



# Discussion Bulletin

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## ON THE DISCUSSION OF A PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION

By Jean Tussey, Cleveland Branch

The opening of the preconvention discussion in the Cleveland Branch of the Socialist Workers Party has answered any questions comrades may have had as to what kind of differences exist between the authors of the document, "For A Proletarian Orientation" and the overwhelming majority of the party.

Although the Cleveland Branch has been aware for about five years of some of the differences of three of the authors, since they were members of the branch, we could not assume that a document which they wrote before they saw the National Committee Draft Political Resolution would be offered as "a clear alternative political orientation, a counter-resolution," until they said so.

The branch has had a thorough discussion of the two resolutions. We devoted three meetings to it, starting with a presentation by Comrade Bruce Marcus, branch organizer, on the National Committee draft, and one by Comrade Barbara Gregorich on the document signed by her and Comrades Bill Massey, John McCann and Phil Passen.

Seventeen different comrades participated in the discussion, about one-third of those present. Only one, in addition to Gregorich and Passen, spoke in favor of the counter-resolution. Six comrades spoke two or three times.

Voting on the resolutions will be followed by election of delegates at our final preconvention discussion meeting about August 1.

The discussion revealed that the counter-resolution represents a very small tendency without prospects for growth in a party whose members understand our proletarian orientation, are actively engaged in implementing it, and are already seeing tangible quantitative and qualitative progress in becoming a party of mass action.

This was the course we consciously chose in 1946 as the road to becoming a mass revolutionary socialist party, proletarian in composition as well as program, and competent to lead the working class to power for the socialist reconstruction of society.

The Branch discussion itself was gratifying evidence that the party has succeeded, despite unfavorable objective conditions, in keeping on its programmatic course, developing the organizational methods and principles to enable it to correctly analyze changes, act on new opportunities, recruit and educate essential new youthful cadres.

The comrades who spoke at the branch meetings in favor of the majority resolution rejected the methodology of the document offered as an alternative. They criticized the use of quotations taken out of historical context as a substitute for analysis of today's dynamic, objectively anti-capitalist movements and the tasks of the party in relating to them.

They rejected the narrow scope and primitive concepts of the minority's orientation as a guide for action to build and proletarianize the party and to unify the working class and raise its political consciousness.

Since most of the Cleveland Branch membership, like that of practically every other branch of the party, was recruited from the youth radicalization described and analyzed in the Political Resolution, and educated in the principles and program of the SWP under the leadership of the present National Committee, their appreciation of the differences between the two concepts of our proletarian orientation is probably not unique.

But three of the four signers of the "Proletarian Orientation" resolution were recruited in the Cleveland Branch and two are still members, so we have had an opportunity to observe the origin and development of this tendency from a unique vantage point.

About five years ago Comrade John McCann, then a member of the Cleveland Branch who had been recruited from a campus milieu, warned us that the main danger to the party was from the "petty bourgeois student youth" who would serve as a transmission belt for bourgeois ideas into the party. He proposed a probationary period for any student who might apply for membership, special reading requirements, and other restrictions aimed at curbing recruitment of student youth until they had been purged of their petty bourgeois background.

The Branch did not accept McCann's prescription for guarding the proletarian composition and program of the party since it obstructed what we recognized as our top priority task, which was to attract radicalizing youth to our ideas and program, recruit, educate and integrate them.

Nor did we accept his ideas on the importance of the differences rather than the common interests of the working class at this time.

Nor his ideas on how the party should relate to the antiwar movement.

As a matter of fact, there are few ideas in the resolution "For A Proletarian Orientation" that were not expressed almost identically by Comrade McCann five years ago.

All that the co-authors of the document added to his original propositions are a mass of quotations which they apparently think substantiate those propositions, plus their conclusion that what he foresaw by means of his "Marxist" approach has truly come to pass: The Socialist Workers Party "has been and is adapting to its petty-bourgeois milieu and composition," "no longer has a proletarian orientation," and "the party leadership . . . is developing new concepts about the relationship of the vanguard party to the working class—concepts which are directly opposed to Leninism."

The majority of the Cleveland Branch did not agree with McCann's concept of our proletarian orientation and continued to devote itself to the key task of our epoch: building a revolutionary vanguard party.

McCann eventually gave up on the Cleveland Branch and moved to Boston seeking "greener pastures." Of the younger comrades who did accept his concept of the road to a proletarian party, every one dropped out "for personal reasons" or left town, except for Barb, Phil and one other comrade—and their perspective for at least the past six months has been to join McCann in Boston.

We had hoped, five or six years ago, when the present differences first emerged, that they would be resolved by joint work and experience in building the party, and by further education in the differences between our methodology and the simplistic formal logic so inadequate a tool for analyzing changing social phenomena and defining our tasks.

But the minority document ends where it started five years ago, with dire warnings that the party will fail to lead the working class to victory if we do not proceed immediately in a straight line to the "systematic coloniza-

tion of the strategic sections of the working class . . ."

They didn't learn a thing.

We have no doubt that comrades in all the branches will vote overwhelmingly to reject the line of the minority resolution (the same line Cleveland has consistently rejected) simply on the basis of reading and comparing the two documents and checking with their own experience.

The branch discussion of the documents by the three supporters of the minority line confirmed the fact that the N. C. resolution did not change their thinking.

Comrade Gregorich expressed the view that the national leadership was forced to discuss the working class in the political resolution because we had been informed of the minority document; that the attack on our opponents is really aimed at the minority; that our opponents are right in wanting to go to the working class. If they attack us for not going, they are right and we are wrong.

The comrades of the minority are so uninvolved in the new movements in which the party is participating and where we are contending with our modern reformist and infantile leftist opponents that they do not understand that our method would require an analysis of the "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization" and a critique of erroneous concepts at this time—even if the McCann tendency had been aborted at birth.

Comrade Passen expressed the view that the basic difference between the two documents is that the National Committee's resolution is concerned with conjunctural events; "ours is a long range perspective."

He agreed with the party's "line" on the movements today, but was critical of "the application of that line and ignoring of the working class." We must learn the lessons of how the workers radicalized in the past, he said.

But the central lesson that all three branch speakers for the minority resolution reiterated was that it is the "job of the party at all times to root itself in the working class" and today, as they say in their document, "the most urgent task now facing the SWP is a systematic colonization of the strategic sections of the working class . . ."

The purpose of this discussion article is not to repeat the critique of the erroneous concepts of what our proletarian orientation has been, is and should be. Our political resolution and Comrade Barnes' report on it published in the Discussion Bulletin (Vol. 29, No. 1), and the comrades in the branch discussions do that.

But I would like to say to some of the younger comrades who, like the authors of the minority document, can only learn the lessons of radicalizations of the past from books, that the NC resolution has the added feature of embodying the experience of participants in earlier radicalizations of the working class in this country.

It would be a pointless waste of time to discuss each of the citations in the minority's brief, although it is not at all difficult to demonstrate that most of them either extract from the context of earlier polemics in such a way that they miss the main point of the particular experience; or the lesson cited is irrelevant to the situations and problems we are coping with today.

Instead, I would like to suggest that comrades who think for themselves and want valid historical analogies on the tasks of the party for implementation of our proletarian orientation in a period of broadening and deepening radicalization—reread Section X. Some Conclusions, in Lenin's popular essay in Marxian Strategy and Tactics, "'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder."

## ANSWERS TO SOME QUESTIONS ON GAY LIBERATION

by David Thorstad

Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

There are two kinds of questions about homosexuality and gay liberation that one encounters in our movement. The first reveals a genuine concern about the character and origins of the gay liberation movement, its potential to develop into a mass movement with a revolutionary thrust, and the extent to which the revolutionary party should concern itself with this movement. Our probe and experience with the gay liberation movement will help take care of these questions.

The second comes from comrades who are hostile to the party's involvement in gay liberation because of prejudice or because of a general failure to grasp the radicalization or both.

The following is not meant to discuss all of these questions, but only some of the most common. Both because they overlap, and for reasons of convenience, both kinds are taken together.

### GAYS HAVE A RIGHT TO DO THEIR OWN THING AS LONG AS THEY DON'T CRAM IT DOWN MY THROAT.

In the case of some straights, gay liberation may have to be crammed down their throat. That is up to them. If they can overcome what prejudice they have long enough to think objectively about homosexuality and gay liberation, this will probably not be necessary. But if they allow irrationality and emotionalism to dominate their field of vision, then there will be no alternative.

Still, this "let them do their own thing" notion misses the point of what gay liberation is all about. It reflects a liberal, not a revolutionary, grasp of the question. For, while it is true that the acquisition of our civil liberties—the right to be who we are—is an important aspect of the struggle for gay liberation, it is not the most fundamental one.

The essential thrust of gay liberation is not merely to win from straight society the right to express our sexual orientation without being ridiculed, beat up and murdered, without losing our jobs and friends, and without hiding. No. It also involves a struggle for sexual liberation: It ultimately aims at liberating the sexuality of everyone from the restrictions and puritanism of American capitalist society.

These sexual norms, from which both gays and straights have to be freed, are heterosexual.

According to Kinsey and other authorities on sexuality, every human being is born with a general sexual capacity which includes both the heterosexual and the homosexual. In other words, the capacity for homosexual behavior exists *in nature* and is as much a part of the basic *human* sexual capacity as heterosexual behavior. (This, incidentally, is the meaning of the slogan "2, 4, 6, 8—Gay is Just as Good as Straight.") It is society—not any inborn characteristic—that subsequently determines the predominance of heterosexuality or homosexuality in an individual. The fact that homosexual behavior is absent from the lives of most Americans does not prove the superiority of heterosexuality but merely demonstrates the success with which society has instilled its own warped sexual norms in people.

In our society, unlike most other human societies, the

only acceptable sexual norm is one of exclusive heterosexuality. Our society condemns all homosexual behavior, in all ages and in either sex. The fact that this norm has nothing whatever to do with real human sexual potential, but even represents a distortion of that potential, does not prevent it from being enforced in ways that inflict great suffering on individual human beings and immeasurable loss to society through wasted human potential. And the fact that this norm is violated by millions of Americans merely emphasizes the degree to which it is out of tune with the reality of human sexuality.

One of the strongest implements society uses to mould the growing child into the acceptable social forms and to keep people there as adults is the coercion to behave like a member of one's own sex (to be a *real* man, to be *really* feminine). Anyone who deviates from these norms is quickly labeled "queer."

These sex stereotypes and definitions not only have nothing to do with real human potential; they are also reflections of the social needs of the dominant, heterosexual, capitalist society, and they change as those needs change. With the rise of entrepreneurial capitalism, for instance, the rugged individual was the ideal—at least the male ideal. Today there are no more entrepreneurs to speak of and the rugged individual image is no longer useful. In today's consumer society, it is not people with initiative who are needed, but rather people who lack it, people who follow orders—whether it is buying detergent or killing the enemy in Vietnam or hating homosexuals. In a technologically advanced, complex stage of imperialism, the male ideal is the astronaut, the mechanized, unthinking robot.

These images change for women too. During the second world war, when the capitalists needed to tap the reserve army of labor to which women belong, the image projected for women was not that of today's happy housewife, content with the socially useless and unrewarding labor of a home-centered life. No woman today who refuses to play dumb and pretend that she likes being denied the opportunity to develop as a free human being, independent of a man, will for long escape the accusation that she too is "queer."

These sex stereotypes are used not only to sell the products of a consumer society. They are used to keep people in line. If you spend all your energy trying to conform to this society's warped and rigid definitions of a "real man" and a "real woman"—and both straights and closeted gays spend enormous amounts of energy doing precisely that—then you will have none left for the struggle to overthrow the society that imposes those definitions on you.

Many straights can be appealed to to support gay liberation precisely because it will help break down these rigid sex definitions. You don't have to be gay to understand that gay liberation will also help free you from the compulsion to prove your masculinity or to be truly "feminine." And so, in the process of achieving their freedom to be gay, gay people will be helping to liberate straights too.

But this liberation will go deeper than the shedding of role playing and sex stereotyping. It ultimately involves

sexual liberation in general: freedom to develop and express one's sexual orientation without social constraints; freedom to relate to persons of the same or opposite sex as human beings; not as objects or tools; freeing of the capacity for homosexual love which the heterosexual norm in our society is designed to root out.

Does this mean that in supporting gay liberation we should also support the idea of proselytizing to homosexuality? Not at all. That would be artificial and coercive. (This is why, in my opinion, a slogan like "Hey, Hey, What Do You Say? Try It Once The Other Way" is incorrect—no matter how generous it may seem to ask straights to try it our way once when every institution of straight society has been marshalled to force us to conform to a norm of exclusive heterosexuality.) To those who wish to "come out" or "go gay," fine. But while being gay has its blessings, it is no panacea for difficulties of heterosexuality in a society that is predicated on distorting *all* human relationships—whether they be gay or straight. Full sexual freedom will come only with the replacement of that society with socialism.

#### THE RISE OF THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT MAY REFLECT THE DEPTH OF THE CURRENT RADICALIZATION, BUT THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT TO THE RADICALIZATION IS ESSENTIALLY A PERIPHERAL ONE.

The gay liberation movement is as much a part of the radicalization as any other movement. It is not something on the fringes of the radicalization. Rather, it is the logical outgrowth of that radicalization, which not only draws ever new social layers into struggle, but which also provides for considerable political cross-pollination between different movements. Some of the organizers of the gay liberation movement learned what skills they have in the antiwar movement; many lesbians were active in the women's liberation movement from the very start and are today involved in both it and the gay women's movement.

If the gay liberation movement was later than some others in coming on the scene, its impact is still far from having been felt. When the full impact of gay liberation is felt, when the antihomosexual influence of our social institutions has been dispelled and their structure transformed, when the sex-typing that herds people into mutually exclusive categories of "real men" and "real women," heterosexual and homosexual, normal and abnormal is overcome, it won't be so easy to find people claiming that the struggle for gay liberation has played a "peripheral" role.

The central issue being raised by the gay liberation movement is also the central one for other movements: the right to control our own destiny. Those who believe that control over one's body is not as important as control over the means of production are poorly posing the problem. Both are important and both are related. Both involve a struggle to take the control over the decisions that affect our lives out of the hands of the capitalist ruling class and put it into the hands of the oppressed. Neither will be achieved as long as this capitalist society is allowed to continue to exist.

The dynamics of the current radicalization are such that a growing awareness of oppression in one area, and the determination to struggle against it, lead logically to the realization that something is wrong with society

as a whole. While it is true that in the case of gay liberation some goals, such as the elimination of the sex laws, can certainly be achieved under capitalism (and their achievement will give added impetus to the movement), homosexual liberation cannot be. It can only be achieved with the fundamental transformation of this society.

Perhaps the idea that the gay liberation movement is a relatively unimportant one is based on the assumption that it cannot appeal to very large numbers of people. Such an assumption would be unwarranted. The gay liberation movement has the potential to appeal to and involve in action very large numbers, and in this way too it has much to contribute to the radicalization. If Kinsey's statistics are taken as reliable (and, if anything, they are too low), there are around 10 million American men and between 2 and 6 million women who are more or less exclusively gay. This is not a small minority. Millions more (46 percent of American males) recognize in themselves or act upon erotic responses to persons of the same sex. There is no reason to doubt that a large number of these people can be brought into action by the gay liberation movement.

And when they are, they will not be timid in putting forward their demands for liberation. The realization that what you thought was your own personal hang-up was really a hang-up of straight society, and the discovery of the sheer numerical magnitude of people who are gay and thus suffer the same oppression, are sufficient in themselves to produce an explosive rage in gay people. The revolutionary movement would be foolish not to recognize and welcome this.

The movement for gay liberation not only has the potential to involve large numbers, but it cuts into one of the deepest-going prejudices society uses to divide and isolate people, to render them docile, fearful and subservient to those in power. An indication of the depth of this prejudice is the fact that it exists to the extent it does even within the revolutionary party. I doubt if misogyny and racism were ever as widespread in our movement as the prejudice against homosexuality. This prejudice is so pervasive in our society that gay people are not safe even in gay ghettos. In Greenwich Village—probably the largest gay ghetto in the world—gays can still be beaten up for as innocent an act as holding hands on the street.

The gay liberation movement cuts across the lines of sex, color and class as does no other movement, except the antiwar movement. And it is raising an issue about which nobody can remain completely indifferent.

To the extent that the free development and expression of sexuality is an important factor in the lives of all human beings, and to the degree that the elimination of sex typing will be necessary to achieve this, gay liberation has a role to play in the liberation of everyone, whether gay or straight. For without liberation from the restrictions on sexuality imposed by class society, it is impossible to talk about the liberation of humanity.

The gay liberation movement has added a whole new and potentially powerful sector to the growing list of oppressed groups struggling for liberation. Revolutionaries need no better reason to welcome it. Can a movement, after all, that in barely two years has grown from a handful of timid reformists into a movement with groups on hundreds of U. S. campuses, and that is spreading to other countries—England, Sweden, France, Italy, Cana-

da, the Netherlands; that cuts into the heart of the puritanism and irrationality of American society; that has the potential for involving millions of men and women; that has adopted mass demonstrations as a natural vehicle for announcing its intentions and goals; that is compelling a reappraisal of sexuality, which affects everyone and the repression of which forms an integral part of the repressive apparatus of class society; that cannot achieve its goal of sexual emancipation without the emancipation of humanity as a whole—can such a movement be regarded as a "peripheral" one to the struggle for socialism? Not in the least.

#### GAY LIBERATION ALIENATES BLACKS AND WORKERS. IT IS ALSO PETTY-BOURGEOIS.

This revelation is usually brought to our attention by comrades who are opposed to our movement supporting gay liberation, though they may not always frankly admit it. It is never, to my knowledge, expressed with sadness at the bigotry of the alleged Blacks and workers who would be alienated by gay liberation, or even of fatigue at the prospect of yet another question about which revolutionists will have to do a bit of educating. No. It is usually viewed by those who express it as an argument against the revolutionary party having anything to do with gay liberation.

Now, it is a well-known fact that frequently—though perhaps not always—those who are most upset about homosexuality in public are closet queens (or straights who are unable to accept homosexual feelings in themselves). But this is a personal matter, one which has no real interest for a political discussion, except that unfortunately the two sometimes do overlap. Having mentioned the personal, however, let's dwell on the political.

Would our support to gay liberation alienate Blacks and workers? Quite possibly it might alienate some (though not all) straight Blacks and straight workers, although the response of gay Blacks and gay workers might be quite the opposite. But this, of course, is hardly the point. Those who raise this objection are not really concerned about alienating Blacks and workers; rather, they have somehow persuaded themselves that homosexuality is a phenomenon limited to a small section of (white) society—the petty-bourgeoisie and the upper class. This conviction, however, is not based on any knowledge of the subject except the most vulgar and personal.

Homosexuality is a phenomenon that exists in all social classes and in all races. If anything, according to Kinsey's statistics, it is more common among the working class than among other classes.

Yet, suppose it were true that the SWP's support to gay liberation would alienate it from Blacks and workers at their present level of consciousness. Would that justify turning our backs on this movement? Hardly. The same argument could be used against virtually any other objective or movement which revolutionary socialists support.

Most workers and Blacks, and even most petty-bourgeois, in the United States do not rejoice at the idea that some day the United States will go socialist. Yet, socialism is a goal to which revolutionists remain committed, and the gap between their consciousness and that of the masses does not prompt them to despair of ever winning the masses to that same commitment. On the contrary, it spurs them to analyze and apply experience in

such a way as to be able to help raise the level of consciousness to the point where it will no longer be necessary to merely *explain* the need for socialism but to actually *lead* the masses in the struggle to bring it about.

And what about our support to Black liberation? Is it not true that the majority of white workers are to some extent racist? When we put out literature explaining why white workers should support Black power, have we lost our contact with the masses of white workers? (After all, the reasons why white workers should support Black power are far from self-evident to large numbers of those white workers; and Blacks, moreover, constitute a minority of only around 10 percent of the population.) The answer, of course, is no. We understand the importance of fighting the racist prejudices of American society and explaining the political dynamism of Black liberation.

And women's liberation? Did we hesitate to support the liberation of women because most American males would not automatically welcome it? Or because it was "petty-bourgeois"? While the idea may have occurred to some comrades, the party had no trouble rejecting it.

And what about the demand for immediate withdrawal from Vietnam? Did we fight for this demand because it was thrown into our laps by the American people or because the masses of the Americans supported the NLF victory that would result from the carrying out of this demand? To ask the question is to answer it.

Now, after all these movements, you would think that comrades would have learned something about the relationship of the radicalization to developing mass movements against oppression and the relationship of the revolutionary party to both. You would think that those who doubt the importance of gay liberation to the coming American socialist revolution would at least exhibit some modesty in questioning its importance. Alas, this is not always the case. Some comrades plunge into the fray with both hands and both feet and no head. One cannot help but suspect that comrades who resort to the specious argument that our support to gay liberation will alienate us from Blacks and workers are simply using this alleged prejudice as a smokescreen for their own backwardness.

#### GAY WORKERS AND GAY BLACKS WILL NOT BE DRAWN INTO MASS ACTION AS GAYS BUT ON THE BASIS OF THEIR OPPRESSION AS WORKERS OR AS MEMBERS OF AN OPPRESSED NATIONAL MINORITY.

This statement reveals a mechanical approach to the radicalization. Just as the gay liberation movement is itself a product of the radicalization, so it too will have an impact on other sectors of society already affected by that radicalization, such as the Afro-American or the trade union movements. Precisely what forms that impact will take, of course, it is not possible to say. But there is no reason why gay workers should not be radicalized around their oppression as gays (for many gay activists, this is already the case). And what is to prevent gay workers from organizing themselves and moving into political action not just as workers, and not just as gays, but as *gay workers*? Or gay Blacks as *gay Blacks*? Nothing. This is a dialectical question, not one to be approached in a linear fashion.

Many people who are gay, including workers, may

never come out, that is, fully disclose their sexual orientation in public. Yet even those who stay in their closets may very well be inspired by the gay liberation movement to greater combativity in other areas—as Blacks, as Chicanos, as workers, as women, as opponents of the war, etc.

**THE TERM "STRAIGHT" SHOULD NOT BE USED TO DESIGNATE HETEROSEXUALS BECAUSE IT IS A PUT-DOWN.**

While it is true that the term "straight" is sometimes used to mean other things than the heterosexual equivalent of "gay" (such as square, clean-cut, not hip, etc.), this is not what is meant when it is used by gay people. For gays it means someone who is not gay.

"Straight" is an objective and accurate term. It means simply someone whose sexual activity is exclusively heterosexual and thus conforms to the socially acceptable norms of sexual behavior.

It is not a put-down of heterosexually oriented persons. It is not, for example, a gay equivalent of the term "honky." It is true that the kind of emotional polarization that would occur inside a revolutionary organization if Afro-American comrades referred to white comrades as "honkies" would be intolerable. Use of the term "straight," however, is not at all comparable.

A parallel might exist if Afro-Americans had spent years of their lives referring to themselves as honkies, trying to pass for honkies, striving to be better honkies than the honkies themselves. This is precisely what straight society has compelled gay people to do for centuries. When gay people use the word "straight," we are not using epithets. We are referring to a state of sexuality with which we are quite familiar. We are referring to our own past experience. If straight comrades are upset by the fact that we have rejected the exclusive heterosexual norms to which they adhere, that is their problem, not ours.

These norms are set by heterosexual society, not by gay people. People who feel comfortable following those norms should, of course, be free to do so. But gay people, who reject those norms, should be able to designate such persons with a heterosexual equivalent of the term "gay," without being obliged to always fall back on the clinical word "heterosexual" or the awkward construct "non-gay."

**HOMOSEXUAL SEDUCTION POSES A THREAT TO MINORS.**

Homosexuals are no more prone to seduce minors than are heterosexuals. The very existence of the notion that homosexuals are "child molesters" is nothing more than the product of the antihomosexual prejudice of our society. Preposterous though this notion is, it is used to exclude homosexuals from professions, like teaching, where they are in close contact with children.

Perhaps the most striking, and disappointing, example of the persistence of the notion that homosexuals contaminate children is the fact that the First National Congress on Education and Culture in Havana April 23-30 resorted to it as a justification for the proposal to relocate gays from cultural fields into "other organizations" where they will not "have any direct influence on our youth. . . ."

There is no scientific proof that seduction, whether homosexual or heterosexual, has anything to do with the development of an exclusive sexual orientation of either

kind. Many people's first sexual experience is heterosexual, not homosexual, and it is sometimes the result of seduction. This does not prevent some from developing a predominantly homosexual orientation. Most, of course, go on to maintain an exclusively heterosexual sex life, but no one attributes this to the fact that their first sexual experience was heterosexual. There is no reason to think that this process is any different in the case of persons whose first sexual encounter is homosexual. The factors that go into determining sexual orientation are far too complex to be reduced to a matter of seduction.

This is not an esoteric question, but one that our movement will eventually have to deal with. It is linked to the general sex-repressiveness of our society, reflected in the absurd idea that one's sexual life should not begin before adulthood or marriage. And it is tied up with the sex laws and the age of majority.

In European countries where homosexual acts are not illegal between consenting adults, they are often illegal between minors or between an adult and a minor. In addition, the age of consent varies and is often lower for heterosexual acts than for homosexual acts. Furthermore, even where homosexual acts are legal between consenting adults, as in the Netherlands, gangs of minors have been known to seduce adult homosexuals as a way of extorting money from them.

In the U. S., where homosexual acts are illegal in nearly every state under all circumstances (exceptions: Illinois, Connecticut and Idaho), a primary goal should be to wipe all the restrictive sex legislation off the books. In the meantime, comrades should be careful not to give the impression that revolutionists are for legalizing homosexual acts between consenting adults, but that we do not recognize the right of young people under 21 to discover and express their sexuality with the same freedom as everybody else.

The notion that homosexual seduction turns people into homosexuals is actually nothing more than a variation of the old "prairie fire" view of homosexuality. According to this view, homosexuality is so much fun that if it is not kept under control it will spread and may even replace heterosexuality. Such views are mystical.

**EVERYBODY'S SEXUALITY IS DISTORTED UNDER CLASS SOCIETY, BUT UNDER SOCIALISM, PEOPLE WILL BE BISEXUAL.**

I don't think it is possible to dispute the contention that everybody's sexuality is distorted under class society. The idea that under socialism everybody will be bisexual, however, is a different matter.

It seems to me that any claim for socialism in the area of sexuality that goes beyond the idea that it will permit the free development and expression of sexuality is rash. It is rash because there has never been a socialist society and we are not crystal ball gazers.

It is true that we do know a few things about basic human sexual capacity. And it might seem at first glance that admitting a basic sexual capacity that provides for both heterosexual and homosexual behavior would imply a bisexual expression of those capacities in a society without sexual restraints. Such a conclusion seems to me to be unwarranted. While simultaneous sexual relations with persons of the same and of the opposite sex may be the rule under socialism, other possibilities exist. In any case, it is quite likely that sex under socialism will bear very

little resemblance psychically or physically to sex as we know it under class society.

## HETEROSEXUALITY REALLY IS BETTER THAN HOMOSEXUALITY.

Several false notions lurk beneath the surface of this statement.

1) The idea that homosexuality is a distorted expression of sexual behavior that occurs when heterosexuality is not allowed to develop freely (as, for instance, in class society). The fact, however, is that homosexuality is no more a distorted aspect of sexual behavior under class society than is heterosexuality. And while it may be reassuring to some heterosexuals to believe that human beings are basically heterosexual, there is no scientific evidence whatsoever to back up such a belief.

2) The idea that human beings are physically equipped for heterosex but not for homosex. According to this teleological view, a penis was designed to go into a vagina and consequently heterosexuality is superior to (and more natural than) homosexuality. This is the prevailing view in our society.

It has two weaknesses. First, it ignores the practice of other kinds of heterosexual behavior than genital intercourse (such as oral-genital and anal sex). Second, it assumes that the physical structure of the human body, not the degree of pleasure or imagination involved, determines the enjoyment of sex. (People who resort to this foolish argument thus find themselves in the absurd position not only of passing judgment on a form of sexuality with which they are unfamiliar, but of trying to explain why heterosexual sex is fun despite the fact that a man's chest is not built to receive a woman's breasts.)

3) The idea that homosexuality is a product of decaying societies. This idea can be traced—at least in the case of people on the left who use it—to the triumph of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and the subsequent institution of laws persecuting homosexuality in 1934 (the early Bolsheviks wiped the czarist laws against homosexuality off the books after the 1917 revolution). The myth (never explained, only asserted) that homosexuality is a "product of decaying capitalism" is still the line pushed by the Stalinists, including the American Communist Party (as recently as in the January 1971 issue of *Political Affairs*). It is sometimes embellished with the claim that homosexual goes hand in hand with fascism.

First, on fascism. Tens of thousands of gay people perished in Hitler's concentration camps, marked for death with the special Nazi insignia for gays—a pink triangle. There is no more reason to associate homosexuality with fascism than there is heterosexuality. To do so is nothing more than a fancy way for left-wing bigots to dress up their antihomosexual prejudice.

Second, homosexual behavior has played a role in human societies since the beginning of human society. It has been present—as has heterosexual behavior—in societies during their peak of creativity (Hellenic Greece) and during periods of decline (Ancient Rome). It occurs in primitive communistic societies (American Indians), advanced capitalist societies, and in societies that have abolished capitalism.

Homosexual behavior, like heterosexual behavior, occurs in every species of mammal that has ever been studied in any detail.

brings sorrows. It is not better and no worse than heterosexuality. It just is.

## GAY LIBERATION DOES NOT POSE A THREAT TO THE BOURGEOISIE. IT IS REFORMIST, NOT REVOLUTIONARY. AFTER ALL, EVEN SOME BOURGEOIS ARE GAY.

This statement confuses two things. First, it confuses homosexuality with gay liberation. True, some bourgeois are gay; being gay is not in and of itself revolutionary (though it is more hazardous than being straight in a society that finds no way to integrate homosexuality in a positive way). The struggle to achieve gay liberation, however, like the struggle for women's liberation, is revolutionary. It, like the struggle for women's liberation, may attract some members of the bourgeoisie to its ranks, but that will be their contradiction, not ours.

Second, this statement confuses gay liberation with the mere acquisition of our civil liberties. But gay liberation involves more than that. It views gay liberation as an isolated phenomenon, and fails to recognize that it is an integral part of a deep wave of radicalization.

Gay liberation involves a struggle to eliminate the oppression of homosexuals, which is used to help maintain a society based on male supremacy, the subjugation of women, and private property. It involves the transformation of the institutions by which society implements that oppression. Foremost among these are the family, the schools and religion.

The nuclear family is the first institution most human beings encounter, and it is the one in which antihomosexual prejudice is first instilled in people. It is there that we learn the sex roles and sex stereotypes and the possessiveness that distort personal relationships in a male supremacist, heterosexual, capitalist society. It is there that we learn sexual repression, for the patriarchal family is an institution that is designed not to protect the free development of sexuality but to prevent it.

This is all reinforced in the educational system. Not only will the demand for gay studies undoubtedly be raised in the course of the struggle to transform the schools, but the pseudo-scientific quackery about homosexuality that is now passed on in certain fields (psychology, medicine, sociology) will have to go. Sex education in the schools must entail a rational, scientifically sound and positive presentation of homosexuality, whether it be in the colleges or in high school or in grade school.

The Christian church has been one of the most tenacious and damaging persecutors of homosexuality. There are still today millions of human beings whose sexuality is distorted and whose lives are infused with profound guilt because of the superstition and antihomosexuality of the church. The fact that some reformist gays here and there have chosen to set up gay churches rather than reject a religion whose holy books and history merit the contempt of homosexuals may add to the difficulties of the church in a period of radicalization but it does not make religion less an enemy of gay liberation.

The family, the schools and religion are not the only institutions in capitalist society that play a role in the oppression of homosexuals and which gay liberation will help to change. Others are the police, the courts, the mass media, marriage, and psychiatry.

Homosexual oppression is very closely tied up with the oppression of women, and so will be the liberation of both



gays and women. While there are differences between these two struggles and the oppression they fight (women are also oppressed as part of the reserve army of labor, for instance), they also have much in common.

The origins of the development of the oppression of women can be traced to the origin of the nuclear family and the rise of class society. While this also appears to be the source of the oppression of gay people, not nearly as much is known about it yet as is known about the development of the oppression of women. Still, a hint of the common origins of the oppression of women and homosexuals can be detected in the attitude toward male sodomy in societies that, like our own, attempt to suppress homosexuality.

The popular view of male sodomy is that it is degrading—at least to the participant in the so-called "passive role." Why is it considered degrading? Because it is allegedly dirty? No, for that would not explain the widespread occurrence of heterosexual sodomy. It is considered

degrading because in a male supremacist society, there is no lower rank to which a male can stoop than to imitate the position of a woman in heterosexual coitus. In some societies that had slavery (such as ancient Egypt), defeated enemies were often sodomized by the victors in what must have at least partially been not just for fun but as a way of humiliating the conquered.

This passive-active stereotype of sexual intercourse says as much about the degradation of women in class society and in the heterosexual sex act as it does about the oppression of male homosexuals.

The struggle for gay liberation is revolutionary not only because it aims at the heart of the sex-repressive institutions of this society. It is also revolutionary because it will break down one of the most effective barriers which society uses to foster in people a lack of confidence in their ability to control their lives. Revolutions are not made without such confidence, and gay liberation can help restore it to millions.

June 20, 1971

ON THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM IN THE TRADE UNIONS  
Fred Ferguson, Minneapolis Branch

Below are printed two articles which originally appeared in the Minneapolis Typographical Union's monthly publication, the Typographical Bulletin.

They were the result of several months of discussions between Frank Lovell in the National Office and myself. The articles subsequently formed the basis for an intervention by the party in the early stages of contract negotiations between the union and the Minneapolis Star and Tribune.

The union rank-and-file voted on and accepted our proposals and are currently negotiating with the company to have them written into the contract.

I am re-publishing these articles, (and some of the correspondence between Comrade Lovell and myself), in order that other comrades around the country will be aware of what it is possible to do in the unions in this period.

Comrades should remember, that this union, while one of the more democratically structured, has a thoroughly conservative leadership, is a traditional craft union, and does not have a left-wing tradition politically.

Despite this, it was possible to introduce the party's program for dealing with unemployment and inflation *directly* into the contract negotiations with the owners. In the process, we were able to further democratize the decision-making process, open the pages of the union's publication to the rank-and-file, and subsequently use the articles as a platform upon which to run for office. (I was the caucus' candidate for the local union's executive board. I lost by five votes (!) out of nearly a thousand cast.)

I think it only fair at this point to tell comrades that I am a supporter of the document entitled "For a Proletarian Orientation."

I say this because I do not wish to create the impression in comrades' minds that these accomplishments indicate any different situation in this branch than exists anywhere else in the country as regards the question of work in the trade unions.

Trade union work here is carried out in the face of an apathy, almost an antipathy, that shouldn't exist in an organization that hopes some day to lead the Working Class in the Revolution.

However, I do not wish that discussion (over the political resolution) to cloud the value these articles represent as ways in which our Transitional Program can be applied in every day situations in the trade unions, and it is in that spirit that I offer them.

June 21, 1971

(The articles appear, as they did originally, as two parts of the same article, in the February and March issues, both with the title "*INFLATION AND AUTOMATION-UNEMPLOYMENT, TWIN THREATS TO OUR EXISTENCE.*")

(The correspondence between Comrade Lovell and myself follows the second article in chronological order.)

*PART I*

The coming negotiations with the Star and Tribune are extremely important for the future of this union. The decisions we make now, and the demands we are able to win at the end of the negotiations will determine our future for many years. For this reason, and also because

many of the other locals have begun to look to Minneapolis as a leader in solving the problems facing all of us today, I want to urge careful consideration of the following proposals.

First, while I think our contract is weak in many areas such as vacation, sick pay, and holidays, I do not think these are the most serious problems facing us.

There is the far more serious twin threat of inflation and automation-unemployment.

Because of the complexity of these problems I want to split my proposals into two parts, inflation in this issue and save automation-unemployment for the next.

\* \* \*

While the problem of inflation (and for that matter automation-unemployment) are problems facing the entire labor movement, in fact all people who work for a living, I feel they are particularly pressing for us.

The last contract, after a long and bitter fight we won the largest settlement in the history of the I. T. U. and, in the process, ended up with the highest scale in the country. Then, in the following two years we watched as an annual inflation rate of 5 or 6 percent steadily eroded that scale, putting us in the identical position of having to negotiate "catch-up" money just to get back what we've lost.

And there is little prospect for change in that situation.

As long as the basic cause for that inflation continues (the war) we will most likely continue with an annual loss of five to six cents of every dollar we earn.

My proposal is that we adopt the New York formula for an escalator, or cost-of-living clause, with some modification.

The modifications I propose are as follows:

1. That *all* increases in the cost of living (as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for the Minneapolis area) be paid rather than only those in excess of 4% as in the New York agreement.

2. That all payments be made quarterly rather than on the anniversary of the contract. (Also the N. Y. C. agreement.)

The proposed text reads as follows:

Ninety days after the date of the contract, and every ninety days thereafter for the life of the contract, employees covered hereunder shall receive a cost of living adjustment to the prevailing wage scale in accordance with the following formula:

a. The Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (1957-1959=100) for Minneapolis, hereafter called the Index, shall be used for all measurements of the change in cost of living.

b. Effective ninety days after the date of the contract, and every ninety days thereafter for the life of this agreement, the amount of any cost of living adjustment shall be the percentage increase over the previous ninety day period, multiplied by the day scale, and the resultant amount shall be added to the day scale.

The amount of any Cost of Living Adjustment shall be included in computing all premiums and fringes such as overtime premium, night shift premium, vacation payments, holiday payment, call-in pay, bereavement pay

and paid absence allowance.

In no event will a decline in the Index cause a reduction in the scale of wages or in any adjustment thereto.

In the event that the Bureau of Labor Statistics shall fail to publish the Index or shall change its base period, the parties shall meet to discuss and apply any such new Index and its application to the cost of living allowance. If the parties are unable to agree, then the same shall be referred to arbitration.

## PART II

In this, the second half of my proposals for the new contract, I'd like to discuss automation-unemployment.

First, the reason for linking automation and unemployment into one hyphenated word is that that is *exactly* what the employers in this industry have in mind for us.

Whereas in the past, because of a steadily expanding economy, the effects of automation on employment were not so readily noticed, now things have begun to appear in their true light.

For the first time, the employers are automating with a stagnating or declining economy. This has enabled them to do what they've all along been trying to do . . . cut the payroll!

Automation under these circumstances can only mean disaster for us. It can only mean the slow erosion of our numbers to the point is reached when the owners feel it is safe to get rid of us, and they will either lock us out, or force a strike on us and bring in strikebreakers.

Our strength as a union, the thing that has given us the standard of living we enjoy, has always lain in our relatively large numbers, our skills and our solidarity. An employer allowed to automate unchecked and without conscience, will be able to destroy all three.

Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that we gain some measure of control over the introduction of automated equipment. In the process assure ourselves of a share in the resultant savings.

When I speak of a share of the savings, I refer to our right to exist as a union and not of some cash settlement that is worthless to a man who no longer has a job with which to support his family.

To assure our future existence as a union, to insure our standard of living and preserve our union-shop conditions, I propose:

1. An immediate cut in the work week from 35 to 25 hours with no loss in pay.

2. That each new piece of automated equipment introduced in the future, be individually negotiated and that a further cut in the work week result, equal to the amount of man-hours saved by the equipment. Also with no loss in pay.

While this is only a partial answer to the problem of unemployment, in that it only addresses itself to joblessness caused by automated equipment, it is nevertheless a beginning. Once the principle of shortening the work-week rather than laying off printers is established, perhaps it can be extended to other types of unemployment.

In the short run however, the immediate cut of ten hours in the work week should result in approximately 20 new jobs, or just about what we've lost since Jan. 1, 1970. It will, at the same time put the employers on notice that we do not intend to see this union reduced to 50 or 75 machine tenders with no choice but to accept what they

see fit to give us at contract time.

And, most importantly, we will be putting the entire industry on notice that automation will be for the betterment of *all* the people in the printing industry and not just a means to amass even greater profits for the owners.

\* \* \*

Oct. 4, 1970

Frank Lovell  
National Office  
N. Y. C.

Dear Frank,

Due to the peculiar circumstances in my local union, I have once again found an opportunity to intervene.

As you may recall, the former local president, after suffering several strokes, died and was replaced by a considerably younger, ex-political (Stalinist).

This has led to a considerable loosening up of control over the affairs of the local. He has tended to be not only more democratic and responsible to the rank and file, but has been far more aggressive in his dealings with both the International and the company.

Considering this, and with the contract with the Star and Tribune having less than nine months to run, I proposed to him that the local open the pages of the newsletter to the membership for the purpose of discussing proposals for the new contract.

While it hasn't been acted on yet, I feel that there is a chance that it will be done.

Now, the reason for this letter.

After the last contract, which as you know got a \$1.37 an hour raise, the company pushed ahead and stepped up plans for automation. It has reached the point where they have purchased \$200,000 worth of new equipment since the first of the year.

This combined with the conditions in the economy, have resulted in a net loss of approx. 30 jobs or about 8% of the crew. Not to mention a considerable cut in overtime.

I feel that this would be a most appropriate time for us to put up a demand for a sliding scale of hours and wages.

The sliding scale of wages presents no problem as it has been instituted (in a limited form) in other parts of the country.

But I do have some questions about the matter of hours.

As I understand it, we have usually formulated this as thirty for 40 hours pay.

I think that conditions have changed and some innovation is required. Specifically, I think the printing industry is approaching the point where even if we were to manage a five hour a week cut in hours,<sup>1</sup> they would still be able to effect further cuts in manpower through the use of very sophisticated computers and other electronic and photo typesetting equipment.

Therefore, I am considering proposing a formula whereby the company, on a quarterly or monthly basis would estimate its manpower requirements and if the estimated man-hour requirement were less than would be provided by a full crew, that instead of laying off, they would cut the number of hours worked for that period for the entire crew.

To induce the company to accept this plan we would have to sign away the unions rights to reproduction of

advertising and also make some provisions for the hours to slide upward as well as down.

The reproduction clause<sup>2</sup> has always been an extremely painful thorn in the side of the employers, and is therefore a strong bargaining point. It has also become an increasing cause for embarrassment for the union as it is difficult to explain to the layman why the company must have all advertising originally set outside the shop, reproduced by its own employees and then thrown away.

The other point is that the company should be allowed to slide the hours back up (with the original 35 hour week as a ceiling). If this weren't done we would probably find ourselves in the same untenable position as far as the uninformed non-member was concerned.

Naturally, our argument should be "No More Lay-Offs." That if the company wants to use automation to increase their production capacity and cut costs, that's fine, but we are entitled to our jobs and automation should not be used to eliminate printers.

I don't know whether this proposal is anything new or not. I've done a little research on it and I can only find reference to the 30 for 40 formulation. I would like to hear your and Sara's thoughts about it.

I'm also sending a letter to Jean in Cleveland in the event they've done something on it there.

Comradely,  
s/Fred Ferguson

#### FOOTNOTES:

1. The Typographical Union generally has a 35 hour work week now.

2. A separate paper on this subject was prepared by the caucus and presented before a special committee of the Union set up for this purpose. It was decided to put the question over until the contract negotiations. The paper is reproduced here as an appendix.

October 6, 1970

Dear Fred:

Your letter about the application of the sliding scale of wages and hours to prevailing conditions in the printing trades came this morning. In my opinion it raises one of the most basic questions we must deal with now.

As you discovered, the cost-of-living escalator clause in some union contracts and the "30 for 40" demand were attempts to apply the sliding scale formula. But this concept of a sliding scale of hours and wages goes far beyond these beginning efforts. The most obvious differences are: 1) such provisions as *c-o-l* and 30 for 40 are limited to the jurisdiction of the union that wins them and apply only to some workers in a given trade or industry, whereas the sliding scale of wages and hours formula is a broad social demand intended to regulate hours and wages in all industry and thus affect, protect, and benefit entire working-class (skilled and un-skilled, employed and un-employed); 2) the basic concept as applied in the auto industry for example was twisted to serve what was assumed to be temporary needs within a relatively stable economy so that the concept itself tended to become rather fixed and static in its limited application, and this led to acceptance of the "cap" or limit on *c-o-l* in the 1967 UAW contract; 3) up to now the *c-o-l* escalator clause and the "30 for 40" demand have been regarded and advanced as *separate* demands, but the sliding scale of hours and wages concept *joins* these two demands and

presents them as a single, interconnected, solution to the problem of the declining living standard.

Your problem is to find a way to present this solution—and formulate it in a single demand (sliding scale of wages and hours) that is easily understood and explained for the problems of workers in a single industry for the present (printing) and for only a small group of those workers immediately (ITU members). This is the same problem that was faced by unions in other industries when they were on the verge of becoming automated (mining and longshore) or rapidly rationalized with all kinds of new equipment ready to be introduced. You know what Lewis did and what Bridges did. They worked out a scheme with the bosses to limit the work force and provide for its *reduction* through the process of attrition in exchange for a big pension fund for those already in the industry. The results have been disastrous for the union, a big gain for the employers in those particular industries and for the ruling class.

In your negotiations you will be proceeding against this background and experience in other industries as well as the peculiar history and tradition of the ITU and the printing industry. I think you will have to begin right away with some exploratory discussions in which you raise all the problems of automation in the printing industry with the idea of making it an educational campaign for the membership. The bosses will probably go along with this at first because they have a vast amount of equipment to display (much more than is now in use) and statistics of all kinds to prove what can be done in the industry if the union would only be "reasonable." This is what happened in the mining and longshore industries, and the unions there presented their "reasonable" demands which appeared to the membership at the time to be a pretty good deal for all concerned.

Your very reasonable demands, of course, will be different. And when the membership discusses and approves the solution it has worked out for this particular industry (the sliding scale of hours and wages) you will most likely then come in sharp conflict with the printing trades bosses. But they will have to show wherein your demands are unreasonable or out of line with the needs of both employers and workers in this industry.

Right now a kind of make-shift solution has been arrived at by Powers and his gang here in New York. This is the new, three-year agreement in the job shops. It gives a very big wage increase, no change in hours. The printing bosses are all set to go ahead with their new equipment and further reduce the work force. The wage offer was so attractive that it was adopted by the membership (at a meeting here on Sunday, Oct. 4, of about 2,500), but there was a general feeling that something was wrong. What was wrong was the failure of the union to take account of the gnawing problem of unemployment.

Sarah was at the meeting here last Sunday and spoke about this, urging that the proposed agreement be revised to provide for shorter hours. She got a good response but the agreement as submitted by the leadership carried.

You have some time now to work out a different solution. (I am sure that the membership here in New York will wish they had taken time to look more carefully at all the problems before rushing to sign the contract. In the next three years unemployment can and probably will increase, especially in the printing industry. The union expects to share the jobs among its members as they have done traditionally, but with a big cut-back in hours

the big wages won't mean so much. The standard of living of the printers will decline.)

We haven't had a full discussion of this problem for a very long time, and I hope it can begin now. What I have submitted here is only some suggestions of what is involved and what you can start doing now.

For ourselves, I am submitting the problem to all others here. I am glad you send a copy of your letter to Jean. And I think you should now, on the basis of this letter, get the ideas and help of all our leading people there. They have good ideas about how to proceed in the union, how to involve the scale committee in a solution of the problem and the formulation of your demand (after you have worked out a pretty clear idea in your own mind about what you think *ought* to be done), and they probably will have some suggestions about how to formulate the sliding scale of wages and hours formula to suit your particular and immediate needs.

If we are lucky in the way your local negotiations develop, this entirely new concept (for the ITU) can become a big issue in this union and can become the beginning of a new pattern of negotiations within the printing industry. It is something that must be adopted and fought for by the entire organized labor movement. I think you must understand that you are launching a pilot project, something that is a model for others to adopt if the basic idea is to succeed.

Our great advantage now is that we have an opportunity to develop this under the live conditions of real negotiations with the boss. This is much different from sitting down to write what could be, or what ought to be, IF. . . . Here you are dealing with what *is*. And for this reason you must check everything out carefully, listen for the reaction to every proposal you make.

I think it must be a very complicated system to keep track of the hours and establish a sliding scale on the basis of the *present* (?) rate of employment in the industry. What would be your base gauge for the sliding scale of hours? On the matter of wages, the U. S. Bureau of Labor consumer index is used. But the Labor Department's reports on unemployment would not be useful. You must have an "impartial" index of unemployment in the printing trades for your immediate purposes. Does such an index exist? Is there the basis for establishing one? (I am sure there is) And who would be responsible for maintaining it and insuring its accuracy? These may seem to be very elementary questions, but I am sure they must arise very early in your discussions.

Please keep closely in touch with us, because we will have to have an exchange of ideas here and your experience at every step will be useful to us.

Comradely,  
s/Frank

c/c Jean Tussey, Sarah Lovell

*postscript*

After some brief discussion here, there is one additional matter which you raise directly in your letter. You say: "The other point is that the company should be allowed to slide the hours back up, (with the original 35 hour week as a ceiling). If this weren't done we would probably find ourselves in the same untenable position as far as the uninformed non-member was concerned."

Two things are involved here: 1) *structural unemployment* which has to do with the increased productivity of labor, and 2) fluctuations in unemployment resulting

from periodic or seasonal demands for the product.

Your present problems are the result of *structural unemployment*, resulting from the introduction of technological improvements in the machinery of production. Consequently, there would not be any *sliding-up* of the working hours.

This idea of the hours "sliding up" as well as down relates *only* to seasonal fluctuations. It is probably not wise for the negotiators on your side to introduce this question in the early stages of the discussions with the employers. If they raise it, then we must be clear that this relates only to the seasonal fluctuations.

The other matter of educating "the uninformed non-(ITU) member," we do not consider an immediate problem. Our problem is first to educate ourselves on this complicated question, find ways to simplify and popularize it, and then to educate your local ITU scale committee and the union membership.

FL

Oct. 10, 1970

Fred Ferguson  
MINNEAPOLIS

Dear Fred:

There are some additional minor considerations, within the context of those mentioned in my previous letter, that you should take into account when working out a sliding scale of wages and hours formula to suit the needs of your local situation.

1) About technological improvements, automation.

The UAW contracts for many years have included what they call "the annual improvement factor" which relates to *increased productivity* in the auto industry.

I think productivity in the auto industry has increased about 5 per cent annually since the war, maybe the average is higher. This shows up in other statistics in reference to the total work force and number of cars produced. For example, in 1958 (a low-production, "depression" year) 546,037 auto workers turned out 5,135,100 vehicles; in 1968 (ten years later, a high-production, "boom" year) 785,000 workers (about one-third more) produced *more than twice* the number of motor vehicles, 10,718,200.

You would think the hours of work ought to be shortened so as to keep the ratio of workers to units of production about the same. If this is not done, workers will be laid off when "units produced" remains constant or is reduced. (Their argument is that in an "expanding economy" there must *never* be cut-backs in over-all production.)

We think—in order to insure that workers do not suffer severe unemployment—that union contracts ought to include a provision for the reduction of hours commensurate with increased productivity. (You certainly would have little success trying to sell this proposition to the bosses. And there are many workers who will not understand it, thinking labor-saving devices to be generally a good thing and knowing from their own experience that in many instances the work becomes easier even though productivity increases with the introduction of more advanced machinery. So what we try to do is find a way to reduce the hours of work in accordance with the increasing number of unemployed workers. In a union contract we have to find a formula to regulate hours in accordance with the unemployment in a particular in-

dustry, not the national level of unemployment.

In the UAW contracts, increased productivity is compensated for in *wage increases*, not reduced hours. The 2.5 per cent "annual improvement factor" is added to the wage scale each year. It is about half the estimated increase in productivity.

I submit this as evidence that the union bureaucracy has never attempted to stabilize employment, considering this beyond their control.

Reuther introduced the idea of Supplementary Unemployment Benefits (SUB)—which was admittedly a watering-down of his broad social demand (to be realized within the frame-work of capitalism, of course) of a Guaranteed Annual Wage—to protect the seniority workers against seasonal unemployment. But this does not provide protection for very long, or even deal with the problem of structural unemployment.

## 2) Unemployment in the printing industry.

Unlike the auto industry, the printing industry is—or was—made up of many small shops. The biggest shops are now crowding the smaller competitors out. Consequently the big shops do not lay-off, and may even increase their work force as they increase productivity. But their new equipment is so much more efficient that most small shops will soon be out of business, thus creating unemployment in the industry.

Here in New York Powers has just brought in a big wage increase in the new contract, knowing that most small shops will go out of business soon because they can't afford the new competitive printing equipment. Powers also knows he will be faced with an ever more acute unemployment problem in the trade, but he thinks this will somehow take care of itself. Maybe printers will have to share the work by giving up days to the unemployed brothers.

This share-the-work practice of the ITU (and it is one of the few unions that does this) is considered about the "best solution" from the limited union view. But it doesn't work out well because it means a reduction in the standard of living for all, and it tends to pit the employed against the unemployed.

Our aim is to find a formula—the sliding scale of wages and hours—that will unite the union membership against the employers by reducing the hours of work in order to insure that the standard of living does not decline.

Comradely,

s/Frank

c/c Jean Tussey, Sarah Lovell

## APPENDIX

What follows here is a paper put together by a rank-and-file caucus in the Minneapolis printers union during the general discussion on the sliding scale of wages and hours.

While it is somewhat limited in scope, as it was introduced before a committee concerned with just the problem of the "reproduction clause" of the contract, it does indicate the thinking of the caucus at that time (midway in the discussion) and in some respects remains valid as *one* method of concretely applying the sliding scale of hours.

The caucus later decided that this particular formulation was too difficult to popularize among the ranks, and decided on the 25 for 35 slogan.

[Fred Ferguson, June 21, 1971]

The problem with reproduction . . . is that it's indefensible.

No rational person can defend a system which forces the employer to pay to have type set that will never see the page of a newspaper and consequently never earn him a dime.

On the other hand, in a time of rapidly rising unemployment, coupled with an ever-increasing flood of newly-developed automated equipment, I am opposed to giving it up without iron-clad guarantees for the security of the members of this union.

That security would have to provide for the maintenance of our ranks at at least our present strength. For if the employers are allowed to use attrition to pave the way for automation—we face only the bleak prospect of an ever-shrinking membership, with a corresponding loss of power with which to negotiate.

The situation in our own shop alone is enough cause for worry.

The work force since the 1st of January 1970 has suffered a 7% loss.

While the Hand side showed a loss of slightly more than 5%, the machine side, which is bearing the main brunt of the introduction of automated equipment, shows a loss of slightly more than 10%.

All of this of course is *before* the introduction of "second generation" Photons, which promise even more drastic cuts.

So the problem facing us is not "the disposition of reproduction" . . . *it is what to do about automation.*

The failure to see the problem in this way, and to merely "trade off" reproduction for some fringe benefit that would probably accrue to us in the normal course of events anyway, would be, in my opinion, tragic.

We must establish, once and for all, that, we are *entitled* to a share in the savings from automation.

We must establish that automation will be used for the good of all mankind, and not to merely increase the already sizeable fortunes of greedy employers.

## STRUCTURAL AND CYCLICAL UNEMPLOYMENT

The first thing we must do if we are to talk about automation and unemployment is to define what *kinds* of unemployment we are faced with.

There is of course the cyclical or seasonal unemployment that we have suffered within this trade for the last hundred or so years. The fat Decembers and lean Februarys that we have coped with by sharing the work with our unemployed brothers via the union slipboard and sub system.

Now, however, we are faced with a new and much more serious type of unemployment, caused by automa-

tion, called structural unemployment. This type is permanent because it is structured or built into the employers work flow.

The proposal I wish to make to the committee, and eventually to the contract drafting committee is known as the Sliding Scale of Hours, and while the idea was first introduced by the United Auto Workers some 25 years ago, I feel that with some modification it is applicable to our situation.

The Sliding Scale works very simply on the following premise: That when the employers find it necessary to reduce the work force because of either cyclical fluctuations in the economy or because of the introduction of automated equipment, rather than a lay-off, a reduction in the total number of man-hours takes place.

For instance, if the employer claimed he had a surplus of 175 man-hours per week, instead of laying off 5 men, he would reduce the work week of the entire 350 man crew by 30 minutes.

There are any number of ways the details for this can be worked out once the principle is established.

For instance, the company at the beginning of each quarter could be required to state their man-power requirements for the following three months. The union would make the appropriate adjustments in the work week and it would remain that way for the balance of the quarter.

Overtime would of course be paid for anything over the ordinary end of the shift.

The obvious question the employer is going to raise here is "does the sliding scale slide both ways?" In other words, can the work week go up as well as down?

The answer is that whether it slides up depends on why it went down in the first place.

All reductions for *structural* changes in the work force *must* be permanent as our share in the savings realized from automation.

If on the other hand the adjustment was made because of seasonal or cyclical changes in the economy, these would of course be allowed readjusted back up.

Naturally the present 35 hour week would be imposed as an absolute ceiling beyond which no further increases would be allowed.

And in subsequent contracts, as the ceiling were negotiated lower and lower, even these changes would become permanent.

We have never been in greater danger from automation. Even the introduction of the lynotype pales by comparison to equipment now on the market and in the experimental stage. It is now possible to code information on magnetic tape while the reporter is typing his "hard copy." This is then flashed on a TV screen for editing by the editor. After this it is fed automatically to a computer that punches a justified tape which is then fed to a phototypesetter that sets 8 columns of type *simultaneously*. An entire page! Thus eliminating not only the operator but also the proof-reader, and the hand man.

The time to tackle this threat is now! Now while we are at our maximum strength, highest wages and greatest resources. Not five or ten years from now when it will be too late!

If we are going to trade off reproduction, let's get something that will replace it not merely eliminate it!

A FURTHER PIECE OF CORRESPONDENCE  
ON THE SLIDING SCALE OF HOURS  
by Frank Lovell

The following letter from me to Comrade Ferguson, which he neglected to include in his collection, completes our correspondence on the sliding scale of hours concept. Unfortunately, we did not find a solution to our problem. I was sorry we failed last November to get a broader discussion started in ITU local 42 on this question. Nothing to my knowledge has since developed in the local around the issue of unemployment, and subsequent correspondence between us relates to other matters.

June 23, 1971

\* \* \*

November 2, 1970

Dear Fred:

Your letter of Oct. 28 came this morning with copy of your presentation before the ITU Committee on Automation and Reproduction (and the other material you asked to have returned which I am enclosing).

I have discussed with Farrell the immediate problem you have there. The following are some ideas we have about this:

1) You must first clarify the problem.

We thought you had introduced too many considerations, too much along the lines of our previous correspondence in which we were discussing solely among ourselves the general nature of the problem of automation.

I do not think it is wise at this time to suggest that you think bogus is irrational, or that the union should right away give it up. You will get into a lot of unnecessary arguments with some very good union men on this question. Bogus is defensible and has in the past served a useful, if limited, purpose. In 1953 the U. S. Supreme Court upheld the right of the ITU to compel a newspaper to pay for the setting of type not used.

These arguments can only confuse and divert the discussion, and may prejudice some against you at the outset.

The problem is automation and the resulting *structural* (not cyclical) unemployment in the trade. How to cope with this problem at this time?

2) Problems of cyclical unemployment have long existed; but automation creates structural unemployment, changes the character of the industry, introduces new processes, and can lead to the displacement of the ITU.

The question of cyclical unemployment is extraneous, has nothing to do with the problem of automation. To introduce this, even by way of contrast, is a distraction.

3) You must keep in mind who you are talking to.

At this stage you are talking only to your own union brothers, trying to convince them that the best answer to

the problem of automation is a sliding scale of hours.

Hours will only be reduced. They will not be extended.

What you are seeking is a way to measure how much they will be reduced and when.

I thought your suggestion a good start at working this out.

"For instance, if the employer claimed he had a surplus of 175 man-hours per week, instead of laying off 5 men, he would reduce the entire 350 man crew by 30 minutes."

Once other workers get the idea of what a sliding scale of hours is, they will have many good ideas along this line about how to make it work out.

It is a distraction to talk now about hours sliding up. Maybe sometime in negotiations with the publishers this question will be introduced by them and will have to be taken up, but that is still a long way down the road. Right now you are talking only to members of the union, trying to convince them that the sliding scale of hours is a good idea.

4) The sliding scale of hours is designed to cope with the problem of automation, to allow the workers to share in the benefits of the new labor-saving equipment. The employers are not entitled to all the benefits, while workers are made to suffer the effects of unemployment.

5) Other attempts to cope with this problem have not been satisfactory. Bogus is one such attempt, in the printing trades. (I gave examples of the Miners and Longshoremen in previous correspondence.) Bogus has not solved the problem (regardless of whether it is thought to be good, bad, or indifferent); so what is needed is another approach, or way of looking at the problem.

The ITU is in a position somewhat analogous to the UAW in 1946-7-8, looking for a way to cope with the problems of rising prices. The cost-of-living formula, far from perfect, was first (1948) included in the UAW contract. Since then it has been copied by many other unions.

It is now time for some union to introduce the sliding scale of hours concept, a completely new idea. It is all the more urgent in view of the failure in the longshore and mining industries.

\* \* \*

Please let us hear what further ideas you have on measuring or estimating the number of man-hours and relating this to the size of the work force. I will try to learn more about this from those in the industry here, and write to you. I would think this is what will be of most interest to union members, once the general idea of the sliding scale is outlined. We ought to have some specific examples of how it will operate.

Comradely,  
s/Frank



**SOME FURTHER REMARKS ON WORDS AND DEEDS**  
by Lee Smith, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

*Introduction*

Below is a slightly edited version of remarks I made at the Upper West Side Branch discussion of the National Committee Draft Political Resolution and report to the plenum by Jack Barnes (SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 29 No. 1) on June 21, 1971. The remarks attempt to relate what I consider to be one of the central ideas in the Draft Political Resolution and report to some of the errors contained in the article by Comrade Hedda Garza entitled, "For a Better Relationship Between Word and Deed," (SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 29 No. 9).

*Remarks From June 21 Upper West Side Branch Discussion*

Comrade Jack Barnes, in his speech to the Oberlin conference last summer on "The New Radicalization and the Revolutionary Party," drew together the threads of the other major presentations, representing the assessment of the new radicalization and our party's tasks which has been elaborated, refined and distilled in this draft resolution and report.

In a section of his speech last summer, Comrade Barnes dealt with a phenomenon described by Trotsky as "the revolutionary insolence of the masses." The fighters in the mass movements today are all doing something, Comrade Barnes said, that "we should absorb to the marrow of our bones." They are "standing up and saying 'I am an individual!'"

As I was reading over this section of that speech in *Towards An American Socialist Revolution*, I was reminded of an account I read in the *Village Voice* of the rebellion at the Tombs that same month last summer: The reporter described watching the glass bricks of a high window explode as they were smashed out of the narrow opening by an inmate with a metal pipe; and then a muscular arm reached through the narrow opening, clenching the pipe in a fist and the man shouted, "I'm a human being, goddamn you! I'm a human being!"

"As the masses become proud of themselves and insolent to their oppressors," Comrade Barnes pointed out, "authority crumbles. All sacred cows go down. And every time a sacred cow is cut down, it is a time of rejoicing for the Trotskyist movement. The uncompromising assertion of dignity is the most powerful psychological fuel for every mass movement."

One of the new movements taken up in the draft resolution and report is the gay liberation movement—the fight by gays against the legal and extra-legal forms of our oppression.

The gay liberation movement is one more *independent* movement, raising greater doubts about the fundamental values of bourgeois society, extending and deepening the radicalization that spawned it, and confirming that in this radicalization, no layer is too oppressed to find the will to fight, no matter how deep-rooted the reactionary prejudice that sanctifies the oppression.

The revolutionary insolence of homosexuals in the gay liberation movement, our demand for legal and social equality, our assertion of pride and dignity *advance*, as Comrade Barnes points out in the report to the plenum on the draft resolution—*advance* the willingness to strug-

gle and individual sense of worth of literally *millions* of gay workers—whether or not these workers themselves actually join the gay liberation movement. Cutting down the sacred cow of anti-homosexuality *advances* these workers' combativity; it doesn't set it back. This is an essential part of the understanding we apply to the entire radicalization, comrades—the actions of each new layer moving into action reinforce and spur forward other layers already in motion and sections that have yet to move in a massive way.

This is why the resolution states that in all stages of party-building, our cadres must be alert to, recognize and *embrace* the progressive demands and struggles of oppressed groups that develop as part of the radicalization. *The party champions the fighting movements of all oppressed social layers*, advancing and developing their key democratic and transitional demands as part of its own.

We understand that each new struggle is helping to soften up the class enemy and make them more vulnerable to further blows. This is *why*, every time a sacred cow goes down, it is a time of rejoicing for the Trotskyist movement. This is *why* we want to absorb this essential assertion of dignity to the marrow of our bones.

It is with these things in mind, that I would like to direct the comrades' attention to an article in No. 9 of the Discussion Bulletin by Comrade Hedda Garza, called "For a Better Relationship Between Word and Deed." From the standpoint of revolutionary socialist politics, this article has many weaknesses. What I want to focus on now are some things in the article that relate to the importance of our party's ability to welcome new forces in the anticapitalist struggle.

Comrades have publicly stated that homosexuality is "transitional." Transitional to what? Why, to abolition of the family, of course! There's only one problem. If Gay people are better people and it is more revolutionary to be Gay, then not only the nuclear family is threatened but indeed the existence of all humanity—in which case, why bother about making a socialist revolution!

This betrays Comrade Garza's appalling ignorance of what gay liberation is all about. No gay comrade or *any* comrade has said that homosexuality is "transitional" (whatever she thinks that means) *or* that it is more revolutionary to be gay than to be straight. What comrades *have* said and what is indisputably true is that it is more revolutionary to be gay and proud than it is to be gay and ashamed. What advances the radicalization is the self-confident assertion of dignity that makes gays ready to fight their oppression—an oppression rooted in bourgeois sexual morality that will only finally be ended by overthrowing the capitalist society sanctified by that morality.

But comrade Garza does not understand gay pride.

Confessions of newly acquired homosexuality have become a regular event, as though it were a fine model, a badge of honor, and worse yet, as though comrades who would rather "fight than switch" are somehow not true-blue Bolsheviks. All of this hasn't the faintest resemblance to a "probe" into Gay Liberation.

Apparently Comrade Garza has not absorbed to the marrow of her bones the revolutionary importance of the insolence of the oppressed. What this paragraph I have just quoted shows is a confusion of gay pride with an imagined gay will to convert. If a gay person is proud, Comrade Garza believes that person is saying that heterosexual comrades are not true-blue Bolsheviks. Comrades, in this straight society, it is not *gays* who are trying to convert anyone. It is *heterosexuals* who try to do the converting—and they use tortures like ice baths and electric shocks to do it! When we tell people we are proud, we aren't telling them they should be gay—we are saying we're through being put down and we're going to fight back against it!

Black comrades are told to recruit Gay people in Harlem, which outrages them because in the Black ghettos, the attitude toward Gay people takes on almost a defensive aura. Many Black people believe that Black youth become Gay because of too many years spent in reform schools and prisons, deprived of social contact with the opposite sex. They see homosexuality as just another horror perpetrated on Black people by an oppressive society.

If anyone was really told to go out and recruit gays in isolation from our general work and our aim to recruit *anyone* who understands and agrees with our program, I think that was wrong. Now, I doubt such a thing happened. This is—the most generous description would be "hyperbole"—on Comrade Garza's part. But if Comrade Garza is trying to make a case that we should soft-pedal part of our program among sections some comrades believe to be more hostile to that aspect of our ideas, this is equally wrong. That would be like,

for example, the Long Island YSA neglecting to sell an issue of *The Militant* that carried a front-page headline calling for defense of the Palestinian self-determination struggle because of Zionist sentiment on the campuses there.

In concluding her document, Comrade Garza says:

It may be true that there are many Gay workers, but we will not win workers in general to the revolutionary movement by exaggerating the revolutionary significance of Gay Liberation.

No. Not it "may be true." It is true that, not "many"—not just "many," but literally *millions*, masses of workers *are* gay! Now, of course the way to win workers—or anybody else for that matter—is not to exaggerate the revolutionary significance of gay liberation. Nor is it to exaggerate the importance of the Black, Puerto Rican or Chicano struggle, or the labor movement, or women's liberation, or the antiwar movement. The question that arises is "what does Comrade Garza mean by 'exaggerate the revolutionary significance of gay liberation'?" Apparently she means the limited participation we have exercised up until now in connection with our probe of the movement. If this is her view, then she and the comrades who share that view had better rethink the arguments they're going to use. Because if the kind of thinly veiled prejudice in this document is all they have to come up with, then all I have to say to them is, "Comrades, if you think this is too much, you haven't seen anything yet in terms of the activity of the Socialist Workers Party in the gay liberation movement."

June 23, 1971

A REPLY TO RICK FEINBERG ON RE-EVALUATING  
THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY

By Evelyn Reed, Lower Manhattan Branch  
New York Local

In his discussion article, "The Origin of the Family: A Re-Evaluation," (Vol. 29, No. 9, June 1971) Rick Feinberg correctly points out that "a great deal more work is necessary" before satisfactory answers are obtained to a number of still puzzling problems in anthropology. Lewis Morgan and his co-thinkers did not answer all the questions that arose in the science they founded nor did they profess to do so.

It is essential, however, to proceed on the basis of those propositions which have already been clarified as the starting point for finding answers to further questions or to re-evaluate propositions that are inadequate or unsatisfactory. The key discovery made by the pioneer scholars was the fact that patriarchal class society with its oppressive family institution did not always exist. These are no older than the system of private property upon which they are founded. They belong to the period of civilization, not of the more primitive epoch of social evolution. With this approach Engels developed his theses on *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* and drew the conclusion that these are the principal factors behind the oppression of women.

This is the foundation upon which further contributions and re-evaluations should be based, above all by those who adhere to the method of historical materialism. However, the Morgan-Engels thesis on the origin of the family is not accepted by most academic anthropologists today. Those who most bitterly oppose the views of the Marxists have declared that Morgan, Tylor and their co-thinkers are old-fashioned, out-of-date and superseded. But this is merely the opinion of a school of thought which is anti-historical as well as anti-Marxist. What they do not agree with or understand they would like to bury as dead and gone.

Under these circumstances basic questions in anthropology cannot be entirely separated from the political questions that prevail in capitalist society today since these influence the method and results of investigation. To the Marxists, capitalist society is the last stage of patriarchal class society as a whole and when it is replaced by a socialist society that will be the end of the whole epoch of class rule. This is denied by the opponents of the Marxists who contend that just as private property has always existed so have the patriarchal family, male supremacy and the subordination of the female sex. Thus behind many questions which appear to be purely anthropological, there is an irreconcilable political dividing line—the division between revolutionary socialists and their opponents.

This must be taken into account in our re-evaluations of anthropological data. We must always be explicit about our point of departure and the fundamental premises upon which we are making our re-evaluations. This is not clear in the case of Comrade Feinberg's discussion article. He says, if I understand him correctly, that even if Morgan and Engels were mistaken about the historical priority of the matriarchy and were wrong on the question of the late arrival of the family in history, this "does not suggest that there might be any solution other than

socialism to the problems of women in today's society."

To be sure, the basic political premise upon which our movement is founded is the need for a revolutionary transformation of society which, among other things, will change the oppressed and degraded status of women. It is likely that many women and men too, for that matter, will help effect this great social change while knowing little or nothing about the matriarchy and other controversial questions in anthropology.

But this does not alter our responsibility as Marxist social scientists to uncover the truth about prehistory and women's role in it and to challenge every one of the falsifiers of that history. This is all the more important because of the resurgence of the women's liberation movement and the growing number of women who are already theorizing about its problems and helping to shape its strategy and tactics. Our movement, beginning with Engels, has worked out definite positions on basic problems connected with precivilized society and we must continue to come forward with our views because of the challenges from our opponents and critics in the feminist movement.

The following questions involving anthropology have already come up in its controversies. Have women always been the "second sex" due to their biological makeup? Have they always been oppressed because of their everlasting family cares and chores? If the main factor in woman's degradation is biological, how can a social revolution change things fundamentally for the female sex? Was Engels wrong in accepting the basic premise of Morgan or was Morgan right in saying that the family is a late arrival in history, preceded by the communistic clan? Any re-evaluation of early anthropological data must proceed from the answers given to these basic issues.

The most serious flaw in comrade Feinberg's article is the methodological weakness of his theoretical approach. If we take the sum total of all the illustrations he presents, it comes down to a cataloging of the variables that are found in surviving primitive communities which presumably demonstrate that the family has always existed and remains to this day substantially the same. There is no place here for the evolutionary view that the family is the product of specific socio-economic conditions at that juncture of history when class society superseded primitive matriarchal collectivism. This is not the method of the Morgan-Tylor schools nor that of Engels and Marx.

Here are some suggestions on how I think certain points in anthropology should be re-evaluated:

1. The term "matriarchy" is probably not the happiest term by which to describe what Morgan and Engels called the "maternal gens" or clan system. Nevertheless, the term came into usage over a hundred years ago with the publication of Bachofen's book *Das Mutterrecht* and is still fixed in the anthropological record. It has even gained a new currency with the rise of the women's liberation movement. It is not entirely misleading or negative, since it immediately denotes an earlier or pre-patriarchal social system.

The most mischievous implication of the term "matriarchy" is to interpret it as a "stage in social evolution where the women exercised the dominant political control," a point that Rick raises in his article. This notion that the matriarchy was a mere reversal or mirror-image of the modern patriarchy though with female in place of male supremacy, has been openly or implicitly fostered by those who deny the existence of a prior matriarchal system but would nevertheless like to frighten men and even women into acquiescence in the status quo.

What most people want today is a society freed from all domination, whether it is class, racial or sexual domination. And that is precisely what in its day the matriarchy was. It was a communal society based upon communal social relations and therefore upon complete equality between the sexes. That is why we can learn something from the prior existence of such an organization of society. For, if equality between the sexes could exist in the communal society of the past, cannot we achieve the same thing in a socialist future?

To re-evaluate the matriarchy, therefore, does not mean that it should be disavowed simply because the term has been misused by its opponents. Rather, we must explain what kind of society it really was. In its most essential character it was a sisterhood and a brotherhood, but there are probably other ways of saying the same thing.

This explanation, moreover, shows that the matriarchy was a period of *past* history. This refutes those who say or imply that the poor, downtrodden families in capitalist society today which are sustained only by a mother, are "matriarchies." The predatory capitalists have not created a sisterhood and brotherhood as the basis of their society. On the contrary, they have systematically undermined and destroyed even those survivals of the old matriarchal social order which were in existence in the more remote areas up to recent times. There are very few relics left of ancient matriarchal communities; at most what is left are some "matrilineal" communities, and even these are rapidly yielding to the pressures and influence of worldwide patriarchy and male supremacy.

It is significant as comrade Feinberg observes, that in some of these matrilineal communities the position of women is higher than that of women in civilized nations. To a historical anthropologist this represents a survival from the matriarchal period when all women enjoyed this esteem and respect. On the other hand, it is also true that in some of these primitive regions women are oppressed and degraded just as they are in civilized nations. What this means is that patriarchy and class relations have been superimposed upon a rude economy with disastrous results for the women.

A re-evaluation of such anthropological data would begin with this broad historical view to shed light upon the variations and combinations that have occurred in different regions which cannot be explained through a mere catalog or recital of such details.

2. The term "group marriage" which was used by Morgan should be re-evaluated. As a matter of fact, it has already been set aside by some anthropologists who recognize its misleading implications. It gives the impression that every individual of one group was actually married to every individual of the other group. In fact, "group marriage" was merely a connubium agreement made between two groups or communities by which the sisters and brothers of one community could mate with any of the

brothers and sisters in the other community, and vice versa. From this standpoint, Tylor's term "cross-cousin marriage" is far superior to Morgan's term "group marriage." It could however be amended to read, "cross-cousin mating." For in the period before marriage was introduced the relations between the sexes were merely mating relations.

3. The primitive term and meaning of "kinship" requires re-evaluation. Here, perhaps, we have the thorniest problem in anthropology. It is very difficult for us today, who are so bound up in the family institution, to conceive of a time when there was not only no family but no terms to express family kinship. Morgan performed a herculean mental feat when he broke through modern family fetishism and discovered the "classificatory" system of primitive kinship.

Despite this, he did not penetrate all the way to its innermost core. Thus he distinguished between actual brothers and sisters and "collaterals." Originally, however, there was no such distinction. Some later anthropologists then began to describe the "classificatory" system as a system of "social kinship." This is more helpful since it shows that these communities were not based upon family kinship. But even this term does not reach into the heart of the problem.

In my view, the best way to re-evaluate the primitive kinship system is to call it by its most essential feature—*communal kinship*. This is an immediate signal that it has nothing to do with family kinship, besides being appropriate to a communal society. Every member of the commune or network of clan communities which comprised the tribe were akin to one another because they were members of the same tribal community. It was only in the course of time, with the rise of the family system and the breakdown of the tribal commune, that this communal kinship became narrowed down to family kinship.

Naturally, in a system of social or communal kinship the question of who was the individual biological father—or even the mother—of an individual child was, even if known or remembered, irrelevant and immaterial. For theirs was an economy where all the "kin" of the tribal commune were provided for by the whole community on an equal basis, and private property was unknown. The critical importance of the genitor and of family kinship began when there was private property to inherit for the rich children—and misery and degradation for the poor.

These are merely illustrations of the type of re-evaluations that will have to be made by the new generation of anthropologists, once they have shed the need to conform to the anti-historical schools. Many more such re-evaluations are necessary in a whole series of problems which at present are framed in highly dubious and false formulas. Among them is the notion that the genitor, i.e., the sire or biological father, has always been the *functional* father. He was not. He was preceded by the mothers' brothers who performed the functions of fatherhood before the family came into existence. Other questions deal with "bilateral" kinship, with "patrilocal" hunting bands, with "monogamous" marriage in rude cultures, and the like.

When these re-evaluations are made, they should proceed from an application of the evolutionary and materialist method of Marxism, and not a departure from it.

June 24, 1971

## HAVE WE GIVEN UP OUR PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION?

by Frank Lovell

This is an attempt to discover whether we have given up our proletarian orientation as Comrade Barbara Gregorich and associates charge, and if so, when, and under what circumstances; also to ask her and those comrades associated with her to re-consider how we should "begin to establish ourselves as a party of the working class—NOW."

It is true that Trotsky urged in 1940, and before, that the party get deeper into the union movement, that we concentrate on recruiting workers, and that we consciously and persistently undertake to change the class composition of our cadre. We followed his advice.

During the last half of the decade of the 1930's, when the CIO was built and consolidated, the action was in the union movement. We were there. But we were also in the student movement, the antiwar movement of that time, the unemployed movement, the struggle for Negro equality (the Black movement at that stage of its development), the Trotsky Defense Committee which no one but us would or could organize. In addition we conducted a struggle against ultraleft sectarianism and split with the Oehlerites, then fused with the centrist American Workers Party led by A. J. Muste, and very shortly thereafter entered the Socialist Party of Norman Thomas. When we were expelled from the SP in 1938 the entire youth section, the Young Peoples Socialist League, which the Thomasites said had become infected with the ideas of Trotskyism, was expelled with us.

This is all detailed in the *History of American Trotskyism* by Comrade Cannon. The only reason for mentioning it here is to urge the comrades to re-read the history and to remind ourselves that we were never preoccupied with or primarily motivated by the narrow problems of trade union work however important these were for us at various stages of our development. The overriding problem for us always and under all circumstances was how to build the party, how to recruit and train party cadres.

It may be that the 1939-40 split in the party would have been reduced somewhat if we had been able to direct more of the YPSL youth into the union movement—a main arena of political action at that time. But it was not easy to find a job in industry in 1938. Our new youth section had been exposed to the ideas of Trotskyism but did not have time to assimilate those ideas.

The fact that they were recruited as a bloc from the camp of social democracy was not conducive to their further education. Unlike our present YSA membership which is recruited directly to the program of Trotskyism, the old YPSL had had initial training to overcome.

The pressures of World War II pushed them into the Shachtman-Burnham camp.

Our proletarian orientation was not difficult to carry out during the war. The pressures then, including that of the government, were all driving the youth of the nation into the army and into the war industries. But the extent of union work was rather limited.

Our most important work was building the Civil Rights Defense Committee (CRDC), a broad committee organized by us, to carry the defense burden of the 1941 Minneapolis trials in which the leadership of our party became the first Smith Act victims and were sentenced to prison. We

also kept busy selling our press, propagandizing against the war, carefully explaining the reasons for our opposition.

On the ships we were not deeply involved in any union caucus to oust the pro-war officials of the maritime unions. There were no such caucuses. We were selling CRDC pamphlets and collecting money for the committee, and recruiting a few sailors to our party on the basis of our antiwar program.

In the auto industry we participated in the rank and file opposition to the wage freeze and the wartime no-strike pledge. We had some influence in the movement and kept it within the union structure, protecting ourselves and others from victimization. The story of these wartime union struggles is in *Labor's Giant Step*, by Art Preis. The material for this book came right out of *The Militant*, and was reported there first.

Our comrades in Detroit during the war were busy in the unions. But mostly they were busy selling *The Militant*, getting endorsements for the CRDC and collecting money to keep the committee going.

One very important thing the Detroit branch did during this period was to organize the defense of a Black doctor who was being drafted into the army as a buck private. He was willing to go in as an Army doctor and officer but refused the rank of private. We came to his defense when no one else would and forced the Army to back down. This was not so easy as it sounds. The local ACLU attorney, prominent as a civil libertarian and labor lawyer, refused to take the case. Only after we were able to get some publicity for it and bring it to the attention of the national ACLU, was the case against the Army finally pressed. Word of what we had done and how we did it got around in the Black community. The doctor himself, Comrade Jackson, joined our party and for a time was an effective writer and public speaker for us against the Army and the Jim Crow system. This had more to do with the large number of Black recruits who came to us in 1944-46 than the careful and persistent work of our fraction in the UAW, which also paid dividends.

During the war years the unions were transformed in a way that we did not fully realize at the time. They became institutionalized, were drawn into the wartime apparatus of government, and accorded an official status different from the old craft unions of World War I.

The changes affected both the bureaucracy and the unions. In both wars the union bureaucrats were greatly strengthened, their grip upon the unions tightened. The unions as a result grew weaker in relation to the employers. This was true of the CIO unions at the end of World War II. They had nearly doubled their membership from about 5-million at the time of Pearl Harbor to almost 10-million on V-J day. But this numerical gain was deceptive. The old CIO union of the days of the sit-down strikes had been transformed into "the new CIO." This new CIO had plenty of power as was soon to be proven, but it had lost a good deal of the old independence of action and rank and file control. The relationship between members and officials had changed considerably. The officials gave the commands now and the members carried out the orders. The new recruits to the union movement

who came in under the wartime check-off of dues system were trained from the beginning to regard "the union" as something separate and apart from them. It began to be identified in the minds of many workers with the bureaucrats.

In the post-World War I period the employers moved quickly and decisively to smash many unions and impose the open shop. They sought to repeat the same thing after World War II but the 1945-46 strike wave forced them to alter their plans.

It was a measure of the strength and control of the union bureaucracy over the union movement that CIO president Philip Murray in 1946 could bring the strikers back to work after signing with the Steel Trust for an 18 1/2 cent wage raise. This set the pattern. The unions had been demanding 30 cents. But wages were not the only issue for the unions. They were then deeply involved in the fight for shorter hours and against the threat of post-war unemployment, for low-cost housing, for independent political action.

There was a generally sympathetic response from the rank and file to many of our transitional demands, including the demand for "a labor party now." Our broad strategy in the unions then as now was to build a left wing around these class struggle issues.

During this period we made our greatest recruitment gains. We did not confine our activities to the unions. We expanded our press, publicized and sought to promote in every way possible the post-war demands of Black people for equal treatment and equal employment opportunities, and undertook the geographical expansion of the party.

In 1946 we hoped to grow quickly from a propaganda group to a party of mass action and our convention that year set this as our conscious goal for the period ahead.

The cold war and the reaction attending it shattered our hopes. But our first national presidential campaign in 1948 proclaimed out *intention* to become a mass party, to organize the masses in opposition to the reactionary war plans of big business and replace capitalism with a new social system. The campaign was against capitalist war, Jim Crow, the government's anti-union drive, exploitation and repression everywhere. We called for the organization of a labor party, for the convocation of a congress of labor, for union control of industry.

"This campaign was suited to the times and corresponded with the big issues then under discussion and debate. *The Militant* of August 30, 1948, ran an editorial on Reuther's call for a fake "third party." The Progressive Party of Henry Wallace was being organized with the support of the Stalinists for the national election campaign that fall.

After the 1948 re-election of Truman with the last-minute support of the union movement, the cold war was stepped up as was the government drive against the unions. This had begun earlier with enactment of the Taft-Hartley law in 1947, the year Cochran called "the year of lost strikes."

The cold war got hot when U. S. forces invaded Korea in 1950, and so did the situation inside the unions. The Murray leadership of the CIO had expelled the Stalinist-influenced unions in 1949. Opposition caucuses were broken up, militants fired from industry and expelled from the unions. Our maritime fraction was destroyed by the U. S. Coast Guard which cancelled the seamen's papers

of all militants and "trouble makers." Our auto fraction was decimated by the reaction which was fanned both by management and the Reuther bureaucracy, separately and in collaboration. The political climate in 1950 was so changed from the 1946 period that many recruits from the years of post-war labor resurgence had quietly left the party.

The first of them dropped away in 1947-48 when the union strike wave receded. Those who were leaving in 1950 had stronger convictions but the prospects of revolution did not appear bright to them.

This was at the bottom of our fight inside the party with the Cochranites in 1952-3. They had what was left of the auto fraction and by 1952 they had come to the conclusion that they were not likely to be in control of the auto union in the very near future. Some, citing experiences in the auto plants, said the workers had become reactionary, more reactionary than the Reuther bureaucracy.

We did not believe that. But we took a closer look at some changes within the working class. Comrade Cannon reminded us during the course of the fight with the Cochranites that the working class is not a solid homogenous mass, that it is stratified with many divisions and different layers and levels of development, and subject to all the social pressures that produce changes of moods and consciousness. This is very different from Comrade Gregorich's description of the "heterogeneous nature of the working class."

The following is a quotation from a speech by Cannon to the Majority Caucus of the New York Local on May 11, 1953:

"Since the consolidation of the CIO unions and the 13-year period of war and post-war boom, a new stratification has taken place within the American working class, and particularly and conspicuously in the CIO unions. Our party, which is rooted in the unions, reflects that stratification too. The worker who has soaked up the general atmosphere of the long prosperity and begun to live and think like a petty-bourgeois is a familiar figure in the country at large. He has even made his appearance in the Socialist Workers Party as a ready-made recruit for an opportunist faction." (Education for Socialists, "Defending the Revolutionary Party and Its Perspectives," p. 5)

This ought not to be overlooked by those who seek quotations to define and describe our proletarian orientation and its consequences. I cite it here as evidence that being rooted in the unions, as any party that hopes to lead the proletarian revolution in this country must be, is no sure fire guarantee of revolutionary success. Much more than that is required. The main thing is a correct political program and understanding of concrete social changes as they occur.

In 1954 the reaction in this country was deeper than it had been two years earlier. Our party was smaller, had fewer members in the unions, was more isolated. We undertook at our 1954 convention to assess our situation and figure out what we could do about it.

Comrade Cannon spoke at that convention specifically on this question of proletarian orientation, work in the unions, and the tasks of the party at that juncture.

We had to recognize the fact that we were a propaganda party, not a party of mass action and not likely to become such a party in the immediate future. The problem was how to strive to become a party of mass

action, how to keep from degenerating into a sectarian propaganda circle. Such a circle with a completely correct program, with an unalterable proletarian orientation, and with nearly all its members deeply sunk in the unions could have vegetated for a long time, satisfied that it was fulfilling its revolutionary responsibilities.

We took another course.

"The party press will be our chief instrument to recruit new cadres of revolutionary trade unionists from a new generation. Don't forget that. And don't ever think for a minute that the main cadres of the coming revolutionary trade union movement are going to come out of the bureaucracy or any important section of it. Some individual bureaucrats will follow the tide, but they will not lead it. Neither will the dynamic forces in the new upsurge come out of the routinized local officials and rank-and-file trade unionists who have gained privileged positions. The new cadres will come out of the new generation who have no privileges and nothing to lose, the same way the original cadres of the CIO came." (*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, DB A-27, February, 1955, p. 9)

That is a quotation from the speech by Cannon at the 1954 convention of the party.

The following is another quotation from the same speech: "In the early days of the CIO it was these cadres— not entirely but to a very large extent— these cadres recruited out of the student movement, who had no economic prospects in life, who became radicalized and politicalized and then went into the mass movement and became functionaries in the upsurging CIO." (*Ibid.*, p. 10)

These are good quotations to remember in this discussion about proletarian orientation. They are cited here as evidence that our party did not drift blindly into its present position. This was the course we took in 1954. We sought to distribute our press widely. We developed openings and started discussion on campuses at that time. We discovered that the "silent generation" had ears, and some spoke extremely well about the need for socialism and a better world.

Our branches throughout the country established regular weekly Socialist Forums where we encouraged everyone who had anything to say to come and be heard.

We entered election campaigns wherever possible in order to tell all who would listen that socialism is a viable force in the world.

We sought debates and symposiums with anyone and everyone who had a different opinion from ours on any current question of the day.

We did not then and we do not now neglect the union movement. Beginning in 1954 and extending right down to the present moment we have invited official representatives, rank-and-file critics, and aspiring leaders of the unions to our forums to air their opinions on every political issue.

Our comrades in the unions were busy throughout this period selling subscriptions to *The Militant*, bringing contacts to our public meetings, distributing our campaign literature, debating every major national and international development, including changes within the union movement, in the hope that we could make a few friends and win some recruits to our party from the shops.

We failed to make many recruits. But we made some friends as well as enemies. We won the respect of both. And we stayed alive and alert, more so than anyone else.

We were completely aware of everything that was hap-

pening in the world as well as what was happening within the narrow confines of the union movement in the United States. We described this period at our 1952 convention as one of "relative quiescence" of the working class and especially the organized sector of the class. (I recall a minor debate at the convention over whether we should describe the conjuncture at that time as "quiescent" or "relatively quiescent.") We did not then think the lull in the unions would extend over a very long period, certainly not as long as has been the case.

But we were quite willing to turn our attention to other areas of work where there was more than enough to keep us busy.

The Montgomery bus boycott began on December 5, 1955. We publicized that, organized support for it, and made a big case of it in every way we could. We later organized defense cases, notably the Robert Williams defense, as the civil rights movement developed in the South. We were attuned to the rise of Black nationalism from the beginning, sought out and established fraternal relations with Malcolm X, Rev. Cleage in Detroit, and other leaders of the Black movement.

We identified with the Cuban Revolution immediately and became the foremost defenders of it, put together as large a Cuba defense organization as possible, and helped organize demonstrations all over the country at the time of the missile crisis.

With the development of the antiwar movement we were the first to demand that the U. S. get out of Vietnam. In the late 1950's and early 1960's the social democrats who organized SANE thought they had a monopoly on the antiwar movement and tried to keep us and our ideas away from the protest demonstrations they organized. We joined the demonstrations anyway, over the objections of the Stalinists, and finally our idea of a non-exclusive united front-type antiwar movement concentrating on mass actions that can affect and draw in broadest layers, to get out now, prevailed.

This is not to say that we neglected our trade union work. We brought our friends from the unions to every picket line, publicizing the fact that even some members of the union bureaucracy such as Emil Mazey were speakers at antiwar rallies. When the bureaucrats denounced the Cuban Revolution we exposed their reasons for doing so.

Our 1957-59 regroupment campaign following the Hungarian revolution and the Khrushchev revelations was ostensibly directed at the remnants of the radical movement in this country, primarily the Stalinists and fellow-travelers, but it had a broader target. We wanted to establish before the eyes of the whole labor and radical movement— then and for the future— that we do not have any sectarian notions about how the revolutionary movement must develop. We were anxious to get rid of the pariah status that the Stalinists had imposed upon us in their hey-day of the late 1930s and— except for the Stalin-Hitler interval— the war years. We have ideas about what must be done and how to do it, and we are anxious to discuss with everyone and seek collaboration always. This is what we were trying to get across in the regroupment campaign. And we managed to get the ear of some students. Others heard us. We established our right to be heard. And in this way we prepared the ground for the debates that have developed in the antiwar movement.

It all comes under the general heading of party building,

the all-sided activity of the party in good times and bad. Our objective throughout has been to become a *political* factor in this society, related to the objective developments as they occur as much as possible, a force to be reckoned with in *every* arena of activity related to the class struggle.

We have paid close attention to all developments within the union movement because that is an important arena for us. When the deepening radicalization in this country produced some new trends in the unions in 1966 Comrade Dobbs wrote a series of nine articles in *The Militant*, collected under the title *Recent Trends in the Labor Movement*. This is for sale in our book stores everywhere and should be re-read now because events of the past five years have brought a deepening of these trends.

At this time (1967 and early '68) the comrades in the center—the same who are now in the center—began organizing more careful attention to trade union work and took the necessary steps to be able to do this. Because this was done, we now follow developments in the union movement more closely and know better what opportunities are open to us.

At the May 1968 Plenum of the National Committee we adopted a memorandum on trade union policy which serves as a general guide for our work in the unions. This is available. I will quote one section that summarizes our appraisal of the situation in the unions and how our comrades should conduct themselves there.

"Although objective conditions are improving, our prospects in the trade unions at present remain modest. The key task is still one of propaganda and education aimed toward formation of left wing forces around a class struggle program. Since the workers are not yet ready for a general showdown with the bureaucrats, it is necessary to steer clear of premature power struggles in the unions. Critical support to an oppositional ticket may be in order here and there as a step toward loosening up bureaucratic control over the ranks. Concerning our comrades participating in power caucuses and running for union posts, the question must always be put: Will it help or will it cut across building left wing forces around a class struggle program? On this point delicate matters of timing may sometimes arise. In such cases appropriate tactics should be worked out in consultation with the party. In addition, wherever comrades are involved in trade union situations, the party should be kept informed of significant developments as an aid to the assessment of general trade union trends." (*Internal Information Bulletin*, June, 1968, "Memorandum on Trade Union Policy," p. 5)

This was supplemented by a Political Committee memorandum on April 18, 1969, in support of Black caucuses in the trade unions. (*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 27, No.11, August, 1969) The occasion was the formation of such a caucus in the UAW. Both documents are in print and available to party members.

At the 1970 Socialist Activists and Educational Conference in Oberlin we heard reports from comrades who were engaged in trade union work. They came from all sections of the country, were members of all different types of unions, reported a wide variety of experiences. In all instances their work was under the close direction of the party and they carried out party policy with a considerable amount of success. Through their work we got endorsements for the antiwar demonstrations, raised money for the antiwar movement, and won the adoption of the first resolution against the war by any union in

national convention. All of these trade union reports were published in *Activists Panels*, reports from the conference. (1970 *Socialist Activists and Educational Conference Reports*, Vol. 1, No. 1, "Trade Union Workshop")

In our 1971 National Committee draft resolution, "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization," one of the longest sections is specifically about the union movement and how the radicalization of Black workers, the youth, and women workers affects it. (*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 10-12)

*The Militant* has consistently covered the major strike struggles of the union movement. It tries to provide useful information to comrades active in specific situations in addition to reports on the developing trends in unions.

If you look back over the past 15 years—since the deepening radicalization began to find forms of organized expression first in the Black struggle, then the student movement and the antiwar movement, and later the general youth radicalization (different from the earlier college student movement) and more recently the women's liberation and the Chicano liberation movements—then it is clear that there has been more activity here that challenges many of the basic tenets and decries the false values of capitalism than has been the case with the union movement. The unions have conducted some big strikes, crucial ones such as the 1969-70 General Electric strike, which were genuine class battles. But in no instance have these strikes challenged the prerogatives of the employing class or the government.

There is a good reason for this difference between the union movement and the mass protest movements today. The union movement is organized. It is no longer a broad amorphous movement seeking organizational expression. That was once true of it also. In the early 1930's the mass of unorganized workers, employed and unemployed, were looking for organization. John L. Lewis only discovered this fact after the Minneapolis and San Francisco general strikes.

That was 35 years ago, before the majority of present day union men and women were born. These unions that they belong to are now powerful organizations with vast sums of money, close ties to the Republican and Democratic parties, an acknowledged and legally codified working relationship with the employers, and an entrenched bureaucracy. They are cumbersome, and respond very slowly to change.

Until very recently most unaffiliated radicals thought these unions would never change. They appeared to be bulwarks of the established order, and in a certain sense they were. But they were also working class organizations, however poorly they represented the interests of the class. And the organized workers were better off than the unorganized majority. So nearly every worker, regardless of any complaints and grievances against the union bureaucrats, knew that there were advantages to unionism.

Now we are seeing some changes in these unions, obvious to all. There are more and bigger changes in the making. But this does not mean that these organizations will be converted overnight into instruments of revolutionary struggle. That requires a complete transformation, and getting rid of the last vestiges of the union bureaucracy will probably be one of the minor post-revolutionary tasks.

Whatever the longterm developments may be, this present gang in high union positions have some terrible shocks



in store for them if they live much longer. Some have already begun to feel that something is happening down below, the most recent example being in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union. There are others and there will be more.

Young workers are part of the youth radicalization, a distressing fact of life for the managers of industry today. We can expect that most of these young workers at this stage of their development, are as much interested in the antiwar movement, the Black struggle, women's liberation, or the Chicano and Puerto Rican movements as in winning control in their union. This is why we are anxious to get sales of *The Militant* at selected plant gates wherever possible. We think this is one of the best ways to recruit workers at this time. We do not think it is the only way.

Where we have comrades in unions and favorable situations develop we take an active interest in the issues that face the union and attempt to organize a broad movement within the union around those issues. We have done that in several instances. Party branches direct this work and help in every way possible to promote it, including the assignment of comrades to find work and join the union.

There is another way we can expect to recruit young workers, because not all of them are in industry or unions. A very high percentage are unemployed. Some have had jobs and go to the employment offices for their benefits or to find work. We think this is a good place to sell *Militants* because some of these unemployed workers have other things on their minds besides trying to find a job. Of course, we do not neglect this problem either. *The Militant* has published a good deal about it recently and some branches are beginning to organize sales and distributions at the employment offices.

We have not at this point recruited very many young workers, but more than is generally known. We have comrades in several basic industries, all good party builders. We expect their numbers will grow.

Our concept of the red university is that the facilities of the educational system should serve the needs of the working class, of the forces in society fighting against the evils of capitalism, and should be at the service of the instrument which will change society. We are opposed to the training of an elite to serve the ruling class which is what the bourgeoisie thinks the educational system ought to be. And we are opposed to the narrow notion that the present system should be converted into a cloister for the training of future red professors. Our idea is to link the students with the workers, to bring the students, as struggles erupt and the situation opens up, into an independent working relationship with a changing union movement for the benefit of both. We think this will help us to recruit and educate young workers.

All of our fights in the antiwar movement have been aimed at building a movement which will be attractive to the workers, the kind of movement they will want to join. This is now beginning to be realized. It should help us to recruit workers to our party.

In the women's liberation movement, we aim to make it attractive to working women as their feminist consciousness develops. We think many young women in industry today are interested in the action campaign against the abortion laws. Some of these working women will join our party, we hope. Our chances of talking with these women are greater than if we were offering them advice

to join a militant rank-and-file union caucus.

All this is evidence that we have not given up our proletarian orientation nor neglected to pay attention to the trade unions. Our proletarian orientation is our program, the transitional program adopted in 1938 and our key programmatic documents since. It is based upon the historical experience of bolshevism and is designed to bring the working class to power in this transitional epoch.

Our strategical implementation of this program is to prepare ourselves as a viable propaganda party at this stage and to participate in the development of mass actions around transitional slogans. In the process we strive always to become a factor in the political life of this country. We have succeeded in some areas, as in Atlanta through the skillful election campaigns of Linda Jenness and now in Houston in the campaign against right-wing terrorism combined with our election campaign there, and we are very near similar breakthroughs in other localities.

The tactics we employ are dictated to us by the given political conditions at every juncture and turn of events. This is something over which we have no control, something which is determined by the social forces which we expect eventually to master.

We have a difference with Comrade Gregorich and her associates over what tactics are best for us at this time. She seems to be saying that we ought to direct all our attention toward the union movement, urging all our comrades to get into *strategic* industry as we never did at any time in our history. (She may think we did something like this in the years 1940 through 1946. She is mistaken.)

We think her advice on what our tactics should be at this juncture is wrong. We think the present radicalization will deepen, effecting broader sections of the working class. We think the struggle within the union movement will be influenced and its outcome determined by massive social protest movements outside the union movement. This means that our idea of a class struggle program in the unions is one that identifies with these protest movements and with the nationalist sentiments of Blacks and other minorities. The forces for coming struggles in the union movement are being recruited right now by us in the most effective way. Furthermore, those recruits are being trained in the actions of the party today to lead big struggles within the unions as the radicalization extends into the organized labor movement.

At this point we have not recruited nearly as many workers as we have students. But that should not be surprising because some college students were among the first to radicalize, at least ten years ago.

Our party has been transformed during these past ten years. We have a much bigger paper, the magazine is larger, both with larger circulation, we collaborate in the production of a weekly international press service, and we have more members and more branches throughout the country. We do more than we ever did before. In addition there is now a Young Socialist Alliance that is bigger than the party. We have expanded our publications department and are printing more of the basic works by Trotsky and other Marxists (but especially Trotsky) than ever was possible before. So that is all a big gain for our proletarian orientation. We can expect to gain more if we don't make a mistake and change our tactics at this time.

We have a way of checking whether we are doing the

right thing in this respect. The Stalinists are busy in the unions. They have more members than we have. They have many times more money. They do not have our program. Their strategy is designed to influence the Democratic Party and to establish an alliance with the more "progressive" wing of the union bureaucracy. This should make life easier for them in the unions today.

The organization of a national rank and file caucus and an unemployed movement in conjunction with it appears to be their tactic at this time. They act as if they think the whole history of the 1930's will repeat itself in the 1970's.

They are not doing well on their present course. They may be making a few recruits, but not many. If

a genuine rank-and-file movement develops in the unions around any big national issue, we will be there. And our comrades will be far more effective than the "unionists" trained by Stalinism. If unemployment gets worse and a mass protest movement of the unemployed begins to form, we will be there too. And our comrades will be far more effective in that movement than the "workers" trained by Stalinism.

It will be useful for us to pay close attention to what happens with the Stalinists and their "proletarian orientation," to check the growth-rate of the Young Workers Liberation League against that of the YSA, to compare the social and class composition of the two organizations. We should be able to see not too long from now which organization has most successfully built itself as a party of the working class.

June 16, 1971

AN HISTORICAL AND DIALECTICAL CRITICISM  
OF COMRADE HANSEN'S DOCUMENT  
by Tom Cagle, Oakland-Berkeley Branch

The continuing process of fracturing of the world-wide Trotskyist movement which infinitely sub-divides itself into splinter parties and splinter-ettes, now poses the real danger of the SWP-supported "minority position" simmering dispute within the United Secretariat, over guerrilla warfare, holds forth the prospect of erupting into another open split of the Fourth International. There has been a deepening of the political divisions within the United Secretariat since the 1969 World Congress which has now broken out into the open as the various factions are forced into collision in the course of carrying out their line under pressure of a deepening world-wide capitalist crisis and the sharpening class struggles that tend to exacerbate these internal splits. Comrade Hansen's document, "In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building" provides 60 pages of ample proof of the extent and depth of irreconcilable differences coming to the surface in our international movement. Comrade Hansen, in a shallow manner, has correctly assessed these differences using Trotsky, Lenin and Engels' analysis on guerrilla warfare as irrefutable evidence of the incorrectness of the majority position elevating this tactic to the level of a strategy and counterposing this in the place of building Leninist parties in Latin America using the Transitional Program, "utilizing democratic slogans and economic demands related to life in the plants, mills, mines, and other sectors of industry," etc; and then correctly adds that, "The strategy of armed struggle which is a strategy of direct confrontation with the state power with little regard to the necessary correlatives—as viewed from the standpoint of Leninism—stands squarely in the way of such work." Comrade Hansen correctly assesses the majority line as producing "damaging consequences," "within the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement, where it encourages ultraleftism," or "shortcuts to revolution." But the glaring inconsistencies and omissions that negate this document is precisely the role played by Comrade Hansen as the leading spokesman while the entire SWP leadership pioneered in the uncritical promotion of Castro, Guevara and guerrillism to the United Secretariat which was the "concrete basis" for reunification providing an empirical concrete example that you could come to power by using almost any petty bourgeois centrist formation or blunted instrument to bring the working class to power . . . *The Cuban guerrilla warfare line originated with the SWP as a sympathizing organization to the Fourth International and was "sold" to the European section of the United Secretariat; comrades Germain, Knoeller, and Maitan, etc; by Comrade Hansen and company. The strange twist of irony occurs as the SWP embraces the Cuban concrete example of guerrillism and turns to sell it to the leading members of the United Secretariat. Comrade Ernest Mandel was deeply involved in the reformist Social Democratic Party of Belgium and was busy adapting to petty bourgeois radical layers among European university students while at the same time he was developing his theories of permanent capitalism, structural reforms, the new working-class and the reform movements of the middle class . . . What evolved here was in essence that the European comrades pick up and develop the SWP line of guerrilla warfareism while the SWP picks up and develops Mandel's*

theories of "neo-capitalism," middle class radicalism and the new concept of the "new working class" which only plays a subordinate role of adding its "social weight" to these middle class reform movements.

The SWP denies the deepening world-wide capitalist crisis and the movement of the working class and seeks to orient towards liberal, democratic middle class protest movements. . . . Where comrades Maitan and Mandel adapt to ultraleftism and incorrectly raise the tactic of guerrillism to the level of a strategy the leadership of the SWP is equally incorrect in its sharp turn to the right and adaptation to the reform movements of the middle classes—Both of these strategies are petty bourgeois revisionist to the core and seek to deny the movement of the working class and its relationship to the deepening world wide capitalist crisis.

As Trotsky points out in *Third International After Lenin*, internationalism is rooted in an understanding of the international character of class relations created by capitalism. If both opponents in the United Secretariat cannot grasp this essential point and begin from this fundamental Marxist perspective then it is incapable of building and developing an international Trotskyist movement. . . . It is incapable of preventing the continuous breaking apart of the world-wide Trotskyist movement as these differences emerge to the surface and divide into their constituent parts.

What is seriously omitted from Comrade Hansen's document is an historical and dialectical probing to the very roots of this revisionist methodology that plagues our movement today. . . . These very revisionist questions Comrade Hansen and the SWP leadership refuse to discuss between all parties involved in the reunification in 1963 developing out of the original split in 1953 *must be placed on the agenda immediately for discussion.* With this object in mind I would like to review this period and raise these questions for discussion.

*PABLOISM AND ITS LEGACY*

It would be very wrong to lay the blame for the development of liquidationist revisionism solely on the shoulders of Pablo. He was one of the principal mediums through which it penetrated the Fourth International, but only one. Pablo was an impressionist and idealist.

His theory about the inevitability of a Third World War fought out under conditions where the Stalinist parties would be transformed into revolutionary parties was impressionistic to the core. It left out of account the reactionary bureaucratic nature of the leadership of these parties and the role of the international class struggle against imperialism.

It superficially saw things from the standpoint of great power politics and the goings on in the apparatus of the corrupt leadership.

Once a Marxist departs from a continuous study of the workers movement from the standpoint of the struggle to build the revolutionary party, he departs from the science of Marxism and becomes an impressionist. From impressionism to idealism is an easy jump either way. After a wrong estimation of international perspectives Pablo rapid-

ly developed his theory of the self-reform of the Soviet bureaucracy, especially following Stalin's death in 1953. This was only logical especially since he had already come to the conclusion that the Stalinist leadership outside the Soviet Union could transform themselves into revolutionary parties. Here he substituted an idealistic conception of the self-reform of the bureaucracy. From that time onwards, degeneration was rapid. . . . The Marxist method was completely cast aside and the road to one betrayal after another was opened up.

Just as Burnham in 1940 developed a theory that the Soviet Union was a new class society and thus for the whole next epoch the working class would have no revolutionary role. Pablo in 1953 was talking of centuries of deformed workers states which would be created by the Stalinists and not by the independent action of the working class led by Trotskyist parties. In both cases the conclusion is one of deep pessimism about the role of the working class and the abandonment of the strategy of constructing revolutionary parties.

In both cases the method is one of impressionistically reacting to surface developments and projecting these for all time in the future ignoring the underlying essential developments which were creating conditions for a totally different surface situation as well. In both cases these tendencies reflected the retreat of the petty bourgeoisie and through the petty bourgeoisie the pressure of the capitalists themselves. James P. Cannon in his "Open Letter" said this about Pablo in 1953—"These principles (those of the Transitional Program — T. C.) have been abandoned by Pablo. In place of emphasizing the danger of a new barbarism, he sees the drive towards socialism as 'irreversible,' yet he does not see socialism coming within our generation or generations to come. Instead he has advanced the concept of an 'engulfing' wave of revolution that gives birth to nothing but deformed, that is Stalin-type workers states which are to last for centuries."

"This reveals the utmost pessimism about the capacities of the working class, which is wholly in keeping with the ridicule he has lately voiced of the struggle to build independent revolutionary Socialist parties." Cannon correctly concluded about the Pabloites: "To sum up, the lines of cleavage between Pablo's revisionism and orthodox Trotskyism are so deep that no compromise is possible either politically or organizationally." Pablo was expelled by the Eighth World Congress on the grounds that he and his followers had violated discipline over two years. But his departure did not in any way signify that his political ideas were rejected. His political methods still dominate the thinking of the United Secretariat and find their fullest expression in the "neo-capitalist" theory of Ernest Mandel who was to develop the revisionist art of Pabloism to its highest level. Pablo has gone but the legacy of Pabloism lives on.

### *BREAK WITH PABLO*

The brief international struggle of 1953-54 with Pablo was carried out in dead earnest and as far as the SWP leadership was concerned at the time it was a definitive battle. Cannon stated, "The split of 1940 was by no means as definitive and final as is the split today. We are finished and done with Pablo and Pabloism for ever, not only here but on the international field. And nobody is going to take up any of our time with any negotiations about

compromise or any nonsense of that sort. We are at war with this new revisionism, which came to full flower in the reaction to the events after the death of Stalin in the Soviet Union, in East Germany, and in the French general strike." But the break in 1953 did not lead to a break with the method of Pabloism, and so the split could not be permanent. Orthodoxy is not enough, only the ability to apply the Marxist method to a changing reality can insure the permanence of a split with revisionism in all its forms.

### *SWP'S RETURN TO PROVINCIALISM*

The SWP, which was the only party in a real position to do so, did not carry on a theoretical and political struggle after its brief flurry in early 1954. It simply dumped the ideological responsibilities of the new International Committee in the laps of the British and French and proceeded once again to devote its energies to its beloved American scene. It hoped that this time the International would just leave it alone. A couple of "unity" proposal feelers were put out to the Pabloites in 1954 and 1957 not to initiate political discussions but to dispense with this important stage and discuss negotiations around strictly organizational proposals only. As noted earlier, splits which do not lead to an understanding of the methodological causes of the split, cannot be permanent. No matter how much one may wish to turn one's back on the split and get on with other business, the split keeps hitting at you until you are forced to face up to it again one way or another.

### *RETURN TO PABLO*

The period between 1957 and 1961 saw the SWP developing a revisionist outlook very close to that of the Pabloites and proved to be a period of preparation for support to the Pabloites. After the 1959 SWP convention our party was supposed to turn once again to the party's traditional major arena of work—the working class.

But our party was unable to make such a turn—the SWP of 1959 was organically incapable of making such a turn. It was a tired party, a party which had long since withdrawn from the working class. Such a party could not simply re-enter that from which it had slowly withdrawn over the past decade. The party must always keep its cadres busy with organizational tasks, propagandistic election campaigns and the first stirrings of the student radicalization were emerging.

The development of the Cuban Revolution appears as if heaven-sent. Our party proclaimed Cuba to be a workers state. Cuba was seen as a substitute, a short-cut for the long, hard struggle to build a party in the U. S.—a struggle which the tired old SWP cadres could make only a half-hearted effort to carry out.

*The Militant* took on all the coloration of the Castroites and devoted much of its space to publishing Castro's speeches.

This new adaptation to Castro helped prepare the SWP for a return internationally to Pablo's ideological camp as the SWP leadership took note of the concurrence of agreement on important political questions such as the Cuban Revolution.

The 1961 SWP convention consummated proposals for political support to the Pabloites on the basis that the Pab-

loite position has always been that since the objective weight of world events is on the side of revolution: the subjective factor, the building of the party, tends to matter less. Almost any centrist formation can be thrust forward by the objectively revolutionary conditions and bring the working class to power. This was the conclusion the SWP had drawn from the Cuban experience. This represented a total break with the method of Marxism. All groups make mistakes—those groups which are incapable of learning from mistakes or acknowledging that they took place are making the biggest mistake of all, an irreparable mistake. This move of the SWP back into the camp of Pabloism did not protect our party from disintegration or resolve the party's problems. Murry Weiss's petty bourgeois formation had deepened their liquidationist tendencies and one by one left the party. The openly Maoist Swabeck tendency had evolved to the point where they repudiated Trotsky on China and sided with Mao from 1927 on and took 15% of the party out with them. Relations between the SWP and the SLL became tense. There had been a quantitative as well as qualitative growth in the British Trotskyist movement since the 1953 period of the original split with Pablo. The SLL almost from the beginning took the political initiative to raise the level of the international discussion around the question of Marxist methodology in relation to Pabloism to the level that Trotsky himself sought to bring it in his intervention into the 1940 Shachtman Burnham-Abern factional struggle in the SWP. Politically the 1961 SWP discussion revealed that the party's leadership had gone over completely to Pabloism, the very same views it had struggled against in 1953. The Pabloites themselves clearly admitted that the reunification moves favored by the SWP were based on the SWP's reversal of political position and not on any real change in the political outlook of the Pabloites.

This revisionist program began creeping back into every aspect of our party's work—this time to stay. The Cannon of the early 1960's despite all the rhetoric about the American Revolution began to see the American working class, with pessimism, like the Cannon of 1941, but now multiplied many times over. This Cannon began to look elsewhere for a revolutionary force. . . . Cuba, besides being heaven-sent for the adaptationists of the SWP provided an empirical Pabloite concrete example that you could come to power by using almost any petty-bourgeois centrist formation or blunted instrument to bring the working class to power.

Never mind that the Castro formation was not a working class formation or that it lacked a theoretical understanding of Marxism. . . . So what if there was no democratic centralism, no working class say in how things should be run or that Trotskyists were suppressed. . . . Castro had power and he got it empirically that was enough for Comrade Hansen and the leadership of the SWP who began to raise the battle cry of guerrilla warfare to the United Secretariat section of the Fourth International. . . . An empirical method had been established as a concrete fact that the stage of building revolutionary parties based on the mobilization of the working class could be bypassed by using any nationalist, petty bourgeois centrist formation, supported by guerrilla warfare, to come to power. . . . This tragic struggle in Latin America to build Leninist revolutionary parties over the past decade was constantly being misdirected and sabotaged

by the applied methodology of Pablo petty bourgeois revisionism which adapted to Castro's guerrillaism.

Centrifugal currents of liquidationism were to virtually destroy whole sections of the Fourth International as this applied Pabloite technique helped to abort one revolutionary attempt after another as whole sections of these Trotskyists liquidated themselves into Castro's OLAS and guerrilla warfare attempting to come to power using blunted instruments as opposed to sharp instruments of building revolutionary Leninist parties utilizing Trotsky's *Transitional Program* and the struggle for Marxist theoretical understanding. . . . Comrade Hansen cannot disassociate himself so easy from this incorrect methodology that he once advocated just because he now sees the tragic results of petty bourgeois ultraleft adventurism as being counterrevolutionary. . . . This incorrect strategy in Latin America which now threatens to split the United Secretariat has its methodological roots in Pablo revisionism which either opponent refuses to break from and struggle to root out of our movement renders both sides in this dispute merely as different sides of the same coin, (ultraleftism and opportunism) which are under present conditions quite hostile, quite irreconcilable without in any sense one tendency being fundamentally different from the other. No real assessment of Latin America can be put forth without placing it in its proper international context and showing its relationship to the developing worldwide capitalist crisis.

#### CAPITALIST ECONOMIC CRISIS

We must begin as our point of departure by accepting Trotsky's original assessment of this epoch as *still* being one of imperialist decay which then enables us to apply the correct framework of reference indicating that the crisis of the American and world economy is rapidly reaching the breaking point. The bankruptcies and near bankruptcies of major companies such as Penn Central, Chrysler, dozens of Wall Street firms, Lockheed as well as Rolls Royce threatens the capitalist system with worldwide collapse as they struggle to prevent an international chain-reaction of bankruptcies and bank failures. . . . This pending bankruptcy of capitalism represents at the same time a declaration of war on the international working class.

The bourgeois governments by directly intervening to prevent a new 1929 collapse is forced more and more to take onto its shoulders all the enormous burdens and responsibilities of a decaying economic system.

250 million dollars as part of the government's requirement to temporarily keep Lockheed afloat only begins to scratch the surface of the massive monetary injections needed to hold up this troubled system. It raises the question of how effective are these measures of state intervention as capitalist governments itself deepens its involvement with this crisis by driving up its balance of payments until the US balance of payment deficit is virtually raging out of control. In spite of these dangers however the most farsighted of the US ruling class clearly see the main danger of the steady falling rate of profit along with the continued inflationary trend can only hasten the return of the gold crisis raising once again the specter of US currency devaluation. As 1970 chalks up an all time record high of 10 billion dollars balance of payments deficit with an accompanying loss in gold reserves—1971 promises to be even higher. On top of this Nixon has been frustrated in his strategy, over the past two years,

of seeking to break the wage offensive of the American working class through a high rate of unemployment and is now to go the route of wage controls by imposing the first of such controls in the construction industry, clearly this will only tend to exacerbate the general strike movement, hastening our own May-June events in this country. The sharpening class struggle over the declining surplus value especially the working class wage offensive to maintain its standard of living, undermines all effort to stabilize this crisis exposing marginal corporations caught in the squeeze of inflation, drive for higher wages and falling rate of profit with the alternative of being driven to the wall or turning on the working class with vengeance.

### WORLD WIDE CLASS STRUGGLES DEEPEN

In direct relationship to the capitalist crisis, as workers go on wage offensive internationally. Over the past year European workers have been in the forefront of a continuous, on-going strike offensive against employers which is shaking the foundations of the capitalist system. Irrespective of the class betrayals and treachery of their union bureaucrats and Stalinist leaders and the repression of the ruling class this strike wave shows no signs of abating. While the trade union leaders fight to restrict these struggles to purely economic demands these massive strikes are the first stage of the European revolution. During May and June of 1968 the French working class carried through a massive general strike of ten million strong, occupying factories and placing by their actions the question of socialist revolution on the agenda of the day. As temporary gains are eroded away by inflation and direct assaults on their working conditions a fresh new wave of strikes has been spreading throughout France that can only grow and continue to develop not only in scope but in character also. What continually feeds it is the economic crisis of the capitalist system. Not to be outdone *Italy* has moved onto the center of the stage where a whole series of explosive strikes have been continuous since last fall when a general strike on November 19th, forced the government to resign. While these struggles begin first as a defensive economic struggle their character must and is changing in a political direction because the employers and governments have flatly refused to give any meaningful concessions. The workers enter this period of crisis with confidence and strength and with powerful trade unions. This is a new generation of fighters who have not been defeated and are determined to fight until the end. The question must be raised here; what is the Italian section generally and Comrade Maitan specifically doing to build a revolutionary party in their own country? Why are they preoccupied with guerrilla warfare in Latin America, in light of their own situation? Isn't the Italian working class much closer to a revolutionary situation (seizure of power, etc.) than Latin America? The capitalist class is in an impasse. Every new attack on the living standards of the working class only leads to more explosions and struggles. Every attempt to stabilize the economy ends in more disequilibrium. At the Opel plant in Russelheim, West Germany, 40,000 auto workers struck and marched through the town shouting "15 percent and not a pfenning less!" At the Demag plant in Duisberg, 15,000 went out, at the Westfallenhuette steelworks and the Krupp factory in Essen a total of 12,000, at Opel in Bochum, 9,000, at Daimler-Benz in Mannheim 8,000, and at Ford

in Cologne, 12,000, as these workers join the strike waves that are sweeping through the continent. England and the U. S., Amsterdam, Brussels, Antwerp respond with massive working class upsurge as workers and farmers refuse to sacrifice their standard of living in order to maintain the competitive edge of the common market bloc of capitalists. While Comrade Mandel attempts to divert United Secretariat attention towards guerrillaism in Latin America. Adding to this upsurge is the valor and resourcefulness of the Spanish working class who have come forward with its first successful wave of political strikes gaining the commutation of sentences of sixteen Basque socialists facing execution and long prison sentences on frame-up murder charges before a military court in Burgos. . . . Only after general strikes and protest demonstrations swept Spain, France and Italy backed up by a world wide protest to dictator Franco was he forced to concede that he was unable to maintain his iron fist control and now must make concessions. The harsh brutality of Spanish fascism is nothing new. What is new is that the Spanish working class is fighting back as never before against the Franco regime. Not even the iron heel of fascism can keep the Spanish workers from joining the offensive of the working class against the crisis-torn capitalist system. The massive defensive strike waves sweeping England culminating into the March 1, 1971, one day general strike of two million workers was in direct response to the threatened Tories Industrial Relations Bill signifying the irreversible character of this class struggle, as the combativity of the British working class cannot be questioned. Prime Minister Heath put it in his speech to the U. S. this winter, "this will be the decade of civil war." The employers and the Tories are determined to defeat the working class, to drive back its living standards to save capitalism. In order to do this the government must first of all attack and destroy the fighting capacity of the trade unions. This is the purpose of this anti-labor bill which places the unions under complete control of the state, legalize the open shop, fine and outlaw any unions that go on strike. This can only lead to larger general strikes until the Tory government is toppled, posing on the agenda the needs of the working class to contest for power through the building of the revolutionary leadership as the central question posed in this struggle. Comrade Hansen's criticism of ultraleftism and IMG as well as the *Red Mole* places in sharp contrast the two Trotskyist tendencies in England that represent polar opposites in methodology. This raises the question of why the tendency we ideologically support (IMG) stagnates and degenerates while Healy's SLL experiences quantitative and qualitative growth among the working class and trade unions leading to the publication of the first Trotskyist daily newspaper in the world?

### INTERDYNAMICS OF WORLD CLASS STRUGGLE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACIES

The capitalist economic crisis which has brought the working class in the advanced countries into a series of new economic and political struggles against capitalism now finds its finest expression in the upsurge of the Czechoslovak and Polish working class which in turn reflect the deeper revolutionary process maturing in the working class of the Soviet states. These struggles have thrown

the Stalinist apparatuses and bureaucracies into acute crisis. Every advance of the working class, every gain it makes in struggle, every step by which a new generation of workers occupies the front line of battle, weakens the bureaucracy. Equally important, every advance for the working class of Western Europe strengthens the fight for the working class in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. For one of the main factors holding the Soviet working class back from a real settlement of accounts with the Stalinist bureaucracy has been the fear that the imperialists would be able to take advantage of a social crisis in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe for the restoration of capitalist property relations. The Soviet bureaucracy is driven nearer and nearer to the imperialists politically, diplomatically and even economically, because of its hatred and fear of this resurgent working class now beginning to make decisive breaks from its stranglehold. The Stalinists, moving to the right, will play a more and more directly counterrevolutionary role, because the class struggles flowing from the imperialist crisis, with their implications threaten the bureaucracy's very existence and push them into closer collaboration with the imperialists. Having betrayed the French revolution in May-June and brutally suppressed the Czech workers in August 1968, they moved quickly towards agreements with the Franco regime in Spain, to the extent of open strike-breaking in the Asturian miner's struggle with Poland's Gomulka leading this strike-breaking attack. It was a fitting tribute to the Polish working class who successfully mounted a strike wave that drove Gomulka out of the leadership, reversed the price increases, set up strike committees, workers militias and delegations to a central strike committee that have begun to fight for the political overthrow of the bureaucracy as opposed to the Pabloite revisionists within our party and International who advocate reform based on support of Gomulkas and Dubceks.

### LATIN AMERICA

Recent events in the Caribbean, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay, Peru, and Chile also give evidence of the increasing tempo of the class struggle in Latin America, proving that not one inch of South American soil is stable for U. S. imperialism. No sooner has one regime replaced another than it is faced with the same contradictions of severe economic crisis which is being foisted on the working class generating powerful class struggles. The whole Latin American continent is now on the brink of civil war, requiring an international socialist perspective that transcends narrow nationalism linking up with the struggles in other South American countries and a Marxist party that will uncompromisingly wage this revolutionary struggle. The key to understanding the dynamic interrelationship of the world wide class struggle especially how it interreacts and reinforces the developing crisis in this country must be viewed against the backdrop of a forty year decline of European capitalism and the emergence of American imperialism as the dominant capitalist power, culminating in the 1950's in the "Americanization" of Europe. This took the form of the development there of the American technique, economic penetration and a certain degree of prosperity. This penetration means also that the U. S. is forced to take into itself all the weaknesses of European capital and the resulting economic crisis now unfolding reveals how closely intertwined this crisis has

become and its resulting world-wide class struggle now feeding back into the American working class instilling an international class outlook and hastening the development of a political consciousness under the impact of the upsurge of the European working class struggles.

The upsurge of the American working class; GE, Postal, Teamster, Auto, etc., involving 3.3 million workers last year in strikes has opened a higher stage in development of the international class struggle. It marks an end to the era of class compromise and the beginning of the era of violent class conflict at home as well as abroad as the U. S. working class joins its European brothers in a wage offensive political in implications, revolutionary in what it does to a capitalist system caught up in its own contradictions facing trade wars and bankruptcy. When the American strike upsurge is placed in its proper context of the international crisis and the intensification of the South East Asian war then this strike upsurge must be interpreted as the beginning of the final showdown between capital and labor, for it shows from now on in the American capitalists must cope with their own working class simultaneously with the upsurge in the class struggle internationally. But our party draws back from recognizing this international crisis and class struggle upsurge, it tries to ignore and pretend that it does not exist, holds back from drawing the necessary theoretical conclusions, fully aware that from such conclusions a course of action must follow which is in direct contradiction to *everything* that the SWP is doing today. Our party attempts to insulate itself from this class struggle conclusion even more frantically and desperately by projecting student powerism and nationalism as the prime moving force in revolutionary developments internationally as well as in the U. S. Our party's assessment of the war in South East Asia as well as the massive antiwar demonstration as being a *protest* movement of self-determination and not as part of the class struggle internationally. The outbreak in Northern Ireland, Canada, Spain and the Middle East were all seen as "national liberation struggles" with no mention of the international crisis of capitalism and the massive movement forward of the working class internationally. The empirical and pragmatic methodology used by Comrade Hansen in advocating the building of "Leninist parties" in Latin America based on taking Trotsky's "Transitional Program" into "the plants, mills, mines, and other sectors of industry" is considered correct by Hansen for Latin America but opposed by him for his own country, the U. S., where he embraces "student powerism" and the concept of the "Red University" as the central axis of working in the "middle class radicalization." Perhaps this is why Comrades Maitan, Germain and Knoeller have so little respect for the hypocrisy and inconsistencies of Comrade Hansen's criticism in view of the sharp turn to the right by the SWP where our party now reacts in a liberal opportunist way in opposition to terrorist methods which threatens their relationship that they are building in subjective adaptation to petty bourgeois movements, which seeks to maintain these movements in democratic, legal and liberal channels. The only way that Comrade Hansen can figure the American working class into his calculations is in a subordinate role of merely adding its "social weight" to these middle class liberal reform movements which above all must not act on its own, independently, as a class. And don't mention a domestic strategy for proletarian orientation to Comrade Hansen

—this he pragmatically projects for Latin America, not here. . . . The struggle inside the SWP for a proletarian orientation versus a petty bourgeois orientation shall go forward. The outcome of this struggle against petty bour-

geois revisionism inside the SWP will decide the very fate of our party and whether we will be able to orient once again towards the working class.

June 24, 1971