1969.

3. To seek to establish as the key issue underlying all else the question of party building.

This will not be easy.

There is no problem, of course, in getting verbal assurances as to the importance of party building, including assurances that it is re-

garded as the main question facing our movement.

Still, in too many instances, there is no genuine meeting of minds.

This is not because of ill will, as I see it. Basically it is because of lack of common experiences, lack of a common continuity in leadership and some hangovers from bad leadership in the past.

We can only count on a sustained polemic, in which this issue is constantly brought to the fore, to help to some degree to overcome the difficulties we face. I say "help" because I doubt that arguments alone will succeed. The assistance of fresh experiences and the impact of events are required.

## VI.

Now as to what we are doing, or have been doing.

I would put in the first place the efforts we have undertaken in what might be called in other circles "cultural exchanges."

We have extended invitations to Trotskyists in other lands to visit our gatherings and done what we could to assist them in making the trip. This has at least enabled them to get a certain impression. We have noted that one of the consequences has often been a desire to see our party at closer range in its daily activities.

Where at all possible, we have sought to arrange tours or speaking engagements by comrades from abroad. Unfortunately -- for reasons completely beyond our control -- we have been able to do this only to an extremely limited extent.

We have also sent comrades abroad at every opportunity. This has been done in connection with such activities as a presidential campaign, antiwar work, defense work, or covering important happenings for our press. These fields of work open up possibilities of common experiences with comrades in other countries in which we have learned a gratifying amount in surprisingly short periods of time. We hope that some of them found these visits fruitful in their activities, particularly in presenting live American Trotskyists of various colors to contacts and mass audiences.

In Europe we have sought to broaden our experience, visiting as many sections as possible despite the shortness of time into which we generally have to compress this.

I repeat that the purpose of such exchanges is not at all some narrow factional aim but a conscious effort to broaden and deepen the area of common experiences insofar as this is possible with our limited means and the severe restrictions we face.

\* \* \*

As to direct polemics, I have already mentioned the reply now being worked on to Comrade Maitan and Comrades Germain and Knoeller, concerning guerrilla warfare.

Comrade Peng has written that he, too, proposes to answer them.

On the Cultural Revolution and the question of the Chinese Revolution, Comrade Pi-Lan has written a reply to Comrade Wang. Comrade Pi-Lan's article was sent to a comrade capable of translating it from Chinese, but we have just learned that he is seriously ill and unable to undertake it. This confronts us with the problem of finding another translator.

\* \* \*

Some of the resolutions our party passes will have a bearing on the internal discussion.

As an example at the last world congress, you will recall the resolution on the radicalization of the youth that was adopted by a majority of the United Secretariat and accepted at the congress as the basis for further discussion.

The events since then call for a follow-up resolution that may meet with an even more favorable reception.

It could turn out that much the same pattern will be seen in relation to the Women's Liberation Struggle. Compared to the United States and Canada, the movement is just beginning in Europe. We thus already have a body of experience on which I am sure most of the European Trotskyists will want to draw. The same will no doubt hold true for other countries where the Women's Liberation Struggle is beginning or can be counted on to begin soon.

The resolution on the Middle East may serve a similar purpose, although it remains to be seen to what degree differences with it may be voiced whether in part or as a whole.

## VII.

A few words should be said about the Healyites.

They are not losing forces. If anything, they are probably recruiting

some, as is the case with virtually all the groups that claim to be Trotskyist.

In England they put out a curious daily that keeps you right up to the minute on the telly programs.

In France, their cothinkers, the Lambertistes, have a regular press and are active in the youth movement. Lately they tried to capture one of the student organizations, but ended up with only their own forces, as it was a pretty brutal operation. Still, they held a conference of the captured organization at which some 1,500 youth showed up. In the high school upsurge in Paris, on the other hand, they were able to muster only a few hundred to come down to a rally, while our comrades, as I reported earlier, were in the leadership of demonstrations of about 10,000 that went on for three days.

The Healyites have a group in Ceylon; and, as you know, one here. Healy has also formed an unprincipled bloc with Lora in Bolivia. The Lambertists recently published some quite sharp criticisms of Lora, so the bloc may be a bit shaky.

Healy, of course, is aware of our discussion. He gets the material through Wohlforth, who is probably practicing entryism sui generis in the SWP. And Healy published some of our discussion material.

Last April, he opened a unity offensive, but when this ended by being exposed as a mere maneuver, he resumed his public screaming at us. The latest is a series singling me out. Up to now I have seen only the first installment. The British postal strike compelled me to wait, impatiently, for the other five or six massive exposés.

We decided to reissue the pamphlet by Ernest Germain entitled Marxism Vs. Ultraleftism -- Key Issues in Healy's Challenge to the Fourth International which has been out of print for some time.

We plan to include an introduction bringing the pamphlet up to date, mentioning such items as the beating of Ernie Tate, the unprinciples bloc with Lora, and Healy's unity maneuvers.

We plan to include in addition as appendices, the document stating the principles on which the 1963 reunification took place, the polemic written by Caroline Lund, "Where the SLL Goes Wrong on Women's Liberation," and the polemic I wrote on where the Healyites go wrong on Black nationalism.

## VIII.

I should like to end with some comments on the developments in Eastern Europe and what they signify for us.

After the explosions in 1953 in East Germany and in Poland and Hungary in 1956, a long lull set in.

This was broken by the upsurge in Czechoslovakia in 1968 that was answered by the Kremlin with a military invasion.

At about the same time, an upsurge occurred among the students in Yugoslavia.

In the meantime, revolutionary oppositionists had begun to become noticeable in the Soviet Union itself. Eventually this opposition became extensive enough and strong enough to begin getting out underground publications and to engage in some very courageous acts of opposition against the bureaucracy.

Three months ago in December an immense development occurred in Poland. The Polish workers took the initiative in resisting the bureaucratic regime and they did it in the way that comes natural to militant workers. They resorted to strike action. The result was the downfall of the Gomulka regime.

Such fear swept the Soviet bureaucracy over the possible repercussions that the Kremlin underwrote the concessions that the new Polish regime felt compelled to grant. The Polish workers thus won both a political and an economic victory.

This is something new. The Polish events are not a mere continuation of what began in 1953 in East Germany. They represent something qualitatively different -- a mighty demonstration of the power of the working class inside the Soviet bloc, of its growing radicalization, and its capacity to win victories.

The lesson, we may be sure, will not be lost on the workers in the

neighboring countries -- and above all the Soviet Union.

The fear of the Soviet bureaucracy is evident in the fact that they at once decided to revise the next five-year plan to provide for more consumers goods.

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At previous meetings of the National Committee, we have reported that the European comrades had established contacts with revolutionists in Poland, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.

Our comrades helped these revolutionists materially and also got out literature in their language.

One of the unwanted evidences of this activity has been several political trials, including the current one in Czechoslovakia.

It is obvious to all of us what the potentialities are as the youth in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union become more and more radicalized and this radicalization extends to the workers, as has already occurred in Poland.

We thus have a common interest with our comrades, above all in Europe, in getting out such items as Trotsky's writings in the languages of Eastern Europe, including Trotsky's writings in the original Russian.

We also have a common interest in defending the youth who are turning toward Trotskyism, which they hear about despite everything the bureaucracy can do. Inevitably some of these youth fall into the hands of the secret police.

We should seek out fields of common endeavor like this. The more we can succeed in it, the easier it will be to hold the Fourth International together. At the same time, by reducing the tendency toward creating a factional atmosphere, joint efforts of this nature can facilitate a reasoned discussion of the differences that have arisen in other areas.

YOUTH REPORT TO SWP NATIONAL COMMITTEE PLENUM

March 15, 1971

by Frank Boehm

In this report I would like to focus on two main points: first, to assess our success in building a revolutionary socialist youth organization, especially in comparison with the attempts by our opponents to build youth organizations capable of leading and influencing the new generation of radicalizing youth. And secondly, to outline the prospects for the continued development of the YSA and the immediate tasks facing us.

\* \* \*

Two major events of the recent period help give an indication of where the YSA stands on the course of its development: the December 1970 YSA convention and the recent SMC conference in Washington, D.C. A review of these two events also sheds some light on the state of our opponents.

The first point to be made about the YSA convention is that it was this convention which marked in a clear and unmistakable way the emergence of the YSA as the largest, most powerful and dynamic revolutionary youth organization in this country.

Attendance by over 1200 people from all over the country made it the largest in our history. Because of this and the excitement of the convention proceedings, the convention made a major impact on the bourgeois, student and radical press. There were daily articles following convention reports, discussion and workshops in the New York Post, two major articles and a smaller follow-up in the New York Times, radio and TV coverage, and articles in all the major radical papers.

The impact of that convention in terms of establishing us as the major force on the left in this country can be seen by the description of the YSA in articles dealing with the radical movement, e.g., in "The Cooling of America" in a recent issue of Time magazine.

The centrality of our politics in the movement today was in evidence at the convention as well by the fact that virtually every imaginable opponent was there, relating to our politics and attempting to influence our cadre. And significantly, for the first time the Communist Party and the Young Workers Liberation League were present at a YSA gathering passing out leaflets attacking the YSA's politics, selling their publications,

and as a result being forced into political debates with our comrades.

The second point is that the convention showed very clearly, through the range of resolutions, reports, workshops and plenary discussion, the scope of our involvement in the mass movements.

The discussion at the convention left the unmistakable impression that our comrades spoke of campus struggles, the feminist movement, the Black and Chicano liberation struggles, and the antiwar movement not as sideline commentators but as participants and leaders of these struggles on the local, regional and national level.

The discussion and workshops also indicated our awareness of and, in some cases, involvement in developing struggles, such as the Black feminist movement, and the movement developing to defend the Arab revolution.

In addition, the organizational expansion of the YSA was a prominent aspect of the convention. Besides a major organizational report, there was for the first time at a YSA convention, separate reports on The Young Socialist Organizer, and a separate Financial report. The discussion under the organizational report reflected the involvement of our comrades in developing aspects of our work, e.g., regional work, defense, and finances.

The fact that there were eight major reports to the convention, compared to five at the last, is a further reflection of our deep involvement in the struggles which more and more youth are becoming involved in, as well as the importance we attribute to the parallel expansion of the YSA organizationally.

One of the most impressive and characteristic features of the YSA is its political homogeneity and agreement on the central political lines which we have developed over the last decade. This was in evidence again at the YSA convention.

There were, however, indications, especially under the discussion of the political resolution and report, of the pressures on our movement to abandon our orientation towards the student movement in favor of an artificial move towards the factories. This pressure comes from layers in

the student movement and virtually all the ultraleft and reformist student groupings, who, upon discovering that there could be no socialist revolution without a decisive section of the working masses brought into action, mechanically and formally decided that this dictated a policy of worker's work, or industrial concentration -- and they proceeded to, at least rhetorically, urge radicals to enter the factories. We rejected this orientation because of our understanding of the current radicalization and our understanding of how the working class will radicalize, and how best we, a youth organization politically affiliated to the SWP, can facilitate that process and at the same time be in the position to gain the leadership of the entire youth movement. We recognize the call to abandon the campuses as in reality being a retreat from the developing social movements and struggles.

The question of our orientation towards the student movement was the heart of the political resolution and report, and the center of the discussion around them. This discussion was extremely important and helpful in educating our comrades and clarifying our strategy. This was perhaps the single most important aspect of the convention, because a clear understanding of this question is crucial to our ability to move forward in the coming period.

The final point to be made about the YSA convention concerns building leadership. One of the best indications of the growth and expansion of the YSA, and our ability to train and educate our comrades, is that a whole new layer of leadership has developed in the last year. The result of this process is that the present National Committee is extremely young. We went into the YSA convention having graduated a majority of the previous NC (out of a total of 57 full and alternate NCers, 30 had graduated to take on party assignments).

We came out of the convention with a National Committee of which only 8 comrades were previous regular NCers. An additional 11 of the present NC members were alternates on the previous NC, and 11 were neither regulars nor alternates on the previous National Committee!

The figures on the composition of the alternate National Committee are even more revealing because 23 out of the 27 members were neither regulars nor alternates on the last NC. The present NEC also reflects this process -- only one out of the 10 present NECers was on the previous

NEC.

Plus, we have already graduated three full NCers on the present NC. This is a good process -- we want to continue it.

This situation not only reflects the success of our ability to develop and educate leaders at a rapid rate, but, because of the expansion of the party's work, the crucial necessity for leading YSAers to be freed up to take on full time party assignments.

The fact that such a dramatic change in the composition of the National Committee took place, and that it took place in the context of expansion, development and out of simple necessity, is a healthy sign.

It is also evidence of the important role that the experience and leadership of the party have played in building the YSA. And because this process will continue and intensify, we have to understand that this necessitates even more concentrated and intense education, and conscious leadership development.

The recently held National Student Antiwar Conference, sponsored by the SMC, was another gauge of where the YSA stands today. That conference clearly confirmed two things:

One, the correctness of our projection of the importance and potential for building a mass student antiwar organization in this country; and two, the correctness of our understanding of how to build such a mass organization and the role that a revolutionary combat youth organization must play in it.

One thing that none of our opponents understand, but which is actually quite obvious, is that it is precisely because we have been the best and most consistent builders and defenders of the SMC, that we are respected as the leadership by the mass of independents, and that we have been able to recruit so heavily from it. The success of this relationship has had an important effect not only on other developing movements, but also in educating our comrades.

In attempting to assess where the YSA stands today, it is necessary to examine the state our opponents find themselves in. In Susan LaMont's report to the party plenum last year, she spent some time discussing the evolution of the three major factions of SDS since the split convention in June of 1969. I just want to add the concluding chapter on two of these

groups.

One was the Weathermen, or Weather-people as they now call themselves. There is no evidence to suggest that they even exist anymore in any organized form. If they do, their impact on the movement is zero. The only significance in the concluding chapter of their history, is the effect of their popularization of the concept of terrorism as an effective tool to bring about the revolution among the most frustrated layers of the radical youth. But the impact of the strategy of terrorism upon the mass movements and on the radical movement in general is minimal.

The other faction which emerged from the split was the Revolutionary Youth Movement II (RYM II). For a while it looked as though they might become the rallying point for all those who were looking for the old SDS. But their inability to arrive at any coherent program forecast their dissolution. The intense factionalism at their first and last convention in late November 1969 indicated that they had learned nothing from their experience in SDS except how to maneuver and wheel-and-deal. Last summer, by decree from the National Center of RYM II in Atlanta, they formally dissolved.

The third major faction, Worker Student Alliance-Students for a Democratic Society (WSA-SDS), has experienced a different evolution, and a contradictory one. In order to see what has happened to this SDS, it is important to look at the Progressive Labor Party itself.

PL is in crisis. The last year has been one major setback and disaster after another for their party. During the May upsurge, although they were the only tendency to consciously counterpose a strategy to ours, they were isolated and decisively defeated on campus after campus, most often by forces under our leadership. Their strategy for shutting the schools down until the workers could seize control was so out of whack with reality that even places which were considered their stronghold, such as Columbia University, were lost to them. Their physical attack on the SMC Steering Committee meeting in Boston last spring was an indication of the frustration they felt as the upsurge totally bypassed them.

This setback was followed immediately by the June antiwar conference in Cleveland where they attempted to salvage something from the upsurge. They mobilized everything they had, including their SDS, and were handed another defeat, again led by us.

The expulsion of literally their entire Black and Puerto Rican membership here in New York, and the expulsions in the top leadership level (including central leaders like Bill Epton and Jarod Israel) are indications of their crisis. This crisis is reflected in their totally inconsistent perspective even towards their own SDS. In some areas, such as San Diego and Portland, they have abandoned SDS, setting up groups called "Friends of PL" (FPL). In other areas they continue to build SDS attempting to portray it as the all-inclusive and influential organization it once was.

It is in this context that the SDS convention was held in late December. There were 400 to 900 people in attendance, depending on whether the estimate came from PLers or members of the anti-PL faction. The convention was, according to an article in the University of Chicago student paper, totally chaotic and marked by intense factionalism with members of the anti-PL faction thrown out and accused of being police agents. In contrast, at the same time, the YSA was holding its convention in New York.

PL's continued opposition to the existing and emerging mass movements -- including a particularly vicious attack on the feminist and gay liberation movements -- and the fact that they were the first and most consistent tendency to try to concentrate its members in factories has led them to isolation and crisis. They have not grown significantly in the last year.

However, we should not dismiss them yet. They still have a certain attraction because of their identification with Mao and China -- however tenuous that may be -- and because of their superworkism.

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Before going on to deal with some of our minor opponents, I would like to briefly mention an opponent force which is not consistently organized and has no political program -- that is groupings which emerge from the ultraleft milieu. These groupings, which go by names such as the John Brown Caucus, the Peoples Liberation Front, the Crazies, etc., still exist on campuses all across the country. In many areas, where there are no organized national tendencies, these groupings are our major opponents.

In several places around the country, groupings like these merged into one, such as in Seattle where the Seattle Liberation Front arose,

and in Boston the November Action Coalition was formed. They were extremely influential among a large layer of students. However, again, because they had no unity on the basis of a political program and no concept of democratic organization, the intense tempo of this radicalization and the issues emerging demanding answers and action, forced these groups to fly apart into hundreds of little caucuses, communes and families. Neither the SLF nor the NAC exist anymore.

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The convention of the International Socialists in late June is a starting point from which to assess where they stand. Only 100 people attended and they proceeded to break down into at least five factions -- from what our observer could tell. Intense factionalism, and general chaos prevailed. It looks as though they have not only absorbed the political theories laid down by their predecessors, Schachtman and Abern, but their organizational practices as well.

In the fall of 1969, IS attempted to project a more action oriented interventionist image, mainly through their paper which was then called the International Socialist. It was during this period that they began intervening into local SMCs, participated in the pre-SMC conference discussion in the Student Mobilizer, and carried out an aggressive intervention into the SMC conference.

But since then, they have continued to shift away from the campuses and the antiwar movement. Their retreat also was couched in superworker rhetoric. They proclaimed that they were entering the factories to form left caucuses. The extent of their retreat can be judged by their noticeable lack of participation in the December NPAC conference and the recent SMC conference. They have not grown in the past year, but they do continue to have fairly large groupings in New York, Berkeley and Ann Arbor, though they have split in the Bay Area.

Although the Workers League remains a tiny and isolated grouping on the left, they have grown somewhat in the last year. One of the surprising aspects of this growth is the fact that they were able to mobilize fifteen Puerto Ricans and Afro-Americans to attend the SMC conference. These people were most likely brought around the Workers League through their campaign to defend Juan Farinas and the dissolution of the Black Panther Party, many of whose previous members had become antinationalist.

There has been no basic change in their orientation over the past year. They continue to demand a Labor Party now at every antiwar conference, and demand that each conference declare itself for either Trotskyism or Stalinism. They continue to reject the revolutionary nature of Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican nationalism. They brand the feminist and gay liberation movements as divisive and reactionary. And they continue their slavish ties to the contortions and maneuverings of Gerry Healy.

I want to briefly mention YPSL. The only reason for doing so is not that they are a threat or an obstacle to us, but because the Socialist Party, after ensuring a stranglehold on their youth, is attempting to revitalize the group. The SP newspaper, New America, has carried several articles attacking the YSA. Their angle of attack is quite interesting. They attempt to demonstrate that we have left the path of Marxism, Leninism and Trotskyism, which is quite a task for right-wing social democrats. These are quotes from New America:

"In the name of socialism, it managed to endorse virtually every crank organization and bizarre idea that offered the slightest hope of disrupting American society. In keeping with the petrified traditions of its parent organization, the SWP, however, it demonstrated little imagination in inventing kooky causes, preferring instead to sign up, in what must be the biggest coup in show biz history, the entire side-show which had sprouted up outside the main tent on the New Left circus grounds.

"Black nationalism, gay liberation, women's liberation, the Arab quest for Israel's destruction, high school 'blow-outs,' etc. -- all were uncritically endorsed....

"Imagine Vladimir 'Turn the Imperialist War into a Civil War,' Lenin staring dumbfounded at the YSA's pacifist anti-war slogan: 'Bring the Boys Home.' Imagine Karl Marx hooted off the platform as a 'male chauvinist pig.'"

Like the Stalinists, they attempt to explain the growth and power of the YSA as a fad or aberration, in the course of the development of the class struggle. Another quote from New America.

"As long as high draft calls created anxieties in middle class youth and the need for left-sounding phraseology to rationalize them, YSA could grow. Together with Trotskyism's tradi-

tional bane -- a sectarian inability to confront the full significance of Stalinist totalitarianism, leaving them no alternative in most instances to support of Stalinist movements and positions -- these contradictions will produce the inevitable splits that periodically do YSA in."

Interesting also is the role they see themselves playing and the strategy for their comeback. This is outlined in this same issue of New America, in an article written by Josh Muravchik.

"As interest in the left-right debate begins to replace interest in the debates within the left that have been characteristic of the campus during the last few years, YPSL and the conservative YAF (Young Americans for Freedom) should emerge as the two poles of the electoral political spectrum. Here I do not use 'poles' to mean extremes...."

"In this period the YPSL can become the leader of the student left: not the student left as we have known it recently, but rather the student left which will emerge as the '72 elections approach and which will be involved in electoral activities."

"YPSL can make a recognizable contribution to the effort to defeat Nixon in '72, which would enable the democratic left student movement to win a respected place for itself in the labor-minorities-liberal coalition."

Although YPSL is far to the right of the masses of radicalizing youth in this country, it is not out of the question that they can make some headway in the coming period among the youthful supporters who will be organized around the liberal democrats in the upcoming 1972 Presidential campaign. They also present themselves as spokespeople for the union bureaucracy, as they did during the UAW strike, and hope to make gains in this way.

There are two basic errors which all of our opponent groupings make:

First, they counterpose their own organization to the mass movements, failing to understand the relationship between being consistent supporters and builders of a movement and precisely because of that, building your own organization. Essentially, each independent new expression of the radicalization is seen by them as a threat to the building of their own grouping. As a result, the relationship they have with the mass movements is opportunist. Good examples are PL, which proposed that the NPAC conference

support the SDS convention, and IS, which tries to shove its entire reformist program onto every movement.

But this aversion to the independent mass character of the struggles arising flows from a more basic error on their part. And that is that they cannot make a correct analysis of the current radicalization. This rejection of the nature of the current radicalization has led all of these grouplets to the rejection of all forms of class struggles which do not take place according to their preconceived schemes. This grave error on their part can only lead to their further isolation and further crises.

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One noticeable grouping -- and the most important in the long run -- which I have left out up to now, is the Young Workers Liberation League. They too have an incorrect appraisal of the current radicalization and an aversion to the independent struggles arising.

But two things separate them out: 1) their ability to adapt in an opportunistic manner to the various movements; and 2) simply, their ability, because of the connections and history of the Stalinist movement, to intervene in the feminist, Black, Chicano and antiwar movements with a sizable cadre.

Following the dismal failure of one youth group after another in the '60s, and understanding that the mass movements of this radicalization were not under their control but were bypassing the CP, plus the fact that they knew our movement was growing rapidly, the CP was forced to try it again. In February of last year, the YWLL was launched at a founding conference with approximately 400 people in attendance. At that convention, which was tightly closed to all but the invited, the YWLL openly declared its solidarity with world Stalinism and the CP USA in particular, thus eliminating any pretext of posing as an all inclusive socialist youth group as did its predecessor, the DuBois Clubs.

The hostility of the Stalinists to the independent mass character of the antiwar movement is all too well known in our ranks. Comrades who read Caroline Lund's article in the latest ISR are acquainted with their reactionary views on the feminist and the gay liberation movements.

Perhaps the best expression of their attitude towards the independent struggles which have emerged and are being waged, is summed up in only three sentences in an article

analyzing the results of the 1970 elections in the November issue of Political Affairs. This is part of a report to a plenum of the National Committee of the CP by Gus Hall. He said, "It is necessary to say something about the student participation in the elections, if only to reject the concept that they were not a factor. As we recall, the Cambodian invasion stimulated a massive student drive to participate in the 1970 election campaigns. Dozens of organizations were formed all over the nation, among them organizations like Referendum '70, Movement for a New Congress, and the Coalition for a Responsible Congress."

In other words, for them, the real significance of the May upsurge was that it provided a mass of energy to be tapped and channeled into bourgeois politics -- especially into the election campaigns of progressive Democrats.

So this is the political background of the YWLL, and the meaning of their solidarity with the CP USA.

The one-year history of the YWLL has been rather unspectacular. Their role in the May upsurge was negligible -- they were busy campaigning for the Abzugs, Carl Maxeys, Ron Dellums, etc. Until the most recent SMC conference, they have not intervened at all in the many antiwar conferences of the past year, although of course they have been active in PCPJ-type formations around the country.

In some areas, notably Los Angeles, they have with some effectiveness intervened into the women's liberation movement, but as a whole this is not the case.

Throughout the past year they have made very little impact on the radical movement -- they are not known, they are not open leaders of any movements, they have not led or even openly participated in any major campus struggles. And they have made only a half-hearted attempt at a paper called the Young Worker.

But it would be a mistake to say that they have not made gains over the past year or jump to any premature conclusions based on their first year's performance. While the YWLL has grown in the past year -- and in some areas significantly -- and they are going to continue to make immediate gains from their defense of Angela Davis; they do not as yet pose a real threat to our ability to continue to grow and expand. We have a significant jump on the CP in terms of building a strong revolutionary socialist youth

group. This is the key to understand -- this is what frightens them and this is why they launched major propaganda attacks in the past year, such as the pamphlet, "Trotzkyism: The Inside Job."

The YSA is unquestionably stronger than the YWLL in terms of political understanding, roots in and leadership of mass movements, and in simple numerical terms. And this is one of the few countries in the world where the revolutionary socialist movement is in an actually better position than the Stalinists in terms of gaining hegemony in the youth arena.

However, it would be a major error to underestimate their strength or potential as there is a tendency to do among many YSAers. We have to continue to arm our comrades theoretically to deal with the Stalinists. And we have to continue to take them up in our press. We played a major role in aiding the disintegration of the DBC through drawing them into united fronts and winning their youth away and exposing their leadership. We are in an even much stronger position today, and we are just as eager to be able to draw them into united front formations, or the SMC.

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The general inability of our opponents to understand this radicalization, and thus their inability to fully take advantage of the opportunities it has opened up for the revolutionary movement, has made it possible for us to take up the leadership of mass movements and to confirm our strategy in action as during the May upsurge. It has enabled us to become the force we are today in the radical movement with our politics being the center of discussion and debate not only in the antiwar movement, but now in the feminist movement as well. And more and more as the various tendencies are forced to relate to our politics, the center of discussion and debate within the radical movement.

But also, it is important to remember that because the radicalization is so deep and so powerful, it is still possible that other left political formations can arise and grow rapidly.

It is in this context that it becomes particularly important that we intensify our efforts to colonize and recruit new forces on hundreds of campuses across the country. The necessity of building our base on the campuses is made clear by our analysis of the current radicalization. That necessity was driven home by the events of last May.

Building our base on the campuses and recruiting hundreds of new comrades in universities and high schools across the country remains our central task because this is precisely the key to our success in participating, building and gaining the leadership of the mass movements. This, in turn, is the key to winning over an entire generation of radicalizing youth to our perspectives and our movement.

The very nature of this radicalization means that all sorts of new forms will emerge, and that sectors of the population who suffer a particular oppression but have never organized to combat it, will do so in this period. It is crucial to understand that this is a characteristic of this radicalization because of basic political and organizational implications.

The women's liberation movement has forced several questions to the fore demanding answers. One of the questions thrown up with the advent of the new feminist movement is that of sexual roles or sexual stereotyping in class society. This question has been even more forcefully put forward with the incredible recent growth of the gay liberation movement.

Hundreds of gay organizations have sprung up on campuses all across the country. This movement is bringing the rage of millions of homosexuals who are -- and have been for thousands of years -- brutalized and murdered out of the closets and into the streets. And the potential size of this movement -- because of the numbers of people who it directly affects -- is another important point to consider in evaluating the dynamics of this movement. According to Kinsey's study, there are approximately 20 million homosexuals in this country. And this does not even begin to include the millions of people who, because this society is so repressive, actively suppress their homosexuality, but who can and will be drawn into this movement.

At the YSA convention we noted in the political report that the gay liberation movement was a significant and unprecedented movement which is further evidence of the scope and power of this radicalization to propel new forces into action. We also pointed out, however, that we had little knowledge of the gay liberation movement and that we knew little about the various gay organizations, the various perspectives being put forward in the movement, the analyses of gay oppression, their strengths and political weaknesses, etc. And we also pointed out that because of this we should begin to probe this movement and become

familiar with it. In order for a revolutionary socialist organization to arrive at an orientation towards developing social movements, not only must a thorough analysis of the dynamic and direction of the movement be made, but practical experience must be gained as well. Therefore, the convention decided that the thrust of the YSA's participation in the gay liberation movement at this time is to learn from the movement precisely so that we can develop a political orientation and an overall approach.

In line with this, where we have gay comrades they may participate in gay liberation groups. Since this, like any other area of our work is done under the direction of the local as a whole, there should be reports to the Executive Committee, to the local and the national office. In locals where we have no open gay comrades, we of course cannot participate inside of the movement, but locals should consider assigning someone to cover the events of the gay liberation movement, check out the various groups, get to know the activists, obtain their literature, etc.

One of the best ways to begin this work is by building the gay task forces for the April 24 actions. This has the potential not only of drawing new layers into the antiwar movement, but for introducing us to the movement and beginning political collaboration.

We have also begun to think in terms of holding forums on sexual oppression and gay liberation to help educate not only our comrades but the movement as a whole to the seriousness of this new movement. Many comrades are reading the material written by the Gay Activists Alliance, the pamphlets reviewed by Lee Smith in the March 5 issue of The Militant.

We are also aware of the various actions being planned in local or regional areas against political oppression of homosexuals, such as yesterday's action in Albany, and lend them our support if that is possible, and intervene with sales of our press.

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A test of our understanding of this current radicalization is how we approach and understand these new movements. This period calls for us to have an experimental, open, and audacious approach to these movements.

The same is true in other areas of our work which are mistakenly labeled "routine." One of these is recruitment. While it's true that more and more people are coming around the YSA and are joining as the comrades in Seattle

told me, "just because we are the YSA," it is also true that we must be very conscious of carefully organizing our contact and recruitment work. It is even more important when, in such a period as we are in, more and more people are attracted to our ideas and our actions. We have to take an aggressive and experimental approach to recruitment work, talking to the thousands of people we work with in the mass movements drawing them to our functions, and recruiting them.

We know just from the volume of inquiries and requests to join which we receive in the national office -- and the geographical spread of the places we receive them from -- that there are young people virtually everywhere today who are looking for revolutionary answers and who are ready to join the YSA. It's only a question of making sure we organize to reach them, talk to them and draw them in.

We have to have one full time comrade in the national office whose task is to respond to these inquiries! In the six month period since Oberlin, we have handled from the office over 1,470 inquiries requesting more information about the YSA and in some cases ordering buttons, posters, etc. And to prove that the radicalization has reached every nook and cranny of this country, in many cases along with the name of the YSA, we have gotten inquiries from places like Ashland, Kentucky; Doraville, Georgia; Upper Black Eddy, Pennsylvania; and so on.

One of the best ways of reaching out to these people is through regional work. We have made major steps forward in the last year in terms of consciously planning out, organizing and doing regional work.

There are now regional committees, and organizers in at least 13 of the 15 regions. In addition, there are at least 11 regions which sustain a full time regional organizer. Regular meetings of the regional committees are being held and a collaboration so necessary to building a regional leadership is taking place. In at least one of the regional committee meetings which I attended following the YSA convention, the regional T & P was not just a report discussed in the branch and local exec in the regional center, but a report prepared by the regional organizer, discussed in a meeting of all the organizers and National Committee members in the region, and a final report prepared and again gone over by the organizers and NCers from all the locals in the region. In other words similar to the way T & Ps are drawn up for locals or branches. This was invaluable in

terms of drawing together the thinking of the leaders of the region, pooling their knowledge and experience, and coming up with a task and perspective which had been hammered out in a collaborative manner. This resulted not only in an excellent report to the regional meeting, but a much fuller discussion from the comrades who came in from the region.

Establishing a regional apparatus helps not only to build YSA locals and develop them politically, but it has proven to be an efficient way to organize our overall work. It lays the basis for a much more effective intervention of the YSA and SWP into antiwar or women's liberation conferences when these actions can be organized on a regional basis. Also organizing YSA campaigns such as around a subscription drive, the fund drive, speaking tours, etc., is much more effectively done on a regional basis. This is still developing. We are gaining experience.

Developing and extending our regional work is crucial not only because of the potential for recruiting and building whole new locals, but because it is the best way, as we grow larger, to aid the development of the already established smaller locals outside of the center. We have seen what kind of gains can be made for our movement in sometimes unexpected areas. For example, the recruitment of a local composed of primarily Black and Chicano comrades in Riverside, California, and consequently their ability to build the successful Black Moratorium which was such an important event. Or the recruitment of a local in Cincinnati primarily from the women's liberation movement composed of leaders of Cincinnati Women's Liberation. Or the recruitment of a local in Tampa, Florida, which consequently grew to become a local of almost twenty which became the center of our movement in Florida, able to build the first statewide antiwar coalition in the history of Florida and carry off a very successful action on October 31. Or, most recently for example, the recruitment of a local composed of predominantly Chicano activists in San Antonio. Inquiries in the office indicate whole new groups are ready to join.

So the centers, including the branches, must be conscious of the dual aspects of regional work: 1) breaking into new areas and 2) aiding in the political development of these locals through education, consultation, exchanging speakers, correspondence and so forth.

One area of work which we are

becoming more and more involved in is defense work. According to a survey we compiled, we are involved in at least 18 defense cases around the country, not including national cases such as around the Berrigans, including ones such as the Florida recognition fight, the fight against the IRS guidelines at Columbia University here in New York City, around 10 civil liberties struggles on campuses from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, to Portland, cases concerning violations of the rights of high school students, as well as cases involving direct attacks on YSA members.

Being able to correctly defend ourselves and extend our rights is extremely important. Every attack from the ruling class which goes without being defeated through mobilizing support for our civil liberties, or at least without being seriously challenged only invites more attacks. We must be prepared to allocate sufficient local, regional and national resources for defense work, and approach it in that manner. We should also not hesitate in giving the fullest possible aid to locals around the country which find themselves or certain members under attack.

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Another area of work which must be expanded commensurate with and necessary to our growth is finances. The YSA is now in the midst of a national campaign to reorganize our finances on a national, regional and local level in a much more professional manner. Because the campaign to increase financial consciousness and organization is so crucial, the YSA national office assigned a comrade on a full time basis to take overall charge of YSA national finances and to oversee the campaign. At the YSA convention we had a separate report on financial and a very productive workshop to hammer out the more practical aspects of the work. Following the convention we were able to free Andy Rose up to tour all the regional centers, give an educational on finances, speak to local organizers and financial directors, and in quite a few instances talk to organizers and financial directors who came in from the region to discuss finances.

As with many new areas of work that we begin to get involved in and pay more attention to, it soon became apparent that this was a task for more than a single comrade to be assigned to on a national level.

The rapid growth of the YSA along with the expansion of our national areas of work such as finances which demand coordination and leadership from the

center, places much more responsibility on the national center to provide the kind of direction and coordination required. Therefore we projected expanding the national office staff at the YSA convention so that we could expand our work nationally and be in a better position to be able to send comrades out of the office for a period of time to consult with comrades around the country.

Although we have been able to make some significant steps forward in the office staff, the old problem of the expansion of the staff lagging behind the expansion of the YSA nationally still exists. In 1967 there were five comrades functioning on the national office staff. Today there are ten, which is the largest it's ever been. But the YSA has grown by four times. The New York local and branch have just released one of its organizers, Mirta Vidal, to come into the office to head up our Chicano and Latino work on the national level. In addition to this major addition to the staff, we have been able to assign two comrades to head up our women's liberation work and two comrades to the staff of The Young Socialist Organizer. This has allowed us to move ahead more with The YS Organizer in terms of producing balanced issues covering a broader range of topics on a more geographically representative basis. If we are going to continue to expand the staff, the leadership must understand and communicate to the ranks the importance of transfers out of locals.

Two other things to note about the staff is the age and the representation from locals around the country. The youngest comrade is 19, three of us are 20, and the rest 21, 22, and the oldest is 23. Only two of the ten are from New York, the rest are from the Atlanta, Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego, Detroit and DeKalb YSA locals.

Again this spring, two comrades from the national office will be conducting national organizational tours to all the YSA locals around the country. This is a very important way for us to get an accurate assessment of the development of the YSA nationally as well as to give the comrades in the field a chance to discuss their problems, criticisms, ideas and suggestions with national leaders of the YSA. These tours will begin in early April.

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The important political events of the last year, which were tests of the political and organizational strength of the YSA, from the May

upsurge, to the YSA convention, to the recent March 8 International Women's Day actions, has shown us the potential and the opportunities which exist for our movement. And they have also shown us that we have never been in a better position to maximize those opportunities.

These events also confirm the fact that for the first time in the history

of American Trotskyism, our movement has been successful in building a revolutionary youth organization which is politically homogeneous, organizationally strong, and in an excellent position to gain hegemony in the youth arena through its deep involvement in the mass movements and the continued recruitment and education of the best and most militant fighters of these movements.