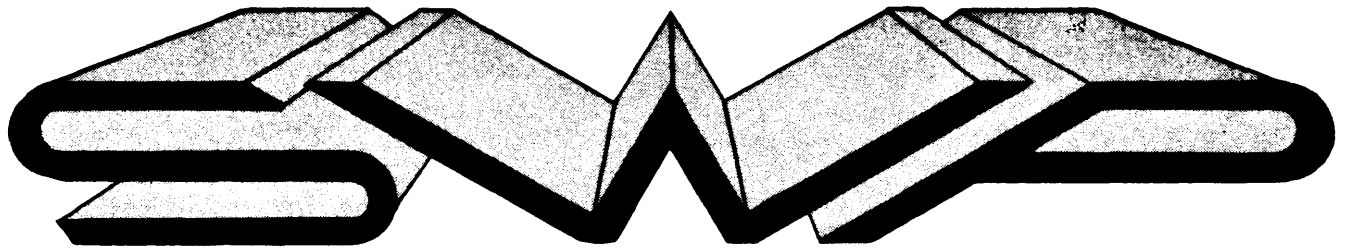


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SCHEMATISM OR MARXISM?
What is At Issue in the Debate
Over Our Political Line

By George Novack

From its birth our movement has set for itself two inter-linked strategical objectives. One is to convert itself from a group of propagandists for a revolutionary program to a party of mass action. The other is to become a proletarian party, not only in ideas and aims, but in fact. This means it has both to acquire a predominantly proletarian composition and be capable of leading the anti-capitalist struggles in all areas and aspects.

All along the way (for 43 years!) we have had to consider what tactical steps could best promote these purposes and bring them nearer to realization. The answers have varied according to the shifting circumstances of the class struggle in this country and our situation in respect to the alignment of forces within it. At each point along the road our leadership and membership have had to make a deliberated decision on the specific orientation of our movement in the next phase of its operation.

The fact that these choices have had a tactical rather than a principled or strategical character did not diminish their importance. The most crucial thing in political practice is to know what has to be done next—and then go ahead to do it. As Lenin put it, it is essential to grasp firmly that key link in the chain of events that can pull the whole movement forward.

These rules are an axiomatic part of our heritage. However, it is not always easy and rarely simple to perceive how they apply at every turn in the process of building the proletarian party.

The Opposing Lines

Alternative proposals on our orientation are up for discussion and decision. One urges the party to concentrate its forces and resources upon colonizing our members in industries and unions and subordinating all activities in other areas to this urgent task. This necessitates the proletarianization at a forced pace of its student cadres, male and female.

The other line says that, at the present stage of development, the best way to strengthen our forces for reaching the working class is to deploy our cadres, as we have been doing for the past ten years of our growth, in those sectors of social struggle that are presently more intensely radicalized and open to rapid recruitment. Success in this endeavor will prepare our party for more extensive and intensive activity among the organized workers when and as their insurgency manifests itself and begins to match that of the more aroused and advanced contingents of the population already in motion.

It is necessary to choose between these two lines, and not muddle them up, in order to provide a clear guide for party activity.

The political resolution unanimously passed by the National Committee unequivocally pronounces itself for the second alternative as the prime task in the next immediate period. It comes to this conclusion on the basis of its overall assessment of the dominant characteristics of the current phase of the evolution of American radicalization outlined in the document. It does not foreclose either the possibility or necessity of a reversal of propor-

tions and priorities and a fuller turn toward the industrial workers at a later date when the conditions ripen for such an orientation.

What the resolution maintains is that, as matters stand, such a step would be premature. Instead of contributing to our approach to the mass of workers, or accelerating it, it would retard and weaken it by diverting us from the best ways of augmenting our cadres and attracting young workers. This would result in missed opportunities for immediate growth in the principal fields of current concentration (Third World work, the campus, the anti-war movement, women's liberation) in favor of an ill-advised redirection of the bulk of our forces into a much less favorable milieu at the present time for activity and recruitment.

The correctness of this course is substantiated by the progress we have been registering vis-a-vis our opponents, especially those who have taken the other road.

The overexcited polemic of the Gregorich group asserts that the implied position of the party leaders is "that we do not have to enter the trade unions at all."—"For a Proletarian Orientation," p. 10, emphasis in the original. Will such distortion of our views next breed the rumor that all our unionists have been ordered out of their jobs onto the campuses to get M. A.'s and Ph. D.'s?

All the fruitful work that can be done among the organized workers is integral to our line. We have several hundred union members who are conducting political activity, as far as possible, among the militants they are in contact with. We are likewise involved in several struggles on a local or national scale in the building trades, railroad workers, auto, teachers and other public employee unions. However important they are in themselves and for the future, these continuing activities perforce occupy a secondary status in our total operations, and, while they can be expected to expand, will not command priority until and unless large sections of the industrial workers go into action.

Some Precedents from Party History

The most important concern for the Marxist vanguard at any stage of its career is its relations with the working class whose interests it represents and defends. There is no disagreement on this fundamental point with the sponsors of "For a Proletarian Orientation." This is no new problem for us; it has preoccupied us many times before. It simply recurs now under different circumstances in a new form and at a higher level of development.

Indeed, the founders of our movement had to make a crucial decision on this matter at its outset. Cannon tells about it in *The History of American Trotskyism*. The problem was then posed in the following terms: what major immediate task should the fledgling Communist League set for itself? Should it proceed forthwith along an independent line of mass activity, going directly to the unpoliticized workers—or should it concentrate upon winning over the revolutionary-minded cadres educated in Marxist ideas assembled in the C. P.?

Temporary sojourners in our movement like Albert

Weisbord insisted on the first course. As Cannon wrote: "His revelation was: The Trotskyists must not be a propaganda circle, but go directly to mass work. . . . He was impatient to jump into mass work over the heads of the Communist party." Cannon and his associates adopted the other alternative. Time has demonstrated which course was correct and could best build a revolutionary cadre.

"The problem," says Cannon, "was to understand the actual situation, the stage of development at the moment." When the international and national situation changed after Hitler's coming to power in 1933, the American Trotskyists along with their cothinkers elsewhere changed their orientation, breaking away from reform of the CP, moving out into a broader field of activity, and working along different lines which combined political unification with stepped-up mass work.

Yet, only two years later, a comparable dispute arose. After the fusion with the Musteites was consolidated in 1934, Cannon and Shachtman put forward the proposal to enter the SP. This encountered furious objection from Muste, the Oehlerite sectarians and other standpaters. We've already set up a party, they argued, and we're going directly to the industrial workers and unemployed. Woe betide those opportunists and deviationists who want to submerge our forces in the petty-bourgeois swamp of the Social-Democracy.

Those who invoked such arguments and split in 1935 have long since joined Weisbord in limbo while the "Cannonites" who rebuffed them have managed to stay around and meet a reedition of a like sectarianism thirty five years later.

These and subsequent tactical readjustments did not signify the abandonment of our basic working class orientation. That was made clear from 1944 on. As the ranks of labor began to resist the effects of the war, the SWP took cognizance of this marked change in the mood and movement of the class. We proceeded full steam ahead to penetrate as deeply as we could among the militants in such basic industries as auto, steel, aircraft, maritime, electrical and the railroads.

The 1946 resolution entitled: "From a Propaganda Group to a Party of Mass Action," plus the convention report by Morris Stein, and Cannon's *The Coming American Revolution* are the two major political documents mirroring the outlook and policy of that specific episode in our development. At that time we acquired the largest measure of direct influence we have exercised upon the workers, white and Black, in a number of key unions. These prospects were cut off after 1947 by the cold war and the witchhunt and we had once more to drastically readjust our mode of operations.

These examples from the past are selected to illustrate two points: the tactical flexibility required of the revolutionary vanguard and the capacity our party has shown to reassess situations, recognize the need for tactical shifts and make them in time.

From these experiences we learned that Lenin is a better guide than Euclid. A straight line is not always the shortest distance between two points in the class struggle, between where you are and where you want to get. Because of the nature of the terrain to be traversed, the party is sometimes obliged to make detours along the way to its goals. The lesson is so plain and recurrent that it has been coined into a familiar adage with a dialectical twist: the longest way round is the shortest way home.

An Analogy From Twentieth Century History

Over the past few years most of us have had the following query addressed to us again and again by friendly critics—and some not so friendly. How is it that the SWP, which claims to be a proletarian party and teaches that the proletariat is the main force destined to defeat the capitalists, devotes so much of its energy to work and recruitment among the students, the antiwar forces, the women, etc.? [as though these had nothing to do with the working class.] Isn't this in clear contradiction to its avowed platform and aims—a deviation and even a sign of petty-bourgeois degeneration, they ask. Echoes of these arguments resound through the pages of "For a Proletarian Orientation."

There is a certain contradiction involved—but we refuse to be held responsible for it. It is lodged in the facts, in the special course of development of the revolutionary processes and the formation of the vanguard party under the very peculiar circumstances of the United States.

We could not dictate the order of emergence on the arena of action of the anticapitalist elements and tendencies in this country. That sequence, as it has unrolled over the past decade has come about through international and national conditions beyond our control. All we could do—and be called upon to do—was to decide what to do about it. We had to judge how best to utilize our cadres to participate in the concrete situations as they have come along and make the most of the opportunities they presented—without losing sight of our ultimate objective.

This is not the first time Marxists have had to readjust their timetables to conform to the dialectical realities of the historical process. Marx, as we know, believed that the first socialist victories would come in the advanced industrialized countries of Western Europe; it didn't happen that way. Trotsky took account of this twist of the struggle in his theory of permanent revolution and together with Lenin acted upon this revised orientation in 1917 against the protestations of the Menshevik doctrinaires.

Since then, the course of the world revolution has taken a prolonged and wide detour through the less developed countries, for reasons we have many times analyzed. We have had to reckon with all the consequences of this anomaly *without, however, surrendering the essence of the Marxist program and perspective that the outcome of the class struggle in the leading industrial countries is the most decisive factor in the world revolutionary process.*

The unexpected path of development taken by the international socialist revolution over the past half century presents an instructive parallel to the no less peculiar course that has characterized the new period of radicalization in the United States. Other sections of the oppressed have risen up before the organized workers in mass production, the principal anticapitalist force, have done so.

So what are we supposed to do about this objective development which is not of our making? Disclaim it, disregard it, downgrade it or go counter to it, as so many of our opponents and critics have done and are doing, because it upsets their preconceptions of the way the mass movement ought to go or the road the oppressed must travel?

As Marxists we have a different approach. Our answer is contained in the draft Political Resolution "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization." We're going to embed ourselves in every one of these movements to re-

plenish our cadres so that we will be in the most favorable condition to take the utmost advantage of the militancy of the organized workers when and as it blazes up again.

What the Schematists and Sectarrians Don't Understand

The proponents of the counter resolution "For a Proletarian Orientation" are simon-pure schematists and sectarians. They have grasped some elementary propositions of Marxism: that it is necessary to have a proletarian party, that the vanguard must root itself in the working class etc. Unfortunately, they have not proceeded beyond that.

After the ABC's there are 23 other letters in the English alphabet, not to speak of their combinations. The sectarians have yet to learn the whole alphabet of Marxism and how to use it to analyze new circumstances and complex situations that create new problems demanding fresh practical solutions.

Instead of coming to grips with these unavoidable and important aspects of the living movement, they offer formulas that are good for any occasion, regardless of the ups and downs, twists and turns of the struggle. These stencils may rid them of the effort of critical and creative thought but they hardly help to work out a policy suited to the given situation.

They fail to understand many things about the Marxist method of thinking in general and its application to the present stage of political development in this country and the tasks of the SWP. Let us discuss a few of them.

The development of social struggles and therewith of the construction of the revolutionary vanguard on a world or a national scale is far from straight, smooth or simple. It is a highly contradictory and complex process. The multiple social forces that enter into action against the status quo do not move at the same time, at the same rate, in the same way or along the same lines. This is obvious from the disparities in the progress of the world revolution—and it is no less apparent in the irregular insurgency of the exploited and oppressed elements in our own country.

Each contingent acts and reacts in accord with its own situation, grievances and impulses—and, especially in the early stages of the anticapitalist movement, with little coordination. The task of the revolutionary vanguard is to be alert and sensitive to the emergence of every one of these oppositional forces, no matter what form they assume, in order to aid and promote them.

Such unevenness could be expected in the U. S. because of its special history and contradictory social structure. Materially and technologically, the U. S. is the most advanced and highly developed as well as the richest and most powerful of capitalist nations. At the same time it is the most backward of all the major industrialized countries in its political development and social consciousness. This is the only one where the workers do not have a political organization independent of the capitalist parties. It has the most conservatized labor movement, the weakest socialist forces and Marxist traditions.

It is quite natural that oppositional tendencies, arising in such a milieu after a prolonged period of prosperity and reaction, would have unconventional traits and display pronounced peculiarities. One anomaly is the fact, described in the N. C. resolution, that the current radicalization did not begin with the organized workers but among other social layers; the Blacks, the students and

youth, the intellectuals, the Chicanos, the Native Americans and the women.

The essence of Marxist materialism is to learn from living experience, from social practice, from the masses in motion as well as from books and other texts. This aspect of our philosophy is foreign to the schematists. Yet that is precisely what our party has sought to do throughout the phases of the current radicalization. We have tried to discern what was new and progressive in the sentiments, actions and attitudes of all those branches of the population that have come into collision with the powers that be: the Afro-Americans, the rebellious students, the antiwar forces, the Chicanos, women's liberation, gay liberation, the prison revolts, and the heterodoxy of the Catholic Left.

We have achieved something in this enterprise. We were, for example, the first party of the Left to emphasize and explain the revolutionary potential of Black nationalism and its relations with socialism; to advance the central slogan of the antiwar movement "Bring the Troops Home Now" and to set up its specific coalition form of mass organization and action; to perceive the scope and depth latent in women's liberation; and draft transitional programs tailored to the specific needs of the Black, student, women's liberation and Chicano struggles.

The radicalization as a distinct phase of postwar politics is at least ten years old, though its roots go back five years before. We have endeavored not only to follow its evolution step by step but to work out a general theory of its progress. We realize that such knowledge is essential to our everyday activity. The results of our investigations, guided by the Marxist method of social analysis, are summarized and extended in the N. C. resolution.

The Gregorich document in contrast contains no such broad conception of the overall radicalization process to date. What have been its course of development, its causes and driving forces, its main trends and specific features? The sectarians neither ask nor answer such questions about this new phenomenon in American life. Having committed a few phrases to memory, they feel no impulsion to deepen and enrich their understanding of events or to learn from the actual movement of the masses.

The doctrinaires do not understand that concrete conditions, not general prescriptions or ready-made recipes, determine tactics.

The argument that appears most persuasive in favor of the Gregorich *et al* line is that "we must go directly to the workers." All sorts of dire consequences will ensue if we default in that respect, as they charge us with doing. However superficially appealing this reasoning may be, it is mistaken and misleading in that simplified form because it proceeds from abstract considerations in defiance of the realities of the situation.

It does not take proper account of the two chief factors in the equation: the state of the union movement on one side and the state of the party on the other. Though the discontent of many workers is growing, it has yet to burst forth into significant oppositional expression. Meanwhile, our party has limited forces confronting considerable immediate opportunities in a number of areas. These concrete circumstances govern the policy decision that has to be made.

The methodological source of their error is their lapse into schematism. There is no room in their calculations for intricate patterns in the unfolding of the anticapitalist

struggle or in the building of the vanguard party. Everything is neatly laid out in advance and simply arranged in their minds, however complicated the real world may be.

For them the proletarian party in the making has a single simple imperative duty at all times; it must be fully faced toward the proletariat as it is. This injunction is too absolute, too sweeping. They fail to make the necessary distinction between what might have to be done in the short run at a given phase of development and what must be done in the long run—and the interconnection between a temporary tactical orientation and a permanent strategical objective.

There can be times along the way to the thoroughgoing proletarianization of the vanguard when, in view of the trends in the class struggle, the nucleus of the revolutionary party may have to focus its main attention and energies upon related oppositional forces—precisely in order to facilitate its constant aim of winning political hegemony among the workers.

Additional considerations should be kept in mind. If the Trotskyists are not present in full force among these other social sectors when they are in ferment, in conflict with the authorities, and open to radical ideas and proposals, they will be left to the mercies of opponent tendencies. We cannot afford that in the Black, Chicano, antiwar or women's liberation movements; the immediate and long-term losses and destructiveness would be too great. The antiwar movement would not have attained its present stature and momentum unless we were aware of that danger and forestalled it.

The contention that we are paying too high a price for this policy would carry weight only if it could be demonstrated that the unions are on the march and we are missing opportunities among them that promise greater returns. However, the authors of the counter-resolution do not offer any evidence on this score contrary to our appraisal or different proposals for action by the workers than we do. They merely reiterate the urgency of converting our student cadres into workers in basic industry and holding them there.

The reasoning that runs through their document can be skeletonized in the following syllogism. a. The proletarian party must have a proletarian orientation. b. The SWP aspires to be a proletarian party. c. therefore "the party . . . must at all times gear its major attention and activity toward rooting itself in the key sectors of the proletariat."—p. 7.

The reasoning is airtight from the standpoint of formal logic. But the conclusion has a fatal defect in regard to tactics. It does not correspond with the facts or fit the actual conditions in which the party must operate at the present juncture of its development. The formalists make abstractions into absolutes and elevate them above actualities. A formula which is valid for all seasons cannot, on that very account, deal adequately with the changes from winter to spring to summer and fall. Generalities have to be concretized by observation and insight into objective reality which is the paramount criterion for Marxist political science.

The materialist dialectic is above all a theory of movement whose usefulness consists in its capacity to analyze changing reality in its myriad and peculiar manifestations. The doctrinaires do not recognize that new phenomena are constantly arising in the revolutionary process which Marxists must reckon with in theory and practice.

That has certainly been the case in the current radicalization. Its developments have already amply demonstrated that, by virtue of its belated emergence and marked peculiarities, the anticapitalist struggles here are not following the same track as in Western Europe nor even duplicating the previous radicalizations in this country.

They are begetting original features and new forms of action. We have observed and analyzed these in connection with the combined national-democratic and proletarian character of the Black liberation movement based upon a powerful, compact nationality of almost exclusively proletarian composition lodged in the major industries, services, and cities of the major imperialist power. We have summed this up in the deduction that the coming American revolution will have a combined character in which the democratic drives for the self-determination of the oppressed will be fused with the proletarian struggle for socialism.

It is insufficiently appreciated in many quarters how much the radicalization is reversing the role of the United States in the world revolutionary process. For a long time through the cold war years this country was correctly seen as the rearguard of the international revolution, a solid block of reaction, an unalterable bastion of capitalist counterrevolution. As the sixties have unfolded, this has been changing. The U. S. has become an innovator in various branches of radicalism.

This is the home of the most explosive nationalist movements in the advanced industrial countries which have inspired other forces in unexpected places (the Black Panthers of Israel!). Following the actions in Japan, the worldwide student radicalization was touched off by the Berkeley Free Speech Movement in 1964. This country has been the center of the broadest and most sustained antiwar movement during an imperialist conflict since the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

Here women's liberation has had its most precocious growth—and the gay liberation movement started. An organized movement of homosexuals engaged in mass mobilizations against their victimization is unprecedented in the social struggles of the modern world.

All these movements have had an impact and stirred emulation in other parts of the globe. They testify to the fact that the erstwhile stronghold of world reaction is also becoming something else. It is a laboratory for new experiences and experiments in radical action emanating from deep-going revulsion against a decadent monopoly capitalism.

The sectarians have not yet caught on to this. They are blind to the significance of such innovations because they do not conform to previous patterns or their preconceptions and prescriptions. However, it is precisely their genuine novelty, their departure from the norms, that give importance to these out-of-the-ordinary occurrences. Marxists are—or should be—especially attentive to what is new, different and progressive in all spheres of anticapitalist activity.

Sectarians, on the other hand, discount or dismiss novelties with the handy disdainful epithet of "petty-bourgeois," thus disclosing their own narrow mentality. They minimize and disparage the sectors already engaged in struggle, and especially student activism, on the ground that the workers are not concerned or interested. They may on occasion grudgingly admit that other layers may act as catalyzers of proletarian action. After the May-June 1968 events in France, it is difficult to deny such a role

to the rebellious students, although some do not even concede this.

What they categorically refuse to recognize is that these other movements can be revolutionary on their own account and in their own name. Thus Progressive Labor, the C. P., and the Wohlforthites refuse to acknowledge the revolutionary thrust of Black or Chicano nationalism while the Gregorich group is blind to the profound revolutionary implications of the student or women's liberation movements.

They have not comprehended the nature and depth of the social crisis of U. S. capitalism expressed in the radicalization to date. This idea is the heart of the N. C. political resolution. The upheaval is affecting all elements of the social structure up to the ruling heights, as the rift over the Pentagon papers attests. Above all, the crisis has awakened and is arousing hitherto unheard-from layers of the oppressed from the homosexuals to the prisoners. It is giving voice to the voiceless, courage to the timid, pushing forward the backward, and inspiring them to emulate and even vie with one another in struggle for their rights and satisfaction of their grievances.

The resolution notes how the students and Chicanos learned from the Blacks, and how La Raza Unida is setting an example of independent political organization for the Afro-Americans. The insurgent women have taken cues for their actions from the precedents set by the Blacks, students, and antiwar forces. This chain reaction spreading from one sector of the oppressed to another is far from finished. The tenor of the resolution is that only the first initiatives have been taken and much more is to come.

It is necessary to understand, as the sectarians do not, that the initiatives and innovations of the various components of the radicalization to date are not purely peripheral. Each one of these independent movements have their own contribution to make to the multiform revolutionary cause and constitute integral parts of the process of strengthening the anticapitalist forces and building the revolutionary vanguard. Our participation in them is not a diversion or distraction from the central objective but ways and means of obtaining it more expeditiously.

What the super-proletarian doctrinaires fail most of all to see is the degree to which the radicalization in these areas has already affected and will continue to affect the body of workers. They view the workers as though they lived insulated from the rest of American society and all that has been happening through the 1960's.

The fact is that the most politically active and conscious elements of the working class are already participating in one way or another, to one extent or another, in the ongoing Black, Chicano, antiwar and women's liberation movements. They are still a small minority but their numbers are growing. Many others are listening, learning, absorbing the lessons of recent events and encounters.

Just as the anticapitalist struggle in its totality has a rhythm of its own, so each actual or prospective part of it has a specific dynamic which it is essential to gauge at each point along the way. The wide differentials between the propulsion behind the other sectors and the organized workers is the basis for our current tactical orientation. We cannot foretell, how, when and in what forms this discrepancy will be narrowed and eventually overcome. But we do project a transitional program of

demands and measures for the left wing forces in the unions that they can advocate to bridge that gap.

We are confident that, as a result of changing economic, social and political conditions, the organized workers will be prodded into militant action again. We are moreover cognizant of the consequences of the law of uneven and combined development that, at a certain point and under powerful enough stimuli in times of crisis, the more backward layers of the population can leap to the forefront of the struggle. There is no reason to think that the American workers will be exempt from the workings of this law in a period of intense and prolonged radicalization.

Getting Down to Cases

However, we do not have to look too far ahead to justify our current line even in regard to the advanced workers. That can be done by reference to recent events.

Both sides agree on the necessity of bringing our political ideas to the ranks of the working class and drawing them into action on the basis of our proposals. Sharp divergences arise on how this can best be done here and now.

Comrade Gregorich and her cothinkers disagree with our line on antiwar work and do not think highly of the results, although they rate high among our proudest achievements. To them it represents "an adaptation to the union bureaucrats" while the gigantic April 24 demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco were "not a rank and file action."— p. 29

They surely will not deny that many more union members than ever before were directly involved in these demonstrations. They could be seen by the thousands bearing their insignia and banners. The difference therefore revolves around the methods of getting them there. In many cases this was done through enlisting the support of the officers of International and local unions and offering the platform to some of them.

There is nothing wrong with this in principle. Did the critics have a more effective method of creating a tremendous mass mobilization against Nixon's war policies and bringing more rank and file workers to Washington and San Francisco? They have presented no specific counter proposals for organization and action beyond urging that the SWP encourage and aid "the independent organization of the rank and file around political questions like the war."— p. 30. Their sectarian approach is as sterile as it is unrealistic.

April 24 provided an excellent test of the opposing lines. The matter was really posed in this way: was it more important to organize the kind of antiwar actions we did— or concentrate the forces at our disposal in doing routine union work, as they urge, or else launch an insignificant "purely proletarian" and "really revolutionary" counter-demonstration, as PL and the Wohlforthites tried to do.

The dissenting comrades should acknowledge that the overriding issue of imperialist military policy takes political precedence for Marxists over everyday union activity. There is no national or international question of greater import and urgency than the Vietnam war. This is the supreme issue of class politics in this country and of solidarity with the vanguard of the colonial revolution and the threatened workers' states.

Despite its limited resources, our party has shouldered

the colossal responsibility for mobilizing the maximum mass opposition to the war. The fact that its efforts helped draw so many new unionists into such action was not only a fulfillment of our responsibility as revolutionists in the center of world imperialism. It was a confirmation of the correctness of our line and a refutation in practice of all the different courses followed by the assorted super-proletarian sectarians, including our own.

About ten thousand unionists disembarked on the morning of April 24 from the special trains that brought them from New York to Washington. As many were trudging to the rallying point of the march, they met up with the contingents of GI's and Blacks who were leading the parade down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol. The Vietnam vets and Blacks spontaneously cheered the unionists who shook their placards and gave the peace signal in response.

This one episode tells a great deal. It illustrated in life the drawing together of the diverse components of the radicalization. The fact that they were getting together in the streets around an anti-imperialist action in direct confrontation with the capitalist administration was no less important than the speakers and speeches on the platform, the sole aspect that concerns the sectarians. Such unity in action would not have taken place without the participation of the SWP and YSA and the persistent application of the policy defended and amplified in the N. C. resolution.

This resolution gives the party a clear and definite plan of activity which corresponds to the needs and tasks of the present stage.

In an article by Trotsky recently printed in *Lenin: Notes for a Biographer* he recalls a characterization of Lenin given by August Bebel who spoke of "the complex curve of Lenin's straight line," p.168. At first hearing this sounds rather paradoxical. But it was meant to convey the idea that Lenin did not invariably head directly toward his fixed objectives but, taking objective circumstances

into account, sometimes attained them by roundabout routes.

Something of the same sort is the essence of our presently balanced orientation. We propose to get to the organized workers in good time through the prior progress we make—and are making—in all the areas of social struggle and phases of radicalism preceding their large-scale entry into action. There are risks and costs involved in all tactical moves but an alert leadership and conscious membership can hold these to a minimum and guard against them.

This tactic is all the more in order because of the urgent necessity of replenishing and reinforcing our ranks owing to the attrition during the cold war. The delay is not of our doing. But is it a deplorable misfortune that we Trotskyists are being given time to rejuvenate our forces, tool up our organization, improve our relative position on the left, before the heavy battalions of workers start to move in large numbers?

We can't prescribe or foresee what the pace of that consummation of the radicalization will be. Our job here and now is to get ready for that accelerated militancy when and as it arrives by deploying and directing our cadres as we have by and large been doing.

The SWP has promptly and energetically intervened in every fresh development of the radicalization from the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott to women's liberation at the close of the 1960's. Does this record suggest that we will be incapable of doing as well when the anticipated upsurge of the unionized workers occurs?

The critics fear that we will miss the proletarian bus when it starts up and comes rolling down the highway because we'll be too busy on the campuses to notice it. Our answer is: we're far more likely to miss that chance if, before the workers get going, we mess up the opportunities for growth presented by the Afro-American bus, the Chicano bus, the student and youth bus, the antiwar bus, the women's liberation bus, etc.

June 21, 1971

THE MINORITY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT
by Chris Hildebrand, Boston Branch

The position put forward by the National Committee draft resolution is that the current radicalization is the broadest and deepest in American history, that its roots lie in the imperialist war policies of the ruling class and the growing contradictions arising out of the evolution of the world capitalist economy. It draws the conclusion that the radicalization will not be reversed without gigantic struggles in which the question of what class rules will be posed. The uniqueness of this current radicalization is seen in the fact that it began during a period of relative prosperity, during an imperialist war, and is also seen in the new forms it has taken to date. The radicalization is characterized by massive, independent movements which have grown up outside the existing trade unions and prior to the radicalization of the working class *as a class*.

One of the proofs of the depth of this radicalization is the existence and continuing growth of the women's liberation movement. This movement is challenging the most sacred institutions of class society—primarily the nuclear family, but also the church; state; universities and private property. This movement has already mobilized tens of thousands of women in the streets. Feminist consciousness has begun to reach deeply into the population.

What does the counter resolution say about this movement? Very little. They give no analysis of the women's liberation movement. To read their document one would not know if they support it. In fact, by their omissions and, more important, their inferences, you would get the opposite impression. You could certainly be opposed to the movement and be very comfortable voting for the Gregorich document.

The counter resolution says we are concentrating almost totally on a petty bourgeois milieu. Since they give no example of a working class women's liberation movement that we are ignoring, they must mean that the whole movement as it presently exists is petty bourgeois. It is certainly true that one aspect of the movement, the National Organization for Women, is primarily petty bourgeois in composition and reformist in its program. We have not concentrated on this section of the movement—far from it.

The minority says that if we are serious about slogans such as equal work and child care we should take them to those who have the most need of their implementation—namely those who work. This is precisely what we are doing. Comrades should learn these statistics. 42% of all women over 16 work. Add to this the students who are preparing to go to work and you have close to 50 percent of the female population already. Over 90 percent of women work at some time in their lives. 31 million women are currently employed. Only about 3 million are currently in trade unions and a large number of these are concentrated in non-strategic unions like teachers, social workers, etc.

If we were to follow the advice of the counter resolution we would be concentrating our forces where less than 10 percent of working women are and where less than 3 percent of all women are to be found—and, more important, where no women's liberation movement exists yet.

The women we meet in the women's movement today

are either working women, students, or wives of workers. Where is the minority's proof that they are petty bourgeois? Certainly not in the demands of this movement.

Leaving this aside, however, the big mistake that the minority makes is how we bring the women's liberation movement to the working class anyway.

They talk about "working class consciousness raising." Again I would like to ask why they put "consciousness raising" in quotes. From their document one is left with the clear implication that the minority is opposed to *feminist consciousness raising*. But that is precisely what the women's liberation movement is all about and that is what the party is for. The primary result of feminist consciousness raising is the identification of our oppression as a sex. That we all face similar oppression (though different in degree) with all other women.

The realization of the magnitude and horror of the systematic denial to half of the human race of the right to be a full human being according to *man's* own definition to himself of humanity is a very important step along the road to redefining ourselves and our goals. Just as Malcolm X taught Black people to understand the badge of their oppression as their blackness, their ability to be separated and treated as inferior due to their biological features, so too, women are learning that the particular form of oppression that we all suffer in common is that we are all females.

It is through recognizing the systematic nature of our oppression that women can come to the conclusion that, although men are frequently (as individuals and collectively) the agents of our oppression, they are not the enemy. It is the institutionalized system of sexism. The way this is brought clearly to light is by making demands which speak to our oppression and which identify the enemy, which is obviously the ruling class and its institutions.

Feminist consciousness raising began first among movement intellectuals because the atmosphere was conducive and their political consciousness already more developed. Little groups of radical women from the S. D. S. milieu began to caucus and get together for discussions.

Feminist consciousness raising among working class women will occur and is already occurring as a dialectical process—first by observing a growing mass movement of women, making demands that relate to *all* women but *primarily to working women*. This is where the concept of sisterhood comes in. It is extremely mechanical to think that working women will not be attracted to the feminist movement unless *we* are in the factories. The key today is that we must be in the feminist movement orienting it to the masses.

The way consciousness changes is in concretely seeing the possibility of achieving alternatives. Capitalist society has created the material possibilities of alternatives for women and the growing feminist movement is providing the instrument for realizing those alternatives. One doesn't negate one's existence or values simply because a sister can give a convincing argument. What does cause this change is when masses of women are seen engaged in struggle for something legitimate and relevant and when the chance of winning is seen.

It is the independent women's liberation movement in the streets which is already inspiring females to identify with it and giving them the dignity and courage necessary to fight for control over their own lives on every level.

This movement and its demands are an objective reality that has already broadly affected the consciousness of females far more than our conversations or "mailings." The counter resolution says that we can contribute to building the women's liberation movement by bringing the working class into it. How will this occur?

A good analogy of how it will and will not occur is the way the objective reality of a massive antiwar movement in the streets changed the consciousness of GIs and enabled them to begin antiwar organizing in the army, and the way the massive ghetto rebellions helped create the conditions for the development of black militant caucuses in trade unions and black student uprisings.

Had we ignored our responsibility to build a mass antiwar movement among those sectors of the population which were most receptive, and sent most of our comrades into factories and the army, there would not be any GIs or trade unionists in the antiwar movement today, because there would not have been a mass antiwar movement for them to participate in.

It was absolutely crucial that we build the antiwar movement in such a way as to make it possible for the trade unions and GIs to enter it. After six long years we are finally seeing the results of this correct orientation.

When female workers begin to organize and struggle on the job, it is true that they will need leadership. Many of these future leaders are being developed in the women's liberation movement today. Many will also arise out of the struggle. Many of these leaders will be recruited to the party. Recruitment and colonization will be a dialectical process just as it was with Female Liberation in Boston. We did not start with a single comrade in Female Liberation, yet because of our program and because of our work in other movements and women's liberation, we were able to recruit feminist leaders to the Y. S. A. and party. When this excellent situation developed we immediately oriented towards it and only later sent in a few more comrades to reinforce the fraction and to help provide political leadership.

Through this combination of recruitment and colonization we have helped to build Female Liberation in this city into one of the best, strongest women's liberation organizations in the country. It has been the driving force behind all the women's liberation activities in Boston this year and I expect it will play a very large role in the coming national abortion campaign. Certainly we will send comrades into promising situations in unions as they develop, and these situations will develop in the future. But the crucial question before us now is what to do in the immediate period.

The critical test of a revolutionary party in a given period is knowing what to do next. Our program calls for unconditional support to the women's liberation movement. Within this context we raise democratic and transitional demands and build actions aimed at winning these demands. As shown over the last year, since August 26, it is very important for us to participate strongly in the leadership of this movement in order to help keep it oriented in a direction which will enable it to reach out to ever broader layers of women.

Wherever we have not been there pushing mass actions,

non-exclusion, united fronts, etc., the movement has tended to become ingrown, sectarian or ultraleft. We haven't yet seen the consolidation of a strong, well-organized reformist wing, ready to lead the movement back into the Democratic Party, but we can be sure this will appear in the next year as its forces are already preparing.

We must use our limited cadre in this period to build this movement, to fight for and implement a program of mass, independent struggle, against the capitalist class. Abortion has become the central focus for the women's liberation movement and we will apply tactics of the united front type coalition to build increasingly broader campaigns, aimed at the government, with the potential for involving hundreds of thousands of women who already favor repeal of abortion laws as a step towards gaining control of our bodies and lives. The issue of abortion relates to all women, most especially Black, poor and working women who have the most difficulty securing them under present laws.

Winning repeal of these laws—and victory is definitely possible—would be an enormous boost to our struggle. The counter resolution doesn't even mention abortion as a demand relating to working women. In fact it doesn't mention abortion at all. It is true that the national abortion campaign was projected after this document was written but it has been the main focus of the party's work nationwide for about a year.

Was this issue purposely avoided? Why was it that so many of the comrades who support the counter document voted in our branch against the report on the national abortion campaign last month? Do they really agree with the majority's analysis of the feminist movement today?

Some supporters of the counter resolution claim that if we adopt the position taken by the document, we'd be doing nothing different than we have been doing, we'd be doing all that we're currently doing—plus factory work. This is simply not true. At least we know that we wouldn't be doing the national abortion campaign and I suspect we'd be opposed to feminist consciousness raising groups and feminist consciousness raising in general. Since we'd be concentrating our forces on the unions, and sending female comrades into the unions, it doesn't sound like we'd be building campus groups, or action coalitions around specific issues, although that is extremely important work in this period.

In truth, we don't know what we'd be doing if we adopted the minority document as our political resolution. The counter resolution gives no analysis of the present movements. I maintain that it is because they have none that they can agree on. The attitude that comes through very clearly is simply a nervousness, a discomfort with the present feminist movement. This is even more evident in their attitude towards the gay liberation movement. They clearly do not want to emphasize feminism, but a *mechanically separated* workerist line.

Comrade Wulp's initial presentation to the Boston branch on the N. C. resolution outlined all the questions raised by the Gregorich document and answered them. Other comrades have also answered them painstakingly. Why won't the minority answer our questions? The most fundamental question is: what is your analysis of the period we're in? Do you or do you not agree with the majority's analysis as presented in the N. C. resolution? Do you or do you not agree with George Breitman's speech at Oberlin

and his general characterization of the present radicalization?

Comrade McCann passed this off in our branch discussion by saying that another document is coming. Does this mean that all comrades who support McCann's *present document* must wait spellbound for a second document in order to find out their own analysis of the period?

We are discussing the political resolution to be voted on at our convention. Comrades have to decide whether or not they agree with it, if they are serious political people.

Comrade McCann says their next document will probably not be a document presented for a vote but just a discussion piece. Why? Don't they have a position on the present radicalization? Do or don't they have major differences with the party political resolution? How can you present a document which draws *conclusions* about what to do next without outlining an *analysis* of the present objective situation and movements? How can you have a conclusion without an analysis?

The minority is seeking to win support on *one tactical question*: To enter or not enter basic industry immediately. The end result can only be an unprincipled combination between differing basic evaluations of the present period, blocking on a tactical question. Our tactics must flow from a basic understanding of the current stage of the radicalization. Is this the deepest, broadest radicalization in American history? Are there mass independent movements which are unprecedented and which make up the current stage of the class struggle? Should we support these movements? Should they be penetrated and built?

Shall we use this time to recruit cadre, build, strengthen and expand the party into an organization that the working class can see as a viable alternative to the bourgeois parties and prepare for the near future when the trade unions will begin to move and we can recruit out of and colonize into the trade unions and factories, not as an end in itself but because it is absolutely necessary to make the revolution?

In other periods we have adopted varying tactics which were necessary, given our size and relative strength. In 1928-33 we oriented exclusively towards the Communist Party because that is where the radicalization held the most promise of bringing recruits to our party. In 1936 we formally dissolved the party and went into the Socialist Party as individuals because this held the most

potential for recruiting to the party. *We dissolved the party.*

Don't Lenin and Cannon teach us you have to have a party no matter what? Well, we dissolved the party in order to build the party! In the late 1930s to 1950s we worked primarily in the trade unions because that was the area where the radicalization was the most advanced and where there was the most potential for recruiting to our party.

Today we are subordinating our trade union work because the work is not so fruitful in terms of party building, and concentrating on the independent mass movements in order to be better prepared to go to the unions later. In 1936 we formally dissolved the party to build the party. Today we concentrate outside the trade unions in order to penetrate the unions. Formal logicians cannot understand this. *But we have to* or we will have neither a party or a base in the trade unions in the future.

Certainly we are in a period of exceptional radicalization of the American people. The forms it is currently taking are independent mass movements, which *have or can quickly become* predominantly working class in composition, but remain predominantly outside the trade unions *at this time*. Those who cling to rigid formalistic, and definitely conservative concepts of how we should intervene in the present stage of the class struggle as it is unfolding at the moment: the women's liberation and gay liberation movements, Chicano and Black movements for self-determination, campus struggles and the mass antiwar movement ought to learn something from Trotsky, who in spite of the fact that none of these movements existed when he wrote the Transitional Program, was able to more accurately foresee our tasks today than some party members who fail to recognize the deepening class struggle as it unfolds before their eyes.

Listen to what Trotsky wrote on p. 14 of the Transitional Program:

The sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions . . . but also to create in all possible instances *independent, militant organizations corresponding more closely* to the tasks of *mass struggle against bourgeois society*: and if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions. . . . It is criminal to turn one's back on mass organizations for the sake of fostering sectarian fictions. . . .

June 29, 1971

THE COCHRANITES AND THE PRESENT DISCUSSION
by Louis Proyect, Boston Branch

One of the most important chapters in the history of the party is that of the Cochran fight which occurred during the peak of the cold war and the domestic witch hunt. I would like to give a true rendition of what occurred in that fight, then tell how the authors of "For a Proletarian Orientation" give an erroneous accounting of this fight, how the quotes they use from Dobbs, Kerry and Hansen are taken totally out of context to give a deliberately false impression.

After the second world war there was a powerful upsurge in the working class. This was followed by a downturn which led into the reactionary period of McCarthyism. During the early 1950's, with the witch hunts, and general drift to the right in the entire population, very strong pressure came to bear on all American radicals including SWP members. A grouping began to develop in the SWP known as the Cochran tendency.

The Cochranites in Detroit were primarily industrial workers, especially auto workers with deep roots in the trade unions. Many of them had been leaders in previous union struggles. Also in the Cochranite faction were some supporters in New York who had more of a middle class type background and composition.

Within the Cochran faction there were two groupings. One was led by Mike Bartell in New York. Bartell, the least important leader of the Cochran group, was adapting to Stalinism. After the victory of the Chinese CP and the Yugoslav CP and the growing fear of a third world war because of the cold war some Trotskyists thought Stalinism would be forced to play a revolutionary role or was already playing a progressive role. Bartell wanted to concentrate on maneuvering within the CP periphery. Cochran's base was in industrial cities like Detroit. Cochran reflected an adaptation to the trade union bureaucracy. He was primarily interested in maneuvering within the trade union bureaucracy.

Bartell and Cochran had one thing in common. They were opposed to continuing as a Trotskyist party. They were opposed to Leninism. They were liquidationists who no longer believed the revolution needed a party. Both wings of the Cochranites were hostile to doing political party building work such as holding forums, running election campaigns, selling *The Militant*. The basic question of the 1953 split with Cochran was over whether we need or do not need a Leninist party.

Because the Cochranites were overwhelmingly proletarian and involved in trade unions, Cannon in this fight emphasized that what we need are political revolutionaries, not just trade unionists. Cannon, Dobbs, Kerry and Hansen polemicized in favor of maintaining a Leninist party. To them this was the crucial question.

Trade union work had been our main arena of work and source of party building recruitment because the unions were the center of radicalization from the mid-thirties up to the late 40's. No one four years ago advocated we get into the women's movement because it did not exist and no one predicted it would soon appear. Four years ago we spoke of the antiwar movement and black struggle because that is what existed *objectively*. It is no surprise that the quotations from Dobbs, Kerry and Hansen speak of trade union work. In 1953 we expected that a revival of the class struggle would be-

gin within the union movement. That is, the next radicalization would be similar to the previous radicalization. Even more accurately, we can say that in 1953 we expected a revival of the previous radicalization. There was as yet no signs that history would develop along a different course.

Bartell wanted to maneuver with the CP and Cochran with the trade union bureaucracy. They were looking for gimmicks to get around building the party. Cochran did not want to accept the fact that for the next immediate period we had to keep our forces in the unions among the rank and file, and that we could not compromise ourselves with the present bureaucratic leadership in the unions.

Consider in this light this quote from Dobbs in the minority resolution: "Talent is very useful, as are adroit tactical maneuvers. But nobody can cheat the laws of the class struggle through talent, maneuvers, or any other gimmick. To win leadership in fact, as well as in name, and to apply class struggle politics in union tactics, we must have strength in the ranks."

Dobbs is saying gimmicks cannot replace slow party building strategy and, to apply class struggle politics in the unions, we must stay in the ranks. He is polemicizing against Cochran under 1953 conditions. Dobbs is not saying, regardless of unforeseen circumstances, at all times, under all conditions, regardless of the size of the party we must orient toward colonizing in the unions.

Bartell kept claiming that we had to keep our eyes open to all kinds of unexpected opportunities. His underlying intention in saying this was to abandon the party. As events unfolded later, it became clear that, for wrong reasons, Bartell was saying things which turned out to be partially right. But we should be clear that Bartell was all for penetrating the unions. I quote: "What about the proletarian, or trade union, orientation? The answer we give to this question (not only verbally—but in action) is of the greatest importance, both for our future possibilities and for the health of our movement today." "We will succeed in influencing the movement, and in putting flesh on the skeleton of the party only to the extent we are rooted in the factories. This fact alone dictates the placing of every possible comrade in some factory or union." (From Vol. 15, no. 1 February 1953)

If you had never studied the Cochran fight and simply read the minority document, what would you think it was all about? The minority document presents the fight as though it was Bartell on one side, saying: let's go to greener pastures—students, Blacks etc., while Dobbs, Kerry and Hansen were saying: no, let's go to the unions.

They quote Dobbs, Kerry and Hansen totally out of context.

In fact, they deliberately give the impression that when Dobbs says: you cannot cheat the laws of the class struggle by gimmicks and maneuvers that he was referring to working outside of the trade unions. No, he was referring to abandoning building a Leninist party and trying to advance socialism without a party. Concretely he was referring to what Cochran proposed to do with our base in the unions at that time.

Hansen's charge of the light brigade refers to Bartell's

non-Leninist concepts of relating to movements without consistent party building and penetrating the mass movement as a permanent strategy. Kerry, Dobbs and Hansen emphasized trade union work in 1953 because it was our main area of work and, in the long run, a central aspect of party building.

Today we face, in a way, a similar debate. The key question is: what should we do to build the party. There are many things you can say that are true in the long run. We must be based in the unions, we must be prepared to advocate workers defense guards, we must be a mass party, etc.

But there are only two things which apply at all times under all conditions. They are: (1) We must have a correct revolutionary program, that is, a correct over-all analysis of the perspectives of the coming American revolution and a correct analysis of the present conjuncture; and (2) we must decide what to do next which best fits building towards that final goal of a mass party. The first is program and the second is policy: what to do next.

But the minority objects to this. They say, even if the antiwar, women's, Black and Chicano movements, etc., are the best area for party building, the party cannot last, cannot maintain a correct program and line unless we have the right composition, that is, industrial workers. Some minority comrades say we will give up our program; others say we have already given up our program.

The minority resolution implies both. But let's put that confusion on their part aside for the moment.

Let us look at what the Cochran fight teaches about composition. It was precisely a heavily proletarian section that capitulated and abandoned the program. What does that prove? It proves that composition is only one of various factors which enter into the dynamics of maintaining a correct program. The conclusion we must draw is not that composition does not matter, it does, but that the minority is making a fetish out of the issue.

Because they really disagree on the basic two points I mentioned above. One, they do not really agree with our analysis of the present period and secondly, they do not agree with our conclusion from that analysis of what to do next, how to build the party today. The minority reflects a conservative mood regarding the present radicalization and, in a desperate effort, are trying to scare us into thinking that all is lost unless we run now pell-mell to the trade unions.

In their frenzy they distort party history and take all kinds of quotes out of context to try and panic us into making an incorrect move in regard to the unions. Rather than working up their list of 108 quotes in their document, they would have been much better off if they would have carefully shown us where they disagree with our analysis of this period.

June 29, 1971

THE UNIONS AND THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

by Don Gurewitz, Boston Branch

The document "For a Proletarian Orientation" begins its section on antiwar work with the following: "an adaptation to the union bureaucrats is most apparent in our work in the antiwar movement." What has our antiwar work actually consisted of in the past couple years—in fact, since the antiwar movement began?

Every effort has been directed toward building mass actions—the biggest this country has ever seen—for immediate withdrawal of the imperialist army from Indochina. To do this, we have sought to create a united front coalition with other radical groups and the accepted leadership of mass organizations. We have sought out the Stalinists, social democrats, ultralefts, pacifists, union bureaucrats, etc.

In order to involve the trade unions we seek the unions' formal endorsement, we seek the endorsement of their present leadership. Is that adapting to the trade union bureaucracy?

I say "no"—I say we actually have built a principled and powerful united front type coalition—which includes sections of the trade union bureaucracy—and used it to build exactly what *we* want—mass independent actions in the streets for immediate withdrawal from Southeast Asia.

When they accuse the party of adapting to the trade union bureaucracy the question the minority comrades raise is whether or not our united front strategy in the antiwar movement has been correct. In their document the minority tells us: "Practically the entire effort of the party to involve the labor movement in the antiwar movement has been in securing the support and endorsement of union bureaucrats."

In his presentation to the Boston branch Comrade McCann told us that we "have done more to line up capitalists in this national coalition, done more to line up bourgeois candidates and, needless to say, trade union bureaucrats than we have with the GIs." He misses the point entirely.

We *have* put a lot of energy into getting endorsements from trade union bureaucrats and even their bourgeois political bosses. But getting their endorsement for what *we* want, mass actions in the streets, is not adapting. It would only be adapting if, to get their endorsement, we changed or abandoned our line.

My impression, however, is just the opposite. I think most comrades would agree that our mass-action-in-the-streets-for-immediate-withdrawal line seems to be gaining considerable ground in the antiwar movement—in fact, at a truly impressive rate.

Does the minority dispute this?

Comrade McCann is worried that we "have done more" to line up capitalists and their agents in Congress and the unions than we have done to get out GIs. But there were thousands of GIs and veterans in the streets April 24. How did they get there if we did so little to turn them out? The truth is that we *did* do a tremendous amount to get GIs.

The most important thing is that we built a broad coalition and spent hundreds of hours lining up endorsements from reformists with mass influence. Does anyone really believe that we could have turned out so many GIs, not to mention workers, without the broad coalition? I repeat—

we get endorsements from reformist forces not as a way of adapting but in order to build a united front action. And I ought to add that we *seem* to be doing a pretty good job.

Wouldn't Comrade McCann agree that April 24 was a tremendous success? That it saw the largest working class—and GI—participation in a political demonstration aimed at the government in all the postwar period?

Just look at April 24. *The Militant* carried many articles reporting items like the following: In New York our work in winning trade union endorsements led to the distribution, by trade unionists, of over 100,000 leaflets to rank and filers. And the leaflets were paid for by the unions. The endorsements these comrades are so concerned about are actually one of the most important aspect of building the united front and reaching the ranks.

Why are united fronts so important? Why are they necessary? The united front is one of the cornerstones of our strategy primarily because the reformists are in the leadership of mass organizations, and, more specifically, are in the leadership of mass *working class* organizations. Despite the rotten betrayals of the trade union bureaucracy, the workers in their great mass still follow their leadership. The workers are not inclined to move without the leadership.

The reformists are deeply entrenched in the mass organizations, especially the unions, and they are today the recognized and accepted leadership of the vast bulk of the working class organizations. It is this *fact* that dictates the necessity of our bringing the bureaucrats, and the liberals into the coalition, into the antiwar movement.

Not understanding this, the minority react only with fear the minute any part of the trade union bureaucracy appears. In their document they tell us that unless the party launches what they call "a massive campaign directed at involving the rank and file," the solicitation of trade union endorsements "will only serve to identify us with the bureaucrats in the eyes of the rank and file." This is a statement to marvel at.

Picture this, comrades: The meatcutter bureaucrats in Boston endorse April 24—we can not leaflet the meatcutters rank and file because unfortunately we do not have enough cadre—and all of a sudden the meatcutters in Boston now automatically associate the SWP with the bureaucracy. Truly amazing!

The reason they are so confused and cynical about the antiwar movement and so worried about our involvement with trade union bureaucrats is because they simply don't understand the united front concept. At a time when the reformists have the allegiance of millions and we are not even a mass party, a united front of action with the reformists is a *prerequisite* for drawing the mass of workers into motion.

That the self-proclaimed "proletarian orientation" comrades don't understand this basic concept of Leninism comes through time and again in their document and their remarks. They point in the direction, not of a united front with the working class and reformist organizations and leaderships *as they exist today*, but rather, in the direction of trying to work around the current leadership and precipitating premature power struggles in the unions.

They seem to feel that, rather than having to reach and mobilize the workers through building united fronts with their leadership, the party is strong enough to enter the unions and challenge the reformists for control. Their document tells us, "Above all,"—above all, comrades, "Above all the party must be inside the trade unions to organize and direct the antiwar sentiments of the rank and file." They counterpose to building a united front with the official leadership the building of rank and file antiwar groups.

Actually the two are not in conflict but one aids the other. The more bureaucrats endorse an action, the better are the chances that the rank and file can organize antiwar committees.

They tell us, "What the labor skates fear most and try to thwart and impede in every way they can, is the independent organization of the rank and file around political questions like the war." And what does that tell them? Nothing about building a united front. Only that it is "the independent organization of the rank and file . . . that the SWP must encourage and aid." That is a dangerous oversimplification. Such a one-sided approach can lead to sectarianism, to turning our back on the workers where they are today. That is the path followed by the so-called independent rank and file union formations of the IS, the Spartacists, PL, the Wohlforthites and all the other sectarians and dreamers.

Let me give a couple of examples of the minority's total lack of understanding on this point. Most of us in the party thought it was a big step forward that a number of unions mobilized their membership and hired transportation for April 24. The minority doesn't agree.

"When the bureaucrats for their own reasons provide trains and/or buses and mobilize their rank and file for a march on Washington this is not a rank and file action, it is an action of the tops. . . ." Think about that. When thousands of hospital workers from local 1199 in New York boarded buses and trains to go to Washington April 24 that was not a rank and file action—it was an action of the tops—all 2,000 of them.

Why? Because the bureaucrats rented the buses. You can really see how off-base the thinking is if you apply the same logic to the question of strikes. By their tortured logic most strikes today are not "rank and file actions" since, despite the increase in wildcats, most strikes today are still called by the union bureaucracy, albeit "for their own reasons."

What these comrades are in effect saying is that no action organized by the current reformist trade union leadership, who do *everything* "for their own reasons," can be considered a "real" rank and file action.

What they miss in all this, of course, is the fact that, just because bureaucrats have "their own reasons," doesn't mean that the action is not a product of pressure from the ranks and worthy of support. In fact, one of the biggest "reasons" the bureaucrats *have* for providing leadership for mass actions—including strikes and antiwar actions—is precisely to try and curb and contain pressure from the ranks.

There is today mass antiwar sentiment in the labor movement and the general population which constitutes a *terrific* pressure on the labor fakers. Unfortunately, the counterresolution comrades simply can't see it. They are so afraid of the bureaucrats, they do not see the power of the masses behind the labor fakers' actions.

They tell us, "*The Militant* often ascribes the bureaucrats' support to the antiwar movement to pressure from the ranks. This pressure in most cases, does not exist. If it did, there would obviously be large union contingents in antiwar demonstrations and the rank and file would be involved in the building of the antiwar movement." There is no pressure from the ranks because if there was there would automatically be large-scale action and involvement. What confusion!

If there is *anything* we understand that our opponents do not it is that tremendous pressure *can* be building among the masses but *not* be realized in action because of the lack of *leadership*. Look at the Black community. Who is more against the war or more combative? Yet there are no large Black contingents—because there is no *leadership*.

It is exactly this crisis of leadership that makes the united front so important. The authors of this document are so confused on this point that in the very next paragraph they tell us that two of the four reasons bureaucrats act against the war are: 1. "their jobs are threatened by the agitation in the ranks caused by the war-induced inflation" and 2. "they want to keep under thumb and control any possible development of a desire in the ranks to actively participate in the antiwar movement."

There is no pressure from the workers—they just threaten the bureaucrats' jobs. These comrades don't even know what they see when they see it. The pressure *is* there. It is no *accident* that the overwhelming majority of trade union bureaucrats whose endorsement the antiwar coalition has won so far have been *local* officials, those closest to the ranks. You have only to look at the list of endorsers of April 24 to see how true this is.

They tell us that, if pressure from the workers existed, there would automatically be large contingents and massive involvement. The party's approach has nothing in common with this crass *spontaneism*. The party's approach is built on an understanding of the key importance of *leadership* in determining whether or not the sentiments of the masses will be translated into action. That is precisely why so much effort is invested in building the antiwar coalition, in lining up all those endorsements which the "proletarian orientation" comrades recoil from in horror.

The irony is that, in turning from the united front type approach and pointing in the direction of trying to circumvent the incumbent trade union leadership, minority comrades are actually turning away from the best way to fight the bureaucracy. They simply don't understand that the united front helps establish a *political alternative* to the trade union bureaucracy, the alternative of mass, independent action in the streets. And it helps us create such a political alternative in a way that no amount of "rooting" with our limited cadres could possibly do in this period.

A good example is a couple of things I saw in Washington during the building of April 24. The Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild is the second largest newspaper guild in the country. It has 1900 members. At a typical membership meeting on March 24 of only 55 people out of 1900 the local voted to endorse April 24. Subsequently 100 members of the local petitioned for a referendum to reverse the endorsement. The referendum was granted—at which point the supporters of April 24

in the union organized a committee and began to pass out leaflets and try and build support.

They leafleted every single member of the union—all 1900—not once but twice. When the referendum occurred it really shook the union up. Well over one-half the membership voted. Although the endorsement of April 24 failed by a handful of votes, the committee had a profound impact on the union—and they kept right on going to build April 24.

An even more interesting case is written up in the April 21 *Washington Post*. "Four Washington-area locals of the country's largest union of federal workers yesterday challenged the power of their national leadership to curb their support of legal antiwar activities. They called a news conference to express their support for one of their number, Local 650, which represents 550 patent office workers. On April 8, Local 650 received a 'cease and desist' order from AFGE President John F. Griner in connection with an antiwar resolution. In its resolution, Local 650 demanded 'immediate and total withdrawal' of US troops from SE Asia. It also endorsed and agreed 'to help build' demonstrations called by the NPAC.

"The four locals issued a statement which concluded by saying that any action taken by AFGE headquarters that affects the autonomy of locals would be met with legal action. In addition to the presidents of the four locals initiating the action, the statement was signed by 18 officers of nine other area locals." The antiwar movement has had that *profound* an impact on the working class—and is just beginning to bring them into antiwar actions.

There is an upsurge of labor militancy taking place—strikes against the government, militant defiance of government attempts to intimidate strikers, more militant picket lines. Would anyone deny that the antiwar movement, this mass movement with its example of independent mass action in the streets—just what we advocate for labor—would anyone deny that this movement, which has been in the streets now for six years, has been a major factor in shattering the relative class peace of the fifties? Certainly no Marxist would.

The antiwar movement has played a major role in stimulating the new labor militancy—and a much bigger role than any amount of "rooting" in this period ever could have.

The minority has made some incredible statements in relation to the antiwar movement. When thousands of workers board buses to go demonstrate against the war,

that is not a rank and file action—it is an action of the tops! If workers were exerting pressure on the bureaucrats to get involved in the antiwar movement, there would *automatically* be mass actions! They have accused the party of adapting to the trade union bureaucracy. They have implied a course for the party which would take us into the unions to precipitate premature power struggles with the current reformist leadership.

Behind all this lies a tremendous pessimism about the party's work. It is the same pessimism, conservative hesitation and fear that these comrades show toward *all* the living movements—and not just to the mass movements but to the growth of the party as well. These comrades simply cannot understand the dynamics of the antiwar movement or any of the other social movements going on now or *what it takes to draw the organized working class into them*.

They do not see the opportunities or the successes—only the "dangers." To them the united front is not an absolutely necessary tactic to draw the workers into antiwar actions—it is a dangerous trap laid by the capitalists, liberal politicians and trade union bureaucracy to ambush and corrupt the party.

Our party is the only tendency on the left which has consistently and successfully fought to build and maintain a broad united front as the *organizational prerequisite* for building mass actions against the war and drawing the working class into antiwar activity. All of our opponents—PL, the Spartacists, the Workers League, IS, the CP—all of the petty bourgeois tendencies on the left have opposed or sought to destroy the united front at every turn. All have accused us of abandoning the working class and adapting to the petty bourgeoisie in building the united front.

Although many of our opponents have tried to bury themselves up to their eyeballs in the factories, *none* have been able to organize even the most modest working class participation in antiwar activities. Only the SWP, with our emphasis on building the united front type coalition and drawing in the accepted reformist leadership of the working class, only we have been able to mobilize tens of thousands of workers to participate in broad mass mobilizations like April 24.

And if we stick to our current orientation, we have every reason to believe that we are in for even bigger successes in the future.

June 29, 1971

THE CRITICS OF OUR POLICY ON THE GIs
by Matilde Zimmermann, Boston Branch

In his presentation to the Boston branch, Comrade McCann put considerable emphasis on his disagreement with our current policy on the draft. In fact, he twice seemed to imply that dropping the proletarian military policy was where the party's degeneration all began. I would like to review what the proletarian military policy was and how our present position has evolved.

What was the situation, in the US and internationally, when the SWP, in collaboration with Comrade Trotsky, developed the proletarian military policy in 1940?

1. The masses of American workers were pro-war—that is, they would support US entry into a war which they saw as a crusade against fascism.

2. The masses favored military conscription—peacetime conscription had just been introduced in the US for the first time and met with almost no opposition.

3. The central aspect of the second World War was an inter-imperialist conflict in which we as Marxists did not take sides.

4. The balance of forces was much less favorable to the Trotskyist movement than it is today—both in relation to US capitalism and in relation to the CP and other pro-war forces on the left.

5. The most radicalized workers were union conscious, having been through the experience of the 30's, and they had a strong allegiance to their trade unions.

The SWP developed a position on the question of the military which was true to our principle of opposing imperialist conscription and at the same time understandable at least to the more advanced workers. To quote from Comrade Dobbs' description of the proletarian military policy, in the 1965 document which McCann insisted did not exist: "Starting from the fact that the workers were for compulsory military service, we counterposed to the capitalist draft policy the concept of conscription by the workers organizations to form well-armed and well-trained labor detachments." Our position on the draft was a minimal one which was not even explicitly antiwar—although we of course educated on the nature of the war in addition. . . . In 1940 we had to think of ways of raising transitional demands which could weaken the strong hold which capitalism had on the workers, such as the demand for trade union control of conscription and military training. . . ." To quote again from Dobbs: "Capitalist militarism had to be taken as an established reality which we were not strong enough to abolish. We had no choice but to adapt our strategy and tactics to the existing reality and to shape a course which took its start from the facts of capitalist rule over the working class."

One final thing to be pointed out about the proletarian military policy was that it was just that—a "policy." You will never read anything in *The Militant* about a "proletarian military policy movement." This was not a policy which had mass support or around which we could have attempted to build mass actions; it was a propagandistic technique devised to deal with the reality of social patriotic attitudes among even the most class-conscious workers during war time.

Now what is the actual situation we find ourselves in today?

1. The vast majority of the American people are opposed

to the Indochina war. In fact, we find a phenomenon which has never been seen in the USA before: mass defeatism about an ongoing war.

2. Capitalist militarism is everywhere on the defensive—not only from the antiwar movement but from within the army itself where every aspect of a racist, dehumanizing, imperialist military is being challenged.

3. There is massive opposition to the draft, a sentiment which even sectors of the ruling class are forced to recognize and accommodate themselves to.

4. The army is disaffected, demoralized, with a hatred of the war so deep that it can no longer be denied by anyone.

5. The US military is a counterrevolutionary instrument whose purpose above all else is to put down the colonial revolution and to contain or wipe out the workers states.

Our present position on the draft flows from this reality: We openly propagandize for abolishing capitalist conscription by raising the demands "abolish the draft" or "repeal the draft." We have a strategy for how best to fight against the draft: that individual resistance is ineffective because it blocks building a mass movement which can end the draft. (It should be pointed out that a mass antidraft movement *does* exist, as an inseparable part of the mass antiwar movement. It is not true, as Comrade McCann said, that the antidraft movement "fell on its face" and we dropped it and ran. He equated the antidraft movement with the pacifist card-burning "we won't go" episodes and slandered the SWP by suggesting we built that type of movement.)

We raise the demand "abolish the draft" within and as an integral part of the antiwar movement—seeing no conflict between it and the demand for immediate withdrawal from Indochina. The best way to fight against the draft is by mobilizing the masses of American people in independent actions in the street against the war and the draft. We are seeing as a living reality something Trotsky foresaw in 1938. To quote from the Transitional Program: "the struggle against war must first of all begin with the revolutionary mobilization of the . . . youth."

That is our position on the political question of capitalist conscription and how to fight it. McCann also raises a separate question, which he confuses with the above but is not the same. That is the question of what members of the SWP and YSA do when faced with the possibility of induction. The party has at no time advocated that its members avoid the draft—by mail or in any other way. Individual non-compliance with the draft is an incorrect political strategy and it is illegal. When drafted, individual Trotskyists have gone into the service, not hiding their political beliefs or affiliations from their draft boards, the army, or their fellow GIs.

As revolutionary socialists on leave from the SWP or YSA, individuals have spoken out in support of immediate withdrawal from Vietnam, free speech for citizens in uniform, and self-determination for Afro-Americans. They have actively led struggles around these issues, and on the basis of this activity have recruited others to the ideas of Marxism, with the perspective of recruiting them, after their discharge, to the YSA and SWP. The classic example of this was the case of GIs United at Ft. Jackson and Ft. Bragg. Everyone is familiar with the current case of Ed

Jurenas, a Trotskyist on leave from the YSA, whose courageous defense of his antiwar beliefs and constitutional right to express them, in the face of the pressure of the most extreme isolation, has sparked a civil liberties struggle which is once again turning the army on its ear.

The SWP's "position" in relation to draft-age male party members is very straightforward and no secret: (1) party members do not refuse induction or avoid the draft; (2) if drafted they are given a leave of absence from the YSA or SWP; (3) all servicemen and servicewomen, including revolutionary socialists, are protected by constitutional guarantees of their rights to free speech and expression.

Comrade McCann apparently does not agree. In fact, he does not *believe* that this is our position. Rather he believes that the SWP has the "despicable," also known as the "sinful," policy of keeping its members out of the army. He cites as his proof the fact that some members of the YSA have written to their draft boards informing them of their political beliefs and intention of exercising their rights to hold and express these beliefs after induction. He labels as "hogwash" and a lie the obvious explanation that such a letter seeks a written guarantee of the rights of the individual concerned to protect him from harassment and victimization in the army.

The reason he says it is hogwash is that any fool knows it is totally ridiculous to expect to get such a letter out of the army—and, therefore, the real reason must be to avoid the draft.

In refutation I would like to submit the following letter, dated July 5, 1968:

Dear Mr. Miles:

This is in reply to your letter concerning your possible induction into the Armed Forces.

If you are inducted into the Army, you will be subject to the same rules and regulations as any other soldier. You will receive full benefit of your constitutional rights as a soldier and a citizen. As a citizen you are entitled

to any belief you may have; however, if by your actions you violate regulations, you will be subject to disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

I hope you will find this information helpful.

Sincerely,

s/A. P. Hodges
Lieutenant Colonel, USA
Chief, Waiver Branch, PAD, EPD

If Comrade McCann thinks that this letter (and the others which have been received by other YSAers facing induction) was *not* protection, if he thinks that this was *not* one of the reasons for the army's inability to court martial and undesirably discharge Joe Miles as they had done Howard Petrick, then he cannot be expected to understand an elementary precaution protecting our members and our organization.

Comrade McCann stated that the SWP's real policy on the draft was something different from what it actually is, that in fact the real policy was to avoid the draft, that in fact the SWP was in a position of counseling young men to avoid the draft. All of which is false and an attack on our organization, its proletarian norms and its legal standing. Comrade McCann went to the almost incredible extreme of lauding those who, *he says*, "did not go along with that hogwash and went into the army" (a phrase which he repeated three times), who he says refused to follow what he claims was the real policy of the democratically elected leadership of the SWP.

Comrade McCann has every right to disagree with the SWP position on the draft, to write a document motivating whatever his position actually is, which I for one would like to know. If he is interested in improving the SWP's political program and policy without imperilling the organization, and not just in scoring factional points, that is the course for him to follow.

June 29, 1971

THE ROLE AND COMPOSITION OF THE STUDENTS

by Mark Friedman, Boston Branch

I want to deal with the role of students in the coming American revolution, what role they have played in the past and how this can be related to the present pre-convention discussion.

First, let me give some statistics concerning students. In 1900, for instance, 6 percent graduated from high schools and were almost completely the children of the bourgeoisie and the upper petty-bourgeoisie. At that time, one-third of all high school graduates entered college and finished, approximately the same ratio as today. The social difference is that in 1900 almost all college students were bourgeois or petty-bourgeois.

The percentage of high school graduates grew continuously, 16 percent in 1920, 50 percent in 1940, and 80 percent in 1970. Sometime between 1920 and 1940 working class youth became the majority of high school graduates.

Colleges followed this same pattern about one-quarter of a century later. There were 250,000 college students in 1900, again primarily the sons and daughters of the rich and the petty-bourgeoisie. In 1930 there were one million college students, in 1940, one and a half million. In 1940 the one and a half million college students represented 16 percent of all college age youth. Most of these college graduates, as well as those of previous years, became petty-bourgeois or went into managerial positions.

By 1940 we can see the beginnings of an influx of proletarian youth into the colleges. In the late 1950's and early 1960's this was speeded up. By 1960 there were already 3 1/2 million college students. And now, according to 1971 statistics, there are close to 8 1/2 million college students. The reason for this immense leap was that the capitalist class, due to the technological revolution, needed a tremendous amount of skilled technicians and workers in order to run the capitalist machinery.

Obviously those going to college now are not only the sons and daughters of the rich; the vast majority in the last ten years are proletarian youth. At the time of this great influx of proletarian youth perhaps 15% were of petty-bourgeois origin: property owners comprising about 5%, doctors, lawyers, and professionals about 5%, and all other layers that can justifiably be called petty-bourgeois, put together all total under 15%.

Where have the rest of the 5 million college students added in the last ten years come from, keeping in mind that the percentage of the petty-bourgeoisie is continuing to decline? The minority, and I quote from "For a Proletarian Orientation," page 22, says that: "The fact that there are more students from working class backgrounds today than there were in the past is of little significance. . . ." They see it as insignificant that so many future workers of America are today on the campuses which presents an entirely different picture of America's future.

To give an example of the overwhelmingly proletarian composition of the campuses, we can cite the fact that there are today approximately 3,600,000 17 year olds in this country. Of this number about 2,800,000 graduate high school or about 80% of all people in this age category. I don't think that anyone will disagree that the overwhelming composition of high schools is proletarian.

Of these almost 3 million high school graduates, almost 2 million go on to enter college. From these statistics,

anyone can see that the overwhelming composition of colleges across the country is proletarian. This is confirmed by a study just finished of high school graduates in New York City that revealed that 76 percent of high school graduates go on to some form of higher education. This figure was 57 percent last year. Open admissions increased the percentage almost 20 percent in one year!

This 20 percent is entirely proletarian and mostly made up of Blacks and Puerto Ricans. This would lead anyone to conclude that, *if anything*, colleges are becoming more proletarian in composition. In addition, 61 percent of the graduates come from families with an income of \$10,000 or less. A breakdown of the ethnic groups going on to college reveals that 88 percent of Orientals go on to college, 78 percent of whites, 67 percent of Blacks, 67 percent of Latin Americans, and 63 percent of Puerto Ricans. These statistics should be sufficient to prove the proletarian composition of today's colleges and that trend should continue, especially in the enrollment of Third World people.

Obviously this general fact has its variations. We cannot ignore the differences in composition between campuses like Harvard and U. Mass. Harvard is obviously more upper class in composition. But how many people are at colleges like Harvard in relation to enrollment at U. Mass or State University of New York which has an enrollment of 179,000? By the way, the concentration of proletarian youth is greater on the campuses than in the factories.

Does the minority refute the statistics I have given? Are high school students now petty-bourgeois also? Do they own stores? Or does it matter solely what class your parents come from? The minority gives no statistics whatsoever but makes all kinds of claims. From reading their document one would think that most students came from petty-bourgeois homes. This is factually wrong.

The minority also asserts that the party is petty-bourgeois because it is primarily recruiting from students. Actually we are primarily non-industrial proletariat. That is, most SWPers work in non-industrial sectors of the working class. There are very few shopkeepers, farmers, lawyers, dentists, etc. in the SWP.

One other point I want to deal with concerns the differences in atmosphere on the campuses and in the factories. The general atmosphere on the campuses is undoubtedly petty-bourgeois. The whole individualistic scene, preparing oneself to become a skilled worker, so you can get an easier job. The tremendous alienation that exists in the factories does not exist to the same degree on the campuses. Because of the general structure of mass social labor, workers in factories tend to develop a proletarian consciousness. Yet this general long-term trend cannot be applied mechanically in a rigid and formal manner. Today, the accepted ideology in the factories is unquestionably petty-bourgeois and in some instances pro-imperialist.

Comrades in factories may be in many instances under more social pressure than our campus comrades. This was not true in 1938 where the situation in many respects was reversed. The social consciousness of students today is far ahead of the industrial proletariat on many key political questions. The attitudes of students on the

campuses, who are America's future workers represent a real challenge to bourgeois ideology and values regarding culture, imperialism, racism, sexism, the family, life styles and general social consciousness.

They do not have the bourgeois prejudices against gays and Blacks accepted by the majority of the industrial workers. How do you think a worker in a factory who announced that he/she was gay would be treated? How would this reaction compare to the reaction on a campus? The social consciousness of students on the campuses today concerning the major social issues of the day—the war, Black liberation, women's liberation, etc., is far higher than in the factories. This reality will undoubtedly put petty-bourgeois pressures on our comrades working in basic industry. Contrary to what the minority says, consciousness is determined in a far more comprehensive and dynamic manner than where you happen to work or be active. So we know then that our comrades working in basic industry will resist bending to the sexism, racism, and pro-imperialist moods that still prevail, just as our student comrades will resist bending to the petty-bourgeois individualism of pot-smoking and the like.

The minority charges that we underestimate the pressures from the petty-bourgeoisie transmitted through students. It is not students alone who act as a transmission belt of petty-bourgeois ideas into the working class. There are also the trade union bureaucracies, the mass media, schools, churches, the army, and other bourgeois institutions, including the family.

Finally, I want to draw a few lessons from the May 1970 student strike which apparently comrades in the minority have not yet absorbed. The national student strike was not a strike of the petty-bourgeois storekeepers; it was in part a strike of America's future working class. It was an independent antiwar strike which was a reflection of the mass antiwar sentiment that exists throughout the country. The students proved to the world through this strike that they were the vanguard of the antiwar movement and could detonate a mass movement.

Our strategy for the student movement and our concept of the "Red University" came through as a vivid and living portent in the May student strike. Where were our opponents who have politically abandoned the youth on the campuses with their super-workerism, and by doing so have isolated themselves from the center of the present radicalization? The May student strike revealed the power and social weight students have. Social power is primarily

determined by the relations to production but not that alone; it includes many other factors like relative numbers and concentration.

The capitalist class would be hurt economically and politically if the colleges were to be closed down for an extended period of time. It is amusing to note that while the bourgeoisie realized the power and the potential of the student strike, the people within our own ranks who want to straighten us out don't understand the role of students or that May 1970 proved the extent of the importance of students.

The inability of the minority to see the power of this strike is another instance where they do not appreciate or correctly appraise the current radicalization. What analysis do they have for all the political activity going on throughout the country, especially on the campuses? What caused the capitalists to retreat on the invasion of Cambodia? Some comrades in the minority think it was the monsoons!

In "For a Proletarian Orientation," page 25, the minority alleges that George Breitman says that students can lead the revolution by themselves. They take a statement from Breitman: "It's true they'll never be able to do the whole job by themselves, they need to seek allies among the exploited and the oppressed. . . ." From this they maliciously infer that Breitman believes the student movement has the leading role in the revolution.

Their conclusion does not follow from this quote and I'm sure they could never find a quote from Breitman to meet their needs. We could say the same thing about women: "They'll never be able to do the whole job by themselves, that they need to seek allies among the exploited and the oppressed." Does this now imply that we believe that women, and not the working class, will lead the revolution? Only if you have a rigor mortis of the brain which unfortunately affects the logic of the minority.

We reiterate our position that the coming American revolution is going to be led by the working class, the most important section being the industrial proletariat coupled with the national liberation struggles of Third World people. Other mass movements fighting oppression will aid the revolutionary struggle both as independent forces and by increasing the mobilization of workers and oppressed national minorities.

June 29, 1971