



# Discussion Bulletin

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## TOWARD A MASS FEMINIST PARTY

### Resolution on the Feminist Movement

Proposed by Sudie and Geb, Boston Branch

The essence of the strategy proposed by the Political Committee in "Toward a Mass Feminist Movement," is the mobilization of massive, independent female political action, in struggle against the capitalist power structure, around democratic and transitional demands rooted in the needs of the masses of women, forming part of the general transitional program of the socialist revolution.

Organizationally, this can take such forms as united fronts and coalitions, movement conferences and rallies, linking local coalitions on a national scale, coordination of actions on a national basis, etc. In the electoral arena, this includes referendum campaigns, movement "parties" running slates in student government elections, independent movement candidates for public office on a local scale, advocating and forming electoral coalitions between the SWP and independent movement organizations in school and local elections, etc., with the purpose of encouraging women to take political action against their oppression, in the voting booth, as a step in the direction of general political action in opposition to the power structure of the status quo.

The electoral arena is only one of many vital arenas of the feminist struggle. Women need to organize as women, for the purpose of struggling in whatever arenas are necessary; they need a comprehensive organization in order to unify the many facets of their struggle. For this they need a mass, democratically-organized female political party.

The perspective offered by the Political Committee is objectively a perspective of building steps in the direction of such a party, and should be approved as a strategy for implementation of the perspective of a mass feminist party.

(This resolution is not a counter-resolution to the PC draft; it doesn't go against the PC line, but parallel to it, extending it. But it cannot be considered simply a proposed amendment, since it deals with the very center of our perspective for the women's movement. So this should be considered a line resolution which is in addition to the PC resolution but which includes the PC resolution as a part of itself.)

May 22, 1971

## TOWARD A FEMALE PARTY

by Sudie and Geb, Boston Branch

For Marxists, analysis of particular political parties and types of parties is a central question, one with vital practical importance. The history we are taking part in is the history of the struggle between various sectors of society; political parties, like states, are crucial weapons used by sectors of society in the struggle. To lack an analysis of some type of party, is thus to have an inadequate analysis of whatever sector of society is associated with that type of party, and thus of the role it plays in history.

In recent years it has been comrades' attitude that the only types of political parties that could play even a partially progressive role in the historical struggle (hence the only parties ever worthy of even critical support), were parties with specifically socialist programs, and parties based either on the labor movement or on some oppressed nationality. This is an important position of ours, since for instance it explains why we are in principle opposed to support to the Democratic party, yet often advocate support to parties like Britain's Labor party, despite the fact that there is very little difference between their programs, and even less difference between their practices when in power.

We've never specifically considered the question of a women's political party. By default, our recent attitude would rule against such a party, unless it had a socialist program, since a female party is neither a (wage) labor party nor a party of an oppressed nation. But we have never consciously decided whether our traditions are to be interpreted in this way. This omission is a gap in our program which we must close, before we can justly say that we have a comprehensive analysis of the women's movement.

Though our conscious tradition does not commit us to any position on a female party, our method does; the same things that make labor and third world parties progressive, make female parties progressive as well.

A labor party would be a progressive step, because it would increase the social power of a progressive force in history, the working class.

The black community is also a progressive force in history, whose

social power would be increased if it was organized into a political party; so again, a black party would be a progressive step.

And the female sex, too, is a progressive force in history. Its social power would likewise be increased if it organized itself into a political party. Thus, a female party would also be a step forward.

What are the basic axioms in this analysis?

First, social power derives from organization. This is not self-evident, regrettably. There are many who sympathize with the oppressed, but who still oppose organizing the oppressed. Anarchism is the classic example of failing to see that the only way the oppressed can defeat the organizations of the oppressors, is with organizations of their own. Others make the same error, as well. Cell 16, for instance, seeks to lead and represent women, without organizing them. The Panther party seeks to lead and represent the black community, without organizing the mass of blacks into their ranks. A major difference between ourselves and the various types of elitists, is that we don't think a small vanguard can make a revolution for the masses. No-one can free the masses, but the masses themselves; and to do it they need to be organized en masse.

Second, the most powerful kind of organization is the mass political party. The party is only one kind of organization needed by the oppressed. Some ways of organizing the oppressed, such as religions like the Nation of Islam, are absolutely useless. Other types, such as labor unions, defense committees, militias, etc., can and must be used; but even these are inadequate by themselves, for each struggles only on certain fronts, while the purpose of a political party is to struggle on all fronts, making it possible to unify the various fronts of the struggle. Even electoral work, such as our campaigns, is only one arena of a party's efforts. It is common among our opponents that, if they support organizing the oppressed at all, still they fail to support the most powerful form of organizing, the mass party.

Third, the female sex is a progressive force in history. The petty-bourgeoisie often struggle around progressive demands (as they did in Russia in 1917). But this sector is not inherently progressive, and so

we support its movements only conditionally, only insofar as they are progressive; we would not support anything we considered to be a party of the petty-bourgeoisie, even if it was built around progressive demands such as withdrawal from Vietnam, for we do not feel that the petty-bourgeoisie is in itself a progressive sector of society whose social power we wish to see increased.

If we had an analogous attitude toward the female sex, then we would support movements of women around progressive demands, such as free-abortion-on-demand-no-forced-sterilization, etc., but we would not support a female political party, or any other women's liberation organization whose purpose was not restricted to certain approved demands, for this would mean unconditional support to the struggles of women, and our support would only be very conditional.

But our attitude toward the female sex should not be analogous to our attitude toward the petty-bourgeoisie; it should be analogous to our attitude toward the working class, for the female sex, like the working class, is an inherently progressive force in history. What makes a sector of society a progressive historical force -- and, in particular, the female sex?

History is the record of the struggle between sectors of society, sectors consisting of those playing a certain role within the social division of labor; the historical role of a sector of society proceeds from its role within the division of labor. Radicals commonly misunderstand Marxism to hold that history consists of just the struggle between the classes. If that were true, Marxism would either have to state that what happened more than 10,000 years ago was not history, or that nothing happened prior to then, or that classes existed prior to then. But, most embarrassing of all, Marxism would have to admit a total inability to explain pre-class history; it would be restricted to study of the results of the existence of classes and could not discuss the causes of the existence of classes.

The misunderstanding results from a dogmatic attachment to the first sentence of the text of the Communist Manifesto: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." This claim was later qualified to apply only to recorded history. It quite specifically did not apply to the future. It was a

brief, and accurate, summation, intended to affirm the historical importance of classes, and not intended to deny the importance of analogous struggles between the sexes. Marx and Engels never analyzed the struggle between the sexes in a serious way, except in discussing ancient history. It never occurred to them that the feminist movement could achieve a militancy and massiveness such as what we are beginning to see.

Their method, however, was well enough explained that it is clear what their analysis would have involved. One place where Marx and Engels discuss their basic method is in the German Ideology, in the discussion of Feuerbach. While discussing the role and history of the social division of labor, they argue that that division is the driving force of history; then they introduce classes as things "determined by the division of labor" to be understood as such.

Private property is introduced thusly: "Division of labor and private property are, moreover, identical expressions; in the one the same thing is affirmed with reference to activity as is affirmed in the other with reference to the product of the activity."

Marx and Engels are concerned with a certain sense of "division of labor," that between "intellectual and material activity." "Division of labour only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labor appears." They are not talking about the supposed difference between running an electric typewriter at the point of production of mail, and running a linotype machine at the point of production of newspapers; that is, they were not referring to the color of a person's collar, socks, etc.

The difference between "intellectual" and "material" activity was itself defined, as the difference between "enjoyment and labor, between consumption and production." That is, labor is divided into decisions and performances. One type of person decides what shall be done, and another type of person does it. Some people have "the power of disposing of the labor-power of others." Instead of my brain commanding my muscular system, my brain commands your muscular system. Such is the difference between capitalist and worker, between master and slave, between husband and wife-and-children, between oppressor nation and oppressed nation. Their different roles within human activity produce different group interests around which

they struggle.

Classes are basic historical forces, because they are conflicting poles within the social division of labor. Many tendencies, even on the left, fail to see the importance of classes. Being determines consciousness, but doing is the most important part of being in the determination of historical consciousness. The proletariat and the bourgeoisie are historical enemies because of the relation between them in the economy, the day-to-day activity of humanity -- a relation which gives them diametrically opposed interests around which they struggle.

In the struggle between the classes, the proletariat's role is inherently progressive, because by its nature it struggles toward the abolition of the social division of labor. Humanity's task if progress is to occur, is the abolition of the social division of labor. One basic aspect of the social division of labor in bourgeois society, is the division between the classes. The role of the proletariat within human activity forces it to struggle toward the abolition of classes and the division of labor between them -- without which no other aspect of the division of labor can last. It is thus that we unconditionally support the struggle of the proletariat, and hence that we call for its most powerful weapon, the labor party. Workers are by nature slaves -- wage-slaves -- and thus are a force for the abolition of slavery in general.

Nations are also basic historical forces, since they too are conflicting poles within the international division of labor. Contemporary society is a world-wide phenomenon, but it is divided into nations. States, and their armies, are historical centers of human activity. They tend to be the work of one particular nation, and one major function they serve is to struggle against other nations, in the interests of the nation they represent. Sometimes two oppressor nations fight for the right to command other, oppressed, nations (as the U.S. and Japan fought over the rest of the Orient). Sometimes an oppressed nation fights its oppressor nation, seeking to free itself from its condition of national slavery.

In struggles between an oppressor nation and an oppressed nation, the national struggle of the oppressed nation is inherently progressive. Progress requires the abolition of (the division of labor between) nations --

where some nations have "the power of disposing of the labor-power of others." Anytime that an oppressed nation struggles for an end to its national oppression, it is struggling for a major step in that direction, and deserves unconditional support as a result. Thus we advocate to oppressed nations that they organize in their national interests, including the forming of nationalist political parties.

The progressive character of national liberation movements is even greater in the present period, because socialism has become the only solution for national oppression. A few nations and nationalities, such as Afro-America, are radicalized even further because they almost totally overlap with the working class. Sometimes people believe that the revolutionary nature of black nationalism results from Afro-America's being overwhelmingly proletarian in composition. But actually all that is required is that it be an oppressed nation or nationality. Vietnam, for instance, has a relatively small working class, relatively much smaller than, say, the American working class. Only a few decades ago, black America was far less proletarian than white America, in composition, since blacks were largely share-croppers. The progressive or reactionary nature of the nationalism of a given nation, depends only on whether it is an oppressor nation fighting for its right to oppress other nations, or an oppressed nation fighting for an end to its oppression.

Because the division of labor between the sexes is such a basic feature of modern society, struggle between the sexes plays a decisive role in contemporary history. Feminism is the movement of the female sex around its interests as a sex. Its enemy, the capitalist power structure, is just as much male as it is white and bourgeois. The importance of the feminist struggle in American history, is covered up by the same power structure which covers up the history of labor struggles. The conflict between the female sex and the male power structure results from the opposition of the sexes in the sexual division of labor, particularly in the family, the "molecule" of the modern economy. During the present process of ever-increasing conflicts within bourgeois society, the struggle between feminism and the patriarchy will intensify just as the class struggle will, since the process of radicalization means the growing impossibility of convincing the masses in general of the viability of the status quo.

In the struggle between feminism

and the patriarchy, the role of feminism is unconditionally progressive.

The relation between the sexes in patriarchal society in general, is the product of the division of labor within the family, within which the man "is the bourgeois and the wife represents the proletariat" (Origin of the Family). "Monogamy and male supremacy were established for (the purpose of organizing) the preservation and inheritance of property" (ibid.). "Monogamy arose from the concentration of considerable wealth in the hands of a single individual -- a man -- and from the need to bequeath this wealth to the children of that man and no other" (ibid.). From ancient Greece to modern bourgeois society, woman is "the slave of man's lust and a mere instrument for the production of children." (ibid.)

Since the main historical role of the family is the production of "legitimate" children to serve as heirs to wealth, it results that "in its completely developed form the family exists only among the bourgeoisie" (Communist Manifesto). But the original "domestic slavery" of woman as child-producer was without any hesitation used to justify analogous forms of domestic slavery, wherein women serve as general sex-slaves, and as general slaves with regard to all domestic labor from washing the dishes to washing the children. In general, then, the wife serves the husband as "a mere instrument of production" in whatever ways he personally can use her -- whether he needs her to produce his heirs or just to produce his supper.

In many families where there are servants to wash and cook, the wife has the "privilege" of only being enslaved in directly sexual matters; she then "differs from the ordinary prostitute only in that she does not let her body out on piece-work as a wage-worker, but sells it once and for all into slavery" (Origins) and in having the further "privilege" that "her" children are considered "legitimate." The difference, then, between the wife of the bourgeois or petty bourgeois, and the wife of the worker, is only the difference between the highly paid "call girl" and the less-well-paid "whore." Her "privileges" are like the "privileges" of the white worker relative to the black worker. Malcolm X would draw the analogy with the "house nigger" and the "field nigger."

One illustration of the position of women within the upper classes, is to note that they represent perhaps 51% of the bourgeoisie, and yet virtually all of the capitalists are men. The

status of the wife of the capitalist, has not changed fundamentally since the days when she didn't even have the right to vote or to own property; it has only been further "glossed over," as Engels puts it in Origin of the Family.

The relative "privileges" of some sectors of women (like the relative "privileges" of some sectors of workers), create differences in the ways they tend to relate to the struggle. Just as the organized labor movement began among the more privileged workers, likewise the organized women's movement began among the more privileged women. The well-named "Knights" of Labor, despite their conservatism compared to other workers, played an enormously progressive role in helping the whole class win the basic legal right to organize. Similarly, the thoroughly bourgeois feminist movement known as "the first wave," played an enormously progressive role in winning female suffrage, the right of women to own property, etc.

The progressive role of the "aristocracy" of labor is not yet totally ended in the U.S.; they continue to be important allies in defending, and in some cases, extending, working class rights. But the basic tasks of the working class now require the militancy and egalitarianism of the "peasantry" of labor, so we oppose the leadership of the labor "aristocrats" over the class as a whole, giving them only conditional support in those cases where they do fight the bourgeoisie in ways which serve the class as a whole.

Likewise, the progressive role of the "aristocracy" of the enslaved sex is not yet totally ended. They continue to be important allies in certain feminist struggles where they are able to see an identity of interests with their "peasant" sisters, such as on abortion repeal, equal pay for equal work, equal access to jobs and school, and repeal of the Immoral laws. But the basic task of the female sex is no longer mainly to acquire such legal rights (in order to increase women's ability to fight for other things); rather, the basic task for the sex is to acquire greater freedom from household drudgery (which would do more now to increase women's ability to fight for other things). The struggle to make abortions not merely legal but free, for free child care, etc., will reveal the limitations on the ability of bourgeois feminism (typified by NOW) to lead the feminist struggle.

What makes the feminist struggle

against the patriarchy an unconditionally progressive struggle, is that it is, at base, a struggle by women "to abolish their status as mere instruments of production," hence to abolish the division of labor between the sexes. So our support to the feminist movement is as unconditional as our support to the labor movement. We say "feminism is a revolutionary struggle in its own right" (YSA NEC) in order to counter tendencies like the Chicago Women's Liberation Union, which believes that feminism is progressive only when it is consciously socialist, and which would thus oppose any women's liberation party or organization which did not have an explicitly socialist program. The labor movement is progressive even when it is not consciously socialist, because it is a valid movement in itself. Likewise, the women's movement is progressive even while it is still not consciously socialist.

Since our support to feminism is unconditional, we advocate feminist organizing (just as we advocate labor organizing). There is really not such a sharp difference between a feminist party and other types of feminist organizations. The Panther party does not run candidates for office, and still is considered a party; a feminist group could run candidates for office and still not be considered a party. If support to the movement of a certain sector of society is really unconditional, there is no reason to try to draw an arbitrary line between political parties and more limited forms of organizing. But support to independent female political action, objectively means support to moving toward an independent female political party, and all steps in that direction.

If American labor were to organize into a labor party, that would be a progressive step, even if that party hadn't yet become consciously socialist. Likewise, if women organized into a feminist political party, that, too, would be a progressive step even if the party didn't yet have an explicitly socialist consciousness (of course, even the most conservative labor parties generally give "lip service" to socialism, and even the most conservative feminist parties are likely to do the same). Once the basic step of a labor party is taken, the field is better cleared for struggles between right and left wings of the labor movement, for leadership of the class -- which may come as a struggle between factions of a labor party, or as a struggle between different labor parties. Similarly, once the basic step of a feminist party is taken, the field would be made more clear for the struggle between right and left wings of feminism.

This field-clearing would be only one reason why the forming of a feminist party would be a progressive move. Another important reason is that it would present a further challenge to the hold of the parties of the capitalists, over the masses, in the electoral arena. We would be sectarian to demand that the masses of women must be willing to support the SWP (or at least some labor or third-world party), before they split from support to the Democrats. The question of whether to vote feminist, is the quickest way of bringing the issue of feminism to the masses of women. The fights that will result will be so furious, that among other things they will surely lead to the break-up of very many families which very badly need to be broken up.

Ultimately, however, the reason that the forming of a feminist political party would be progressive, is just that it would increase the degree of organization of the female sex, and hence its power.

The character of a political party is determined by its program and by its composition. In order to organize political action by the sector of society it represents, a party must have both the appropriate program and the appropriate composition. Correct program is not enough; the SWP has the correct basic program for the labor, third world, and feminist movements, but still needs to win masses of workers, third-worlders, and women to its ranks. Britain's Labour Party has the composition a labor party needs, but lacks a proletarian program; even the program of la Raza Unida is inadequate, in the long run, and will have to be developed further. Women organizing for the first time into a political party, cannot be expected to choose at the very start a program which is complete and correct in every way; more likely they will resemble la Raza in building a party with a correct composition and overall purpose, first, without yet the final program of feminism. We can reasonably hope that they will not be so slow in learning, as the working class has.

"...the feminist movement is also a struggle which is different and independent from all other movements, because it is based on a unique oppression. The movement therefore has its own dynamic and its own unique course of development. While women need allies, it is only women, organized independently...who can win full female liberation. No other movement can substitute for this." (PC draft resolution on women's liberation, p. 12, emph. added) Where an adequate program for women's liberation -- the full transitional program of the socialist revolution -- is



is in its essentials already adopted by an organization, then it is not generally necessary to exclude men from that organization; its program will exclude those men who need to be excluded. But the masses of women have not yet arrived at that program. During the process of working it out, they are generally forced by the nature of our society to exclude men from their organizations and their parties. Insofar as they feel the need to do it, women have the right to exclude men from their organizations and parties, just as much as workers have the right to exclude capitalists from their organizations and parties, just as much as third-worlders have the right to exclude whites -- and for the same reasons. Men who truly support feminism, won't object to this, for they will have total faith in the ability of women to run their own struggle without male "guidance."

\* \* \*

The feminist movement, like the third world liberation movement, is not merely an aspect of the labor movement; each of these three historical allies

is a separate aspect of the socialist revolution, each with its own independent validity. The revolution is the joint effort of workers, women, and third worlders, and is not merely a "proletarian revolution." On page 15 of the political resolution, the PC recognizes that "...the American revolution will have a combined character. It will be a revolution by the oppressed nationalities for self-determination together with a working-class revolution..." These two ingredients are further combined with a third, the female revolution "to abolish their status as mere instruments of production"(Communist Manifesto).

Let the bourgeois philosophers worry about the answer to the meaningless question whether the labor movement is more important than the women's movement, within the socialist revolution. It is like asking which was more important to human life, food or air. Those who insist that the labor movement is more important than the women's movement, are only expressing their emotional feeling that the labor movement is more valid than the women's movement, and on this they are wrong.

May 22, 1971

## CONCERNING URBAN GUERRILLA WARFARE

by Arthur Maglin, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

There are two points that should be developed in connection with Comrade Joseph Hansen's document entitled "In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building" (International Information Bulletin, No. 3, April 1971). The first point concerns the question of what strategy the Cubans advocate for revolutionaries inside the imperialist countries. The second concerns our evaluation of the split in the Black Panther Party.

### I. The Cubans on Urban Guerrilla Warfare

Comrade Hansen points out in his document that an orientation towards guerrilla warfare as a strategy cannot be logically confined to the one continent of Latin America. He points out that the Cubans have tended to generalize their own inclinations in this direction to cover Africa and Asia as well as Latin America.

Comrade Hansen goes on to argue that there is no reason to confine this strategy to the colonial and former colonial countries. He makes this point to demonstrate the overall absurdity of relying on guerrilla warfare as a substitute strategy for building the revolutionary party by revealing the untenable political conclusions it leads to for practical activity in North America and Europe.

However, Comrade Hansen entirely neglects what might have been one of his most telling arguments. Namely, that the Castro leadership has drawn the logical conclusions for the imperialist sector from its incorrect political strategy for the colonial and neocolonial sector. The Cubans can no longer be said to be equivocal in this regard, as Comrade Hansen seems to indicate in his document.

The Cubans now take a position in support of urban guerrilla warfare in the imperialist countries. They were not able to confine their advocacy of guerrilla warfare as a strategy (and as a substitute for building revolutionary democratic centralist vanguard parties) within the continental bounds of Latin America, Africa and Asia, but with eminent consistency have extended and adapted their position to cover countries in the imperialist category. They are especially unambiguous with regard to the United States.

Probably the earliest indication that the Cubans had settled on this position was the publication of the unsigned article, "USA: From Little

Rock to Urban Rebellions," in the January 1970 issue of Tricontinental Bulletin. The article is an analytical review of radical history in the U.S. from the mid-1950's to the end of the 1960's. Extensive quotation from this article seems warranted:

(1) "Snipers first made their appearance in Watts, an event which has been called 'one of the climactic moments in Afro-American history.'

"The ruling class had planned to frustrate the development of violence by assassinating its prophet: Malcolm X. But this brought about more violence than ever, in Watts, in Chicago, in Cleveland, in Oakland."

(2) "At the beginning of 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee, Martin Luther King was assassinated. In the last years of his life, King had been moving toward an acceptance of facing violence with violence. That turned him, as it had Malcolm X, into a danger to the system.

"Spokesmen of different organizations agreed that with King's death, nonviolence also died. After the death of the black minister, Afro-Americans, infuriated by the crime, took to the streets and set off violence in some two hundred cities which became true battlefields."

(3) "Beginning in 1965, student belligerence was to become intensified. It reached high points such as the prolonged occupation of several buildings in the University of Columbia in New York at the beginning of 1968 and the 134-day strike at the University of San Francisco. Other culminating moments include events such as when the students raised barricades in the streets to face the repressive forces in Wisconsin in the middle of this year, and finally the demonstration against the war in Chicago from November 8 to 11 and their active participation in the gigantic days against the war in which millions of persons from all over the country took part.

"The increasing combativeness of the US students is confirmed in a report recently published by the National Fire Association.

"According to the document, 'in 1967 there were 13,200 fires in schools and universities, the majority of them intentional.'"

(4) "The struggle against the

war takes different forms and, to the degree in which it is increasing, it is permeating different strata of the society. The protest demonstrations are taking on a mass character and the attacks on recruiting centers, the burning of draft cards, the desertions from the ranks of the Army and actions against the tie-up between the universities and the Pentagon, CIA, and other military corps, are increasing."

(5) "The increasingly radical actions of the Afro-Americans, both in the universities and in the cities, produced the radicalization of the diverse left-wing forces and forced them to define and take their positions.

"People's violence is the only method to oppose reactionary violence. They speak of guerrilla warfare."

Clearly, then, the Cubans think that the revolutionary movement in the United States should engage in urban guerrilla warfare. They do not think that it contradicts building mass movements and about party building they have no interest. In case anyone should like to think that this article is an isolated case that does not represent a consistent political line, let us jump ahead in time to some very current examples.

Tricontinental magazine for March-April, 1971 carries an article by Peter Hammond entitled "Youth Against the System." This article is prefaced by a laudatory editorial note which states:

"...we turn our pages over to a young man who is a product of today's North American society and let him tell us how they are changing the plans of the merchants of the system."

One quotation from this ultra-left will suffice. Under the subheading, "The Vanguard in Urban Guerrilla Warfare," presumably inserted by the Tricontinental editors, we read the following:

"For example, speaking of armed struggle, I mentioned the Weathermen; I think the most important thing their actions show is that it is possible to have armed insurrection against the United States and not be caught by the authorities. The fact that the Weathermen have continued to carry out their actions has inspired other lesser-known similar groups to take the same type of actions. The fact is that almost no major Weathermen have been caught; at this moment it seems that there has been little police

infiltration into the organization. The Weathermen, through their actual participation in revolutionary practice, and utilizing some of the ideas of the Tupamaros and Carlos Marighella, have given many people in the United States a preview of the coming revolution in the United States."

Tricontinental magazine has not provided equal time for refuting such views simply because it has no interest in doing so. The Cubans do not limit their advocacy of urban guerrilla warfare to the U.S. alone; they extend it to other imperialist countries as well. An unsigned article in the April 1971 Tricontinental Bulletin, entitled "What is ETA?" extends this position to Spain, for example. This article is a historical analysis of Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna (Free Basque Country), a Basque nationalist organization in Spain which practices urban guerrilla warfare. This completely uncritical article concludes with the following four paragraphs:

"Beginning in 1960 they [ETA] accepted as the focus of revolutionary tactic a slogan: 'To reactionary violence, oppose revolutionary violence.'

"From this time on, armed actions in the Basque country multiplied with frontal attacks on headquarters of the civil guards and the police commissaries, acts of sabotage against public installations and buildings, confrontations at gunpoint with the police forces in the streets of the cities, assaults on banks to gain funds for the revolutionary movement.

"In one of the best-known of these direct actions, in August of 1968, the police chief Melitón Manzanas, head of the Political-Social Brigade of San Sebastian, repeatedly denounced as one of the most sadistic torturers of political prisoners, was shot down in the door of his home. This act would be the one described later in the Council of War of Burgos, to condemn to death the six on trial.

"Through the rich experience acquired in this intense revolutionary activity, ETA perfected its revolutionary tactics and the aims of its struggle. In 1965 it began to define itself as 'a socialist revolutionary organization for national liberation.'"

The same issue of Tricontinental Bulletin which contains this article also carries another unsigned article entitled "Violence in the American Way of Life." This article is entirely consistent with the previously cited

examples. One quotation will illustrate. After reviewing statistics on alleged political terrorism, the article states:

"As can be seen, this is a new element in the situation of which the territory of the North American union is the theater. It is a factor that has eminently political connotations rooted in the course of urban guerrilla warfare and which at the same time reflects the repudiation of the foreign policy followed in Indochina, the Middle East, the constant direct or indirect intervention in Latin America and the internal policy of the Nixon Administration."

Therefore, we can see that one of the most powerful factors generating the increasingly widespread practice of urban guerrilla warfare in the imperialist countries -- examples of which are discussed by Comrade Hansen in his document -- is the attitude of the Cuban regime. We have failed thus far to polemicize against the disastrously incorrect strategy which the Cubans propose for the imperialist countries. I hope no one thinks that we should continue to do so.

It should be noted that the Cuban press has had little to say about the course of the class struggle within such countries as Canada, Britain and France. This should surprise no one. It is simply an extension of the exceptions to its general conceptions that Cuba makes for such countries as Mexico, Chile, Guinea and Syria with which Cuba has good diplomatic or trade relations. As we know, opportunism and ultraleftism are only apparently strange bedfellows. If we are to give an adequate refutation of the ultraleft strategy supported by the Cubans, we will not be able to neglect the price they pay for this policy in opportunist practice.

## II. Why the Black Panther Party Split

Comrades should be aware that Comrade Hansen's document includes an analysis of the split in the Black Panther Party which directly contradicts the analysis of this event given by The Militant. I have no idea why this difference of opinion came about, but since it concerns a matter of some importance it should be discussed and clarified. When discussing this matter with people who have in the past looked to the BPP for political leadership we should be very careful to be properly oriented.

So that no confusion arises from paraphrasing I will quote the contradictory positions under discussion here in their original forms.

After discussing the letter from the Weather underground in which Bernadine Dohrn expresses their self-criticism for relying exclusively on a strategy of urban guerrilla warfare and neglecting to build the mass movement, Comrade Hansen states:

"Bernadine Dohrn's letter made an impact among the protagonists of urban guerrilla war in the United States and Canada. Among the Black Panthers it served to detonate the growing internal frictions.

"Nine of the Black Panthers on trial in New York wrote an open letter in reply to Bernadine Dohrn. The letter, published in the January 19, 1971, issue of the East Village Other, cited Che Guevara and Carlos Marighella with approval, and denounced the strategy of party building in the strongest terms.

"The publication of this letter by Eldridge Cleaver's faction was answered by Huey Newton's faction with immediate expulsions, and Eldridge Cleaver responded in kind. The Black Panther party was split wide open. After that, the key issue became obscured by personal insults, charges of murder, and threats of assassination." (p. 24)

The contradictory thesis is contained in "Why Did the Black Panther Party Split?" by Tony Thomas in the April 9 Militant. Under a subheading which reads, "Split Not Based on Politics," The Militant states:

"Neither Cleaver's faction nor Newton's faction provides an answer for Black people. None of the criticism of the other by either of these groups goes beyond the political and organizational confusion that has led them to their current situation -- a political and organizational confusion that was produced by the united effort of Cleaver, Seale, Newton, Hilliard, and the rest of the Panthers' leaders.

"Only by repudiating this whole confusion can anyone attempt to find a way out for the Black liberation movement.

"The Newtonites attack the Cleaver group for its refusal to defend Angela Davis, which is only a continuation of the basic sectarianism of the whole Black Panther Party. Newton, who began to disagree with Cleaver on the Davis defense when he recently split with him on organizational issues -- has yet to come out for united-front actions in all spheres of defense and struggle, which is the only way to politically

answer Cleaver's opposition to the Davis defense.

"The Cleaverites attack Newton for acting like a superhero, but it was they themselves who participated in elevating Newton, Cleaver, and Seale to such positions.

"Some people, such as the San Francisco Good Times, a Bay Area underground paper, claim that Newton represents a 'right' wing as distinguished from Cleaver, who represents the 'pick up the gun' wing of the BPP.

"The facts are that both are responsible for the Panthers' zigs and zags in both directions. It was Cleaver who was the presidential candidate of the reformist Peace and Freedom Party. It was Newton who counterposed forming armed bands of twos and threes to mass action."

Clearly, the explanations given in Comrade Hansen's document and The Militant cannot be made compatible. Comrade Hansen indicates that the split was precipitated by a dispute over party building versus urban guerrilla warfare. The dispute over these political questions was later obscured by personal insults, charges of murder, and threats of assassination. Comrade Thomas indicates that the split was not based on politics, but was rather a dispute over organizational questions. Only subsequently did the two sides attempt to invent political differences to justify the split. Comrade Thomas does not elaborate on what these organizational questions were, but presumably he is referring to unprincipled clique fighting.

While I do not doubt that cliquism played an important role in the Panther split -- the personal insults against the leaders of the opposing factions and the attempts to lionize the leaders of their own factions are evidence of that -- I think that it is untenable to argue that this was the main factor in the split. The occasion for the expulsions of the nine New York Panthers unmistakably demonstrates that the split was engendered by the public airing of factional political differences within the BPP.

It is true that both Cleaver and Newton are equally responsible for the BPP's history of vacillation between reformism and ultraleftism. But this is not sufficient grounds to argue that they had no political differences until after the split occurred. The Panthers could not go on vacillating wildly between reformism and ultraleftism forever. They could not go on forever

making speeches that were so internally contradictory as to frequently make them seem psychotic. It was necessary that they make up their minds and it is not surprising that some made up their minds one way and some the other.

The subsequent evolution of the Cleaver faction towards a clarified ultraleftism and of the Newton faction towards a clarified reformism is confirmatory of this analysis.

Cleaver has been very careful to state that the division in the BPP is between what he terms the "political" and "military" wings of the party and that he represents the "military" wing. Newton has not tried to refute this appraisal. In the first issue of the Cleaver faction newspaper, Right On!, April 3, 1971, Cleaver uses this characteristic formula:

"...when politics is being transformed into war, and we know that this is the trend, this is the way history is moving, the way we want it to move, then the duties of the above ground apparatus becomes one of relating to and enthusiastically supporting the underground."

In Cleaver's view the political apparatus is merely a service organization for the military wing which does the important business of engaging in urban guerrilla warfare.

In line with the Cleaverites decision in favor of ultraleftism they have dropped all pretense at defensive formulations and have escalated their ultraleft rhetorical flourishes to a point beyond which it would be difficult to think of a way to go. For instance, the same issue contains an article by Brad Brewer entitled "Revolutionary Artist or Revisionist Al Capp?" in which the old talk of "offing" pigs is now replaced by the following kind of phrasing:

"In short, we have to draw pictures that will make people go out and kill pigs."

While this process has been taking place with the Cleaverites, Newton's faction has been resolving itself into a more rightward stance. Newton is now urging people to go to church.

At the same time, both factions have tried as much as possible to obscure the differences and atypical statements can be found on both sides to prove virtually anything. For example, since we have referred to Newton's newfound religious feelings, it is

interesting to point out that he could be considered to have been beaten to it by the Cleaver group. The April 3 Right On! carries an article on the Cairo United Front which concludes with the following paragraph:

"The most important part of the struggle is found within its religious dimensions. The Black people of Cairo relate to a higher power. Saturday rallies are accentuated by deeply moving spiritual services. God is praised. God and the people are served. Without God the Front would perish. With God the Front moves on to greater and more meaningful achievements. With God the people of Cairo, God's children, move from Racism and Exploitation to FREEDOM AND LIBERATION."

They can print that and still speak of revisionism! Yet, it should be borne in mind that for the Cleaver faction

this sort of thing represents an opportunist gesture and not the main line of their politics. Newton, on the other hand, is suggesting a political orientation of working within institutions, as he puts it.

In any case, although the split in the BPP has weakened the Panthers' influence as a whole, that influence is still considerable. We can expect that one or both groups will continue to exist for some time to come. They will pose problems for us as do all opponent organizations. Many people who looked to the Panthers for political leadership in the past and some who still do will be people we will be coming into contact with and will want to recruit. For all these reasons, it is important that we be very carefully clear and correct in what we say about the Panthers and about their split.

May 27, 1971