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BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY IN THE
CURRENT RADICALIZATION, PRESENTATION

By Bob Himmel, San Francisco Branch

[The San Francisco branch invited a representative of the authors of *For A Proletarian Orientation* to participate in a debate June 20, 1971 with a supporter of the National Committee's draft political resolution. They chose comrade Ralph Levitt of Oakland-Berkeley to present their views. Since comrade Levitt was unavailable to give the summary, it was given by comrade Bill Massey, also of Oakland-Berkeley.

It seemed to me that many of the points raised in the course of the debate would be of interest to the entire membership. I therefore proposed to comrade Levitt that both of our presentations be submitted for publication in the *Discussion Bulletin*. Comrade Levitt refused to do this.

I have, therefore, sent in an edited version of my presentation and summary (*Discussion Bulletin* No. 19) in this debate.]

The political resolution adopted by the party in 1969 at its last national convention contains a deepgoing historical analysis of American capitalism, and provides the essential underpinning for the draft political resolution that is presented to the party membership by the National Committee this year.

The 1971 political resolution, building on the 1969 resolution, includes various conjunctural aspects, such as the development or further growth of new movements. In summarizing the current political resolution, I want to include a number of points that were developed in the previous resolution to indicate basically how we characterize the current stage in the United States.

First, the unprecedented prosperity since the Second World War, which has been based on equally unprecedented military expenditures, has carried along with it a rising inflation. And this inflation has had the effect of undermining the international role of the dollar and helping to precipitate an international monetary crisis.

At the same time the economies of Western Europe and Japan have grown to the point where they are beginning to threaten the competitive position of American capitalism in the arena of world trade. The combination of these two factors has caused the American ruling class to cut back on social services, and to allow the uninterrupted deterioration of the cities and of the physical environment. In order to solve their basic economic problems the American capitalists have to look for ways to cut into the living standards of the American working class, both to make the workers pay a greater share of the war costs, and to improve the competitive position of American capitalism on the world market. The ruling class has tried a number of different devices to achieve this. They've tried to allow inflation under some control, to eat into the living standards of the workers by allowing the cost of living to creep upward.

But the response of the working class, even to this preliminary eroding of their living standards, has been a resistance through massive strike action, especially during the last couple of years. Also, the rulers run the risk in allowing an inflation to develop unchecked and that process itself will deepen the international monetary crisis. They've tried a controlled recession, which was intended

to have the dual effect of increasing unemployment, lowering, thereby the standard of living of the working class, and also bringing the inflation under control. What they got as a result of this experiment was a combination that I don't believe has been seen previously in the history of capitalism, both unemployment and at the same time a continuation of the inflation.

Now they're going to try a number of other things in the next period, but no matter what they try there's a real danger from the point of view of the capitalist class, that the American working class will not be willing, will not agree to give up lightly the standard of living that it has won through the militant strike struggles and union drives of the 1930s and 1940s.

It's unlikely that the working class can be persuaded out of any sense of patriotism or any other arguments, to give this standard of living up. And any attempt to cut into it drastically risks some pretty severe struggles.

These economic problems of the capitalists are serious enough. But they have other problems, as well. I want to just indicate two of them, although there are many more that, if we had the time, we could discuss. First, they have a serious military problem, just in Vietnam alone. Despite all their efforts, and expense, the United States has not been able to defeat the Vietnamese revolution. "Vietnamization" is not working. And the alternative of a military withdrawal from Vietnam would represent a catastrophic defeat for American imperialism.

Secondly, and closely related to the whole war question, the ruling class is confronted at home by a radicalization that has been drawing more and more layers of the American people into opposition, and into opposition to more and more aspects of the whole capitalist system. And it is this radicalization that provides the whole context, the whole framework for the work of the party in the period coming up.

How do we describe, how do we appreciate this radicalization that we talk about? The first thing that should be noted, and this was pointed out by Comrade Breitman at the Oberlin conference last year, is that there are significant differences between this radicalization and either of the two major radicalizations that preceded it in this century. The Debs radicalization, that is, the radicalization that preceded the First World War, represented a response and resistance to the transition that was taking place to fully-developed finance capitalism, or imperialism. It was based on large-scale industrialization, and a corresponding social dislocation throughout the country. The Debsian radicalization came to an end during the period of the First World War and the prosperity that followed it.

The radicalization of the 1930s was itself different from the first, and from the one we're experiencing now. Taking place in the depths of the most gigantic depression in American history, in response to massive unemployment and economic collapse, the radicalization was characterized by the unionization of the mass production industries which had previously been unorganized. This radicalization also came to an end and that end coincided with the moving of American imperialism into the Second World War.

What are the components of the current radicalization?

Historically, we can trace its beginnings to the emergence of the Black liberation movement in the late 1950s in the forms of the civil rights struggles, which very rapidly gave way to the clear expression of a Black nationalist consciousness among Black people. And this expression of nationalism set off a whole chain of explosions among other oppressed minorities. We now see nationalism not only among the Black people of the United States, but in the most recent period, most notably, the massive emergence into struggle of the Chicano nationalist movement.

Similar developments have taken place among Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. While the movement generated by the rise of Black nationalism among Black people has tended to be in a relative quiescence in the most recent period, largely as a result of the crisis of leadership that exists in the Black liberation movement, these other national liberation movements have advanced at a tremendous rate.

Secondly, the student movement developed in the early sixties, reflecting the growing repulsion of young people largely on the college campuses, with the whole hypocrisy and sterility of American capitalism. This movement has escalated constantly since its first appearance as a part of and also independently of the whole generation of feeling against the war in Vietnam. The social weight and impact of this student movement can be seen best in the developments in the year 1970 following the invasion of Cambodia with the rash of massive student strikes following the Kent State and Jackson State killings that swept the entire country and brought into concrete focus for our movement in this country the concept of the Red University that we had developed.

In the most recent period, we've seen the massive emergence of the women's liberation movement, growing out of and a part of the general radicalization that has been the predominant feature of American life in the past decade. The women's liberation movement is a movement revolting against the oppression of over half the population. Its thrust—as expressed in the demands of feminism—not only advances democratic demands but also is addressed to the whole social fabric, not only of capitalism, but class society as a whole.

The antiwar movement has dominated the last half of sixties. This originated as part of the general student radicalization, but very quickly passed beyond that, and clearly at this point reflects the overwhelming majority of the American people. And this response to the war, which sets its stamp on this whole period, remains the major radicalizing factor of American society at this time. It has penetrated everywhere, including into the ranks of the army itself.

Now, there's no sign of letup. As each layer moves into resistance and opposition, new layers appear, that perhaps never would have considered moving, going into open opposition against the system—such movements as the gay liberation movement, the movement for reform within the Catholic church, the movement for reforms in the prisons, among the prisoners. These new movements are an indication and a confirmation of the depth and scope of the current radicalization.

Now there's another aspect to this radicalization. We've seen a series of different movements develop through the years that have the characteristic both of independence, each having its own momentum and life, each raising its

own demands, and interdependence in seeking inspiration, in learning from the tactical experiences of the other movements. This whole complex of movements is characterized, I think, by an extremely uneven development. This is what indicates, in part, the independent character of each of these movements. One is not dependent on the other at any given moment. We've seen the experiences of a whole period where the Black liberation movement was in a lull, and at the same time Chicano liberation movement was coming into full flower and assuming massive proportions, reaching developments that the Black liberation movement had never achieved, leaping ahead in the organization of the Chicano Moratorium and La Raza Unida Party.

Now, what about the working class, and especially the trade union movement. At this point, the working class has not yet gone into motion as a class. There are a number of reasons for this. The struggles of the 1930s, that won the unionization for the mass production industries, resulted in substantial concessions, in the form of wages, working conditions and rights, for a large section of the American working class. Secondly, the privileged position of American imperialism has not yet required it to make an all-out attack on these gains that were the result of the struggles of the thirties. Thirdly, the labor bureaucracy that has grown up in a period of general quiescence on the part of the labor movement occupies now an objective existence as a heavy conservatizing factor and major obstacle for the next leap forward on the part of the trade unions. That's one side of the picture.

The other side is this: the radicalization *has* affected large layers of the working class. It's affected them as these independent movements develop in the sense that workers in many instances are not simply workers, but they are workers *and* women, they are workers *and* Chicanos, they are workers *and* Afro-Americans, they are workers *and* they are opposed to the war in Vietnam. And there's been a reflection in the organized working class, in the trade union movement, of the independent movements that have thus far grown up outside its ranks. This is already beginning to have an effect inside the union movement as it exists. We see the penetration of Black nationalist ideas in the form of a growing number of Black caucuses inside the unions, as one example; of feminist caucuses, organized by women workers inside of unions, raising feminist demands, demands for equality for women inside the union structure, as another example; participation by as yet relatively small, but growing sections of the labor movement itself in the various actions against the Vietnam war as a third example. The tests of the various referenda on the war that have been held over the past few years clearly indicate by an analysis of the vote in the working class districts that the sentiment among the workers against the war is as overwhelming, if not more so, than in any other section of the population.

What has not occurred is the self-conscious political response of the workers *as* workers. In our discussion and evaluation of the April 24th antiwar march, comrades took note of this, both those who participated in the trade union contingent and those who did not observe that there were many, many workers who were marching in the April 24th demonstration, but relatively few of them participated in the official trade union contingent. It is not, at this point, part of the thought process of the average worker that to oppose the war is to oppose the war as a worker.

Now what perspective flows from this situation? What do we project for the American revolution and our tasks in the next immediate period? Because these two are inter-related. The priorities of work that we lay down in a political resolution (and this is basically what a political resolution does), the tactical orientation we pursue, the allocation of the forces of the members of the party—all of that flows from a general perspective, our strategic orientation, our prognosis, how we expect on the basis of a careful analysis of the whole dynamic of capitalism, how we expect the struggle to unfold in the next period. The question that has to be considered by comrades in making a decision on whether this line is the correct one for the party to follow, is to decide first of all, is our prognosis correct, that is, is our estimate of the social reality accurate? And secondly, flowing from that, does our political perspective serve to advance this strategy?

Our basic premise is that the contradictions of capitalism will create the conditions for a successful socialist revolution. That the main and decisive force that will bring about that revolution is the American working class, acting as a class in its own name and interests. That's not to say that the American working class will be the only force, or the only important social force that will participate in the American revolution. The American revolution, as we see it, will have a combined character. It will be a combined revolution of the workers and the struggle of the oppressed nationalities for liberation.

Our prognosis carries with it the supposition that we do not expect that the independent movements that have grown up in the process of this radicalization will disappear and have simply a transitory character. We expect these movements and others that have not yet arisen to continue to exist and to participate in the revolutionary process.

We see a combined character to the coming American revolution, combining the national liberation struggles and the struggles of the workers for socialism, and incorporating with it all of the democratic and transitional demands that are being projected by the various independent movements that are incapable of full realization short of a socialist revolution. The decisive feature of the revolution is the transfer of state power to the working class. And our whole analysis of class society is that *social classes* hold state power. We see no basis to question that major premise.

Essential to the success of the revolution will be a mass, multinational revolutionary party, organized along Leninist lines, overwhelmingly working class in its composition, and with links to all of the struggles of all oppressed layers of the population. This conscious element—the party—is the decisive factor in a period when a revolutionary situation occurs, that determines, and *solely* determines, the success or failure of that revolution. This is the central lesson we have learned from the history of this century.

We don't create revolutionary situations, we don't radicalize the working class, just as we have not radicalized the students or Black people. The conditions of life radicalize people. And at a certain conjuncture that radicalization takes the form of masses of people going into open confrontation with the ruling class and posing—and this is where a revolutionary situation differs from a radicalization—the question of which class shall rule society. And

at that point, the existence of a conscious vanguard combat party is what spells success or failure in that instant of history.

Now, the SWP is not that party yet. That's a fundamental fact of life. We're a small nucleus of what that party will be. *And the central task before us is to build precisely such a party, and to build that party in advance of a revolutionary situation.* Because if we don't have it then, and the question of class power is posed, it's a little late in the game to begin the construction of the party at that point.

Our major task in the next period is to build the party, to enlarge the present nucleus, to increase the size and quality of our cadre, and to do that by winning to our program and taking into our ranks the best of the fighters in the existing mass movements of struggle. We must educate these cadres in the program and tradition of revolutionary socialism, gain experiences from the struggle by deepening our involvement, and by so doing, deepen the scope of the struggles themselves.

I indicated a number of differences between this radicalization and the ones preceding. There are a couple, or a few relatively unique features here, and I just want to highlight them. First of all, this radicalization, unlike any others, has developed during a period of unparalleled prosperity. And prosperity in the past has always had the effect of dampening radicalism, not strengthening it. Secondly, the movements have developed in wartime, and wartime has *always* had the effect in the past of *killing* whatever radicalization had occurred up to that point. Third, the durability of these movements is unprecedented. They have a certain staying power in the face of, and despite the absence of the working class, as a class, participating in the struggles. Fourth, what characterizes these movements is the independence from the ruling class in their demands and methods of struggle. The general theme that runs through all of the opposition movements is that they carry on their struggle in the streets. Fifth, all of these movements have thus far proven immune to all of the traditional tactics that the ruling class uses in order to head off radical opposition: red baiting, repression, and all the others.

Our expectation is that the objective contradictions that exist in American capitalism will deepen in the next period, and will create the conditions that will make the response of the working class, as the working class, inevitable. This process of working class radicalization will *not* repeat the pattern of the 1930s, and comrades shouldn't expect it to. In the 1930s, the working class was faced with a very elementary need before they could address themselves to anything else, the need of organizing the mass production industries in the United States. They did that. They don't have to repeat that experience.

The radicalization of the American working class will start from the highest point reached in the general development of radical struggles; working class consciousness in the next period will take *political* forms. I'm not saying that there won't be economic struggles, but the dominant characteristic of the next working class radicalization will be the entry of the class as a class into the arena of political struggle.

Let me sum up what we're talking about. First of all, because of the objective contradictions that we've described, and the growth of independent movements of opposition,

we expect that the radicalization will deepen and continue, not in a straight line, not without ups and downs, but will basically continue and that these social contradictions will radicalize the workers as a class and pose the question of class power. That's why the projection we make for the party in the next period is one of expansion, involvement, growth in every area of our work. We look forward to the election campaign coming up in 1972 as being the biggest, most productive and most fruitful opportunity we have had in the period since we've begun running election campaigns, for bringing our socialist program to larger and larger masses of people.

Secondly, when a revolutionary situation occurs, the outcome will be determined largely by whether or not we were successful in the prior period in building a revolutionary proletarian vanguard party that can provide conscious leadership to the working class and its allies.

Third, the Socialist Workers Party incorporates in its program, in its traditions, and in its living cadres the experiences of the past and present revolutionary struggles and the best expression of the theoretical contributions of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and all of the other great revolutionaries.

Fourth. The road to becoming a party in the full sense of the word, a mass party along Leninist lines, lies precisely in our ability to participate in and to give leadership to and recruit from the living mass movements, whatever form these mass movements take.

Now I want to deal with some of the arguments that are advanced against the perspectives in the political resolution by those comrades who have presented the document called *For A Proletarian Orientation*.

This document has been presented to the party as an alternative perspective for the party, an alternative to the perspective that we are proposing in the political resolution. And the comrades, in listening to the presentation and studying these documents, will have to make a choice in the process of voting for delegates, by voting on the lines of these resolutions in advance of the national convention.

It's not clear whether or not the minority document is based on a different analysis of the period in which we live. Comrades who are proposing an alternative line, must, I think, indicate, (1) either that they proceed from the same analysis that the majority does, but draw different conclusions, or (2) they have a different analysis, and they must present their analysis to motivate the conclusions that they draw.

Now I don't want to get sidetracked in this discussion, and I hope this won't happen in this discussion either, on a number of gross errors of fact and interpretation that appear in the minority document. I want to mainly deal with the political conclusions that these comrades have reached, because these are really the central questions on which the party will have to decide. I just want to point out some things that comrades should be alert to. Here are just a few examples of what I'm talking about:

A sizable section in the beginning of this document is devoted to a very sharp distinction that they feel must be made between the categories of productive and unproductive labor. This section is presented, apparently without any knowledge on the part of these comrades, or at least without attributing any importance to the fact that Marx himself wrote somewhat extensively on this subject, in the material that was left but not published in his life-

time, but which he intended to be part of a fourth volume of *Capital*. This material has been published under several different titles—one called *Theories of Surplus Value*. In reading this, it becomes obvious that it's false to the core to say, as these comrades did, that Marx never said that technicians produce value and also surplus value. Marx not only said precisely that, not only said that engineers and overseers can be productive, but also said that on occasion capitalists themselves can provide productive labor. He went to great pains to guard against the kind of mechanical treatment accorded in the document to these economic categories. I don't want to get any further into this question, but simply to indicate that comrades should correctly understand what Marx meant when he was developing these categories.

The second order of error made is one of historical sloppiness. For instance, they attempt to discredit a comment made by Jack Barnes to the effect that the Bolsheviks did not have a majority in the trade unions at the point where they won a majority in the Soviets immediately prior to the seizure of power in October 1917, and to prove their point they cite two sources, a quote from Trotsky from *The History of the Russian Revolution* and a quote from Doug Jenness quoting Badayev that appeared in the *ISR*. The quote from Trotsky was a quote from a chapter describing the July days that occurred between the February and October revolutions, where the Bolsheviks had a majority in the working class. In the course of the July days—an abortive and premature working class insurrection in Petrograd—the Bolsheviks were subjected to a heavy witch hunt, weakening their base and they virtually had to go underground. They never regained that formal majority in the trade union structure prior to October. The second quote, from Badayev is even less comprehensible because they're quoting from a book called *The Bolsheviks in the Czarist Duma*, which dealt with the experiences of the Bolsheviks in the period before the First World War; this is tantamount to using a quotation from someone writing in 1934 about the majority that the Communist Party had in a number of key industrial unions in the United States, and using that to make some point in the year 1971.

It's a bad method. There are a number of other things they do with quotations that are unfortunate. If comrades read them carefully they can pick them out for themselves. They've used a quote which is supposed to demonstrate one thing, but if you read it carefully, you see that it is demonstrating precisely the point that they're trying to use the quote to refute. An example of this is when they cite Trotsky in the Transitional Program about the growth of struggle movements outside as well as inside the trade unions.

So much for that. I simply offer a note of caution for comrades, urging them to read this material critically.

Now what's the central thrust of the projection advanced by the minority comrades? They state that the working class must play a key role in the American revolution, secondly that the American revolution will require, as we have learned in other experiences, a Leninist vanguard party. On this we can agree.

They proceed from that point of agreement to state a series of disagreements and criticisms. They indicate, in summary, that because of the peculiar feature of this

period, recruitment to the revolutionary party has been mainly petty bourgeois, especially students. Secondly, they state that the party is making a virtue of this necessity, and this has now become the permanent orientation of the party leadership. Thirdly, they say that the party has begun to adapt politically to the petty bourgeois milieu, and this is a threat to our revolutionary program. Fourth, to correct this deviation, they say that the party must begin a systematic effort to colonize key plants with the perspective of developing roots in these plants, and that all comrades must be considered for this kind of assignment. They're a little contradictory in explaining how to apply this line. On one hand, they say comrades should be discouraged from entering white collar fields, and should be removed from them and put into industrial areas. However, later on they indicate that women comrades should go into white collar jobs.

Fifthly, they propose that while in these plants the comrades as a rule should consider trade union work their primary field of activity. And lest anyone get the mistaken impression that what they're talking about is the party only, it's clear in the document by Comrade Lauren Charous, a supporter of the minority document, that at least he is talking about the YSA as well. In Comrade Lauren's document, he makes a reference to a task and perspectives report by Peter Seidman to the New York YSA where Comrade Seidman makes a point in the course of his report on the importance of extending the campus base of the YSA, and encouraged more comrades to go onto campus. Lauren concludes, and I'm quoting here, "that no mention was made of sending any comrades into unions. The current orientation of the party is clear: to take comrades, including those in the unions [this might come as a surprise to some comrades] and to send them back onto the campus. This is backwards. We should be recruiting from the campus and orienting our recruits toward going into important unions and industry."

The question of colonizing student comrades into industry is a little abstract at this point, until you try to pin it down. From what set of premises is this strategy being advanced, from what analysis of this period, of this political conjuncture, do they draw the conclusion that at this point we must now begin to divert our young comrades off the campus and into mass production industry?

Have the independent movements that have erupted run their course? Is it that we cannot expect any additional major gains from these areas of work? These comrades don't say that we're in the midst of a giant working class upheaval. In the absence of such an upheaval, and until such a time, they say we must go into the factories and wait out the next period for that radicalization to occur.

That is, the prognosis is one of a period of quiescence. And there's a suggestion that this in fact is what motivates these comrades' conclusions. I can quote briefly from their document, they point out that "comrades recruited in the past five years, who have known only the success and prestige of being student leaders" (that also might come as a surprise to some comrades), "must be steeled for the difficulties which will probably confront the party in the future."

Now what are these difficulties? "Statements such as Comrade Waters' at Oberlin that it is now clear that before

this radicalization ends the question of power, the question of which class will rule society, will be posed in this country, are common in the party today," they say. "They are, however, totally empirical and undialectical. They arm comrades with the view that the course from here to the revolution is a straight upward line. In fact the only question of power that can be posed is through the political mobilization of the working class and it is not at all clear that this will be accomplished before this radicalization subsides." So there's some grounds for thinking that this type of a prognosis is what underlies the minority estimate. And if so, it makes a certain amount of sense.

The second possible, and differing, analysis from which they may proceed is the one advanced by a number of our opponents, especially the Wohlforthites, and also in the document by Comrade Tom Cagle, of Oakland-Berkeley, who solidarizes himself with the minority document. This is the analysis that what we're facing is a period of fantastic opportunity in the trade unions, that the trade unions are in a period of real upheaval. If we are not in the trade unions when the trade unions are in a period of intense upheaval and activity and ferment, taking advantage of those opportunities, that would be a serious error.

What we're presented with by the comrades from the minority is a choice. If you see it within the context of a very careful analysis of the trends, currents, contradictions, movements, all of the various aspects of American capitalism, and how we see the future, then we are left with a choice. Either we continue party building within the existing mass movements, or we remove our cadres from the present areas of work, send them into the factories, and have them wait, for an undetermined length of time, for the industrial workers to radicalize. That's the choice that's being presented to the party in these two documents.

We must do one or the other. And if the comrades in the minority feel that that is a distortion, then it's incumbent upon them to explain to us from which areas of work that we are now engaged in will the comrades be removed in order to carry on this colonization of the factories. How many will we take out of the existing anti-war movement, the existing feminist movement, the existing student movement, all of the other movements in which we are involved, in order to send into factories to do primarily trade union work? That has to be concretized and spelled out.

Now there's no question about the party's sensitivity in taking advantage of live mass opportunities. We have been doing that. We expect to see signs of working class radicalization and ferment inside the trade unions and we will move very rapidly when they present themselves. But won't we be in one hell of a lot better situation in order to carry out that type of colonization if in the intervening period, we have recruited considerable numbers to the party out of the mass movements that have already arisen?

I just want to comment briefly on the question about the composition of the party, which is *not*, incidentally, petty bourgeois, although obviously it is not, as we understand it, predominantly industrial working class. Do we run a risk by going through a protracted period of time with our present composition? There are no guarantees. But *the alternative is to stagnate, and to pursue a policy*

of abstentionism. The best protection against the composition having negative effects on the party's program is offered by recruiting and training, educating the comrades we recruit as Leninists, as professional revolutionists, in exactly the spirit that Lenin advanced in *What is to be Done?* as the hallmark of a Bolshevik party. In the party, there's no distinction about anyone's social origin. The test of a comrade is whether or not he or she is capable of committing his or her life to the struggle for the working class revolution. That's the test that counts in the final analysis.

All the quoting about the work in the trade unions at all costs, under all occasions, and everything else that occupies a good half of this document, misses the whole point, even of what they're quoting. What Cannon, Trotsky and Lenin were talking about is the counterposition of involvement in the living mass movement versus abstaining from them. That's what the discussion in 1940 was all about. It wasn't over whether the students in the party should make a choice between the trade unions and a massive, radical student movement, which was petty bourgeois. It was a choice of whether these comrades would sit on their asses in a bar making smart conversation, or go into the working class movement which *was* a big movement. There *was* opportunity in the unions. That *was* the mass movement. And any party that ignores the mass movement in whatever form it occurs is doomed to failure.

The building of the independent movements that exist at this stage of the radicalization and will come into existence in the future is part of the process of the radicalization of the working class. Note that. *Part of the process* of the radicalization of the working class. The struggle to transform the unions includes fighting within the unions to transform them, strengthening the independent move-

ments outside the unions as well, and struggling within the unions for support to the central demands of the struggles rising out of the current radicalization.

The question of colonization will arise as the situation develops, just as it always has. We decide that on the basis of opportunities that present themselves. That's been the whole history of our movement on this question. It's not a question of artificially proletarianizing the party by transforming a few individual student comrades into proletarians. Proletarians that are created that way generally don't come to much of a good end. The union bureaucracy is full of them.

The composition of our party will change as a result mainly of our ability to attract radicalizing workers to our party by virtue of our program, our size, our geographic spread, and our record in all the social struggles, *all* of them. And the key now is to develop the cadres that are capable of this task. Our perspective is one of optimism for the next period, of expansion, of a continuation and deepening of the radicalization in the United States and in a situation where this country exists in a world of ascendent revolution! Capitalism has never been successful in any instance in turning back revolutions in any country where a decisive transformation has taken place. They've had some limited success where the process hasn't gone the full route. And we are in a period in this country where we do not face any major opponent on the scope that we had to face the Communist Party during the 1930's. That's our analysis, that's our projection, and I hope that in dealing with that, that the comrade reporting from the minority will clearly indicate their answers to two points: 1.), what, if any, alternate analysis they make; and 2.), what would be done concretely in relation to the existing movements on the campus, and the antiwar and women's liberation movements were the party to accept the turn that they are proposing.

THE SWP AND THE GI MOVEMENT: Some Notes on Our Proletarian Orientation and Practice

By Michael Smith, Detroit Branch

One of the key areas of our party's mass work in the antiwar movement is our work relating to GIs. This is a section of the youth, of overwhelmingly working class youth, of youth from the national minorities, which is radicalizing at an ever increasing tempo. Moreover these people are strategically located, literally having their collective fingers on the trigger. We are by no means unaware of these facts. They are or should be obvious to all, especially now in 1971. I believe that the SWP has taken this into account with a clarity of vision, a consistency of appreciation, and a resoluteness in action befitting a Leninist organization.

THE POSITION OF THE GREGORICH MINORITY

"Not so!," says the Gregorich tendency which mistakenly calls itself proletarian. They make two contentions: From *The Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation* (p. 13) we learn that "Since the successful events of The Fort Jackson case, the party leadership's attention to and appreciation for this movement has been diminishing." The Fort Jackson case occurred in the spring of 1969. Therefore this tendency contends that the party leadership has been increasingly negligent—criminally negligent I would think considering

the importance of the developments—for about 2 1/2 years.

Second: "The party has failed to carry out consistent GI work." This being a result of "... a weakness stemming from its petty bourgeois composition and milieu."¹ (Phil Passen, Transcript of the Detroit Branch discussion, July 9, 1971.) I do not think the position of the minority tendency stands or falls solely on their critique of the party's GI work. But a wrong appreciation of our party's activity in that arena would be exceedingly damaging. I think they have made this wrong appreciation.

APPRECIATING A MOVEMENT

One way, a good way, to gain an understanding of the turmoil in the military is to study the book *GIs Speak Out Against the War: The Case of the Fort Jackson* 8,² authored in 1970 by a comrade who was then a member of the Political Committee and intimately involved in GI work. The book is much more than the title conveys. It captures the radicalization of youth inside the military, their rebellion against authority, their rejection of irrationality, their willingness to think for themselves, and their stubborn defense of democratic rights as citizen-soldiers.

The pride, confidence, and camaraderie of third world GIs vividly portrayed in the book shows that the Army, like other institutions, is not invulnerable to the nationalist awakening of Latino and Black soldiers.

When the GIs "Spoke Out" at Fort Jackson, South Carolina they did it in an organized way. They concentrated on civil liberties, for an end to the Vietnamese war, and against racial oppression in the Army. The book details how the organization was built. Thus it is a handbook for organizers. Its publication was a very conscious political act!

THE WATERSHED: GIs UNITED AGAINST THE WAR AT FORT JACKSON

The successful formation of GIs United and its successful defense against the attack by The Pentagon marked a critical turning point in the antiwar movement in 4 respects. First, it confirmed our line in the antiwar movement. The activists we worked with in the movement and the movement in general held either pacifistic (GIs are killers) or elitist views (GIs are too dumb and/or too intimidated to move). The great majority of the antiwar movement, therefore, only 3 years ago supported individual resistance—burning draft cards, refusal of induction, and the like.

When drafted our comrades took leaves of absence and went into the Army. Most antiwar activists looked incredulously at this. But our comrades went, standing on their civil liberties, and organized—under the extremely adverse conditions that then prevailed—as class and nationally conscious Leninists. Our proletarian line demonstrated in practice the falsity of the position of the individualistic resisters. "GIs are potentially a key ally of the antiwar movement," we said. Then we proved it. And, contrary to Comrades Gregorich et al., we have been driving that lesson home ever since, as I will demonstrate.

The antiwar movement takes this for granted now. GIs "traditionally" lead mass demonstrations and participate in many different terms of antiwar activity. It is important to remember that soldiers were not always like this, that this was a development—which we aided—and that the antiwar movement at one time thought it couldn't happen. The point is, Comrades of the minority, that it was the SWP that influenced the petty bourgeoisie in the antiwar movement. Not vice versa as you contend!

Second, GIs United provided an example to GIs and to youth soon to become GIs on how to organize and around what issues. It inspired them and infused them with confidence. GIs United, despite The Pentagon's best efforts, was not beaten.

Third, largely as a consequence of the activity of GIs United and the ensuing publicity the Army was forced to liberalize its discipline thus giving greater latitude to the organizing efforts of antiwar GIs, and civilians. An Army Directive entitled *Guidance on Dissent* was issued immediately after The Fort Jackson 8 victory over the signature of a 3-star general by order of The Secretary of the Army. Smarting under the blows of GIs United and their wide public support the memo counseled field commanders to take a more relaxed view of coffee-houses, the GI underground newspapers, on-post demonstrations by civilians, and dissent in general.³ Another related consequence was that the Army pretty much stopped drafting Trot-

skyists, especially in the following year.

A fourth reason Fort Jackson was pivotal was that the defense campaign showed dramatically the link up between the civilian movement and its GI counterpart. Listen to Pvt. Joe Miles, on leave from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, speaking to 30,000 people in Chicago on April 6, 1969 on behalf of the Fort Jackson men facing prison. "You can't find a GI who's for the war," he said. He charged that the Vietnam war was for the profit of big business and served the interests of corporate capitalism. At that point he was given a standing ovation by the crowd.⁴

WHY OUR WORK AT FORT JACKSON WAS SUCCESSFUL

It's simple. When the opening at Fort Jackson came we were prepared—theoretically and practically—to take maximum advantage of it. Of course we all knew from the Marxist texts that working class armies, to put it mildly, tend to lose enthusiasm for capitalist wars. Comrade Halstead is fond of saying "The Russian revolution was the greatest antiwar movement of them all."

And too we knew of the Bring Us Home movement which developed at the end of WWII. GIs mobilized to demobilize and thwarted U.S. imperialist aims in the Far East. The Chinese then proceeded to take control of China and the Vietnamese of North Vietnam. In his December 1966 introduction to our widely circulated pamphlet on the GI movement, authored by Comrade Mary-Alice Waters, Comrade Fred Halstead, who had participated in it, wrote: "They are U.S. citizens who have a right to think for themselves and who do not lose that right because they are forced to don a uniform. As this pamphlet points out, there is a precedent for the right of GIs to exercise freedom of speech, of association, of press, and to demonstrate. And there is precedent for how responsible and effective the exercise of such rights can be."⁵ Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Most important, the party learned from participating in and observing what was happening to American society; the growing antiwar movement, the youth rebellion, the increasing insistence on democratic rights, the nationalist awakenings. We knew that the military—which is but a slice of society in uniform—would grow to reflect this radicalization. For example, GIs United began as a nationalist group of Blacks and Puerto Ricans. On the initiative of Pvt. Joe Miles they started listening to tapes of Malcolm's speeches at night in the barracks.

SOME EXAMPLES OF PARTY WORK PRIOR TO GIs UNITED

In the summer of 1966 3 soldiers who became known as the Fort Hood 3 refused orders to be sent to Vietnam because of their belief that the war was illegal, immoral, and unjust. A defense committee was formed to gain publicity and support for the men. It took the position that ". . . servicemen as citizens are free to exercise their rights of freedom of thought, conscience and expression," as the defense pamphlet stated. Our movement helped circulate that pamphlet. Comrades George Novack and Fred Halstead were sponsors of the defense committee. Comrade Doug Jenness worked for the defense campaign until he was kicked out by the Communist Party. The case reflected

the mounting GI opposition to the war.

Soon thereafter 43 Black GIs at Fort Hood, Texas, refused orders to be sent to Chicago during the infamous 1968 Democratic Convention for "riot duty," reflecting the strong nationalist sentiment also mounting in the military. Incidentally, GIs United at Fort Jackson helped publicise the case on their base, as did our party throughout the country.

The first comrade, I believe, to confirm our line was Howard Petrick, an antiwar activist from Minneapolis on leave from the party and stationed at Fort Hood in 1966. He began, as the defense pamphlet *Free Speech For GIs* states, to circulate ". . . literature on the history of the Vietnam war, on the Fort Hood 3, on socialism, black power, and on the ideas of Malcolm X." Many soldiers were interested. So was the brass. They responded by threatening to court-martial him for subversion, creating disaffection, and making disloyal statements. The Army wouldn't dare to try that now.

Pfc. Petrick was an excellent soldier; his case thus posed sharply the issue of civil liberties. The Committee to Defend the Rights of Pfc. Petrick was set up nationally and retained the distinguished law firm of Rabinowitz and Boudin, that was later to take the Fort Jackson case. Pfc. Petrick was able to defeat the threatened court-martial as a result of the defense committee's work; but he was given an undesirable discharge by an administrative board. Threat of this type of prejudicial discharge—which follows a man around for the rest of his life causing lost jobs and government benefits—was a successful tool used by the brass to intimidate GIs. Comrade Petrick's lawyers were able to get a Federal Court decision granting him an honorable discharge. The military lost a club and an important civil liberties victory was gained.

DEFENSE OF GIs UNITED AT FORT JACKSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

I have sketched briefly some of the programatic background to the Fort Jackson case which enabled 3 Trotskyists—who were thrown together by accident on the same base in the deep south—to help organize the most successful GI group up to that time, which understood its constitutional rights and was bent on asserting them. It should be noted that at that time there were about a half dozen Trotskyists in a 2.7 million man military. The defense of the leaders of GIs United when The Pentagon (the Army's moves were not directed by the local commanding general) attempted to crush the organization by bringing frame-up courts-martial charges was successful for the same reasons that the organization was built in the first place. Our party, despite its extremely limited resources, knew what to do and how to do it.

When the charges came down against the Fort Jackson 8, comrades were immediately assigned to help the defense campaign, which was organized by the GI Civil Liberties Defense Committee. Attorney Leonard Boudin who had, prior to the arrests, counseled some of the GIs including Pvt. Joe Miles as to the legal ways of exercising their rights agreed to captain the legal defense team which included lawyers from 5 cities. The story received more coverage in *The Militant* than any other that year. Publicity in the bourgeois media ranged widely from the front

page of the *New York Times* to German television. Petitions, defense meetings, and the gathering of defense sponsors (among whom was Bertrand Russell as Honorary Chairman) were organized by comrades across the country. The April 5th and 6th demonstrations against the war, built chiefly by the SMC, came as a timely and weighty supportive event. Given our resources a grand campaign was built.

"We Trotskyists mean business," Comrade Cannon has said. The organized defense of The Fort Jackson 8, its efficiency, energy, and seriousness demonstrated that. So did the victory.

I review this to show that ours is not a party—as the Gregorich minority contends—that is succumbing to the ". . . molecular process of petty bourgeoisification." (*The Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation*, p. 6) There was nothing petty bourgeois, either in theory or practice, about our actions at Fort Jackson, absolutely nothing.

SINCE FORT JACKSON: A CONSISTENT RECORD

The party took many opportunities to spread the word about the Fort Jackson events. We ran an antiwar activist for President in 1968. Comrade Halstead spoke about the GI movement around this country in a campaign that lasted well over a year. Moreover we took the initiative, costly as it was, of sending Comrade Halstead to Vietnam, to experience first hand and to be able to relate with authority, our transitional and democratic demands with respect to the war and the GIs. Our many local campaigns as well have continually emphasized these issues.

Comrade Pulley also traveled abroad to propagandize for our program on the war as did Comrades Allen Meyers, Patti Iiamya, and Norman Oliver, who was in Germany investigating the Black nationalist upsurge in the American NATO forces stationed in that country.

National tours on the Fort Jackson experience were organized for Comrades Joe Cole and Andrew Pulley. Additionally both of these comrades ran for office in local elections and stressed the GI movement.

The leader of a GI organization at Grissom Air Force Base in Kokomo, Indiana was brought around the YSA and joined upon his discharge. He then ran for Governor of Wisconsin emphasizing his experience in the military.

On the legal front, GICLDC has been kept going successfully handling cases for, among others, Comrades Ed Glover and Allen Meyers. Comrade Meyers was court-martialed 3 times for his antiwar activity. He won all 3.

Comrade Ron Wolin was the plaintiff in a suit which reached the U. S. Supreme Court. The landmark decision in our favor gave people the right to leaflet at semi-public places like airports and bus terminals. This was important for it allowed the antiwar movement to reach travelling GIs, most of whom are stationed in out of way Southern posts.

As a result of the activities at Forts Jackson and Bragg lawyers for GICLDC now have cases pending before The Supreme Court in which our comrades are plaintiffs challenging laws restricting first amendment rights regarding the right to assemble and the right to distribute literature on Army bases.

The *Militant's* coverage of the GI movement has been the best of any paper in the country. Recently, for example, we ran three full stories on the Winter Soldier's Inves-

tigation into war crimes in Southeast Asia conducted by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. No other paper including *The Daily World* and *The Guardian* (whose reporter participated on a panel) came close.

The GI Press Service, published by the Student Mobilization Committee, in which our comrades participate provides a crucial medium to reach GIs around demands which we support.

THE KEY TO OUR GI WORK

The best thing the SWP can do to build the GI movement is to build the civilian movement. A mass antiwar movement, brash, insolent, and in the streets legitimizes the GIs activity, comes to their aid if they are victimized, and gives them something concrete to organize around. Formalistic thinkers like the Wohlforthites don't understand this paradox. They abstain from the mass antiwar movement and scold us for working in a petty bourgeois movement, selling out to labor bureaucrats and Congressional doves, not going to the workers etc. They do not understand, nor I suspect does The Proletarian Tendency, that many would-be GI activists get their first taste for the movements as civilians participating in actions like those of April 24th, where they would have observed a large GI contingent. Because of the conscription law which drafts the youngest first the trade unions are not nearly as fertile an arena for the recruitment of GI activists as are the high schools and colleges.

ENOUGH PROOF

This sketch is brief and incomplete. It is some of what I know as an individual who has had some contact over the last 4 1/2 years with our party's work in this area. A team effort would be needed to tell the whole story. Nevertheless it should be sufficient to disprove any notion that our work in the GI movement is inconsistent or that the attitude of the party leadership is one of diminishing interest. The current case of Pvt. Ed Jurenas who organized a group of Military Police, yes MP's!, at Fort Greely near Delta Junction, Alaska together with the apparently successful campaign we raised in his defense should alone convince any fairminded comrade of our earnestness in pursuing this crucial area of party activity. It should also be noted that from the spring of 1969, that is, right after the Fort Jackson case, until Comrade Jurenas was inducted at the end of 1970 that the Army had pretty much disdained from inducting Trotskyists, a practise of exclusion in the pro-war movement. So for over a year our opportunities were in one respect dulled. . . . until Pvt. Jurenas knifed through.

TWO CONTRADICTIONS

What is a party program? It is not something one puts in a backpack and treks over to deposit someplace, like the trade unions. A party program is intimately bound up with its application. It is mechanical to separate the two as the comrades of The Proletarian Tendency do when they say "We agree with the program, but disagree on the strategy and think the program should be taken

more to the trade unions." This lack of understanding of strategy reveals in reality a lack of understanding of the party program, as defined in the National Committee Draft Political Resolution. The party developed a rich understanding of the youth rebellion and nationalism and was thus better able to take advantage of openings inside the military.⁶

The program—the understanding it reflects and the application it projects—is a unified concept. The work of the SWP in the military is one proof of this. The minority's inability to reconcile their verbal agreement with the party program and their disagreement with its strategical application is their problem and they will have to resolve it. One way not to proceed is to holler about the party not doing consistent work amongst GIs.

Second, we are told that ". . . despite what it may say, (the SWP) no longer has a proletarian orientation" and that the SWP is ". . . developing concepts about the vanguard party and its relationship to the working class which are directly opposed to Leninism." (For a Proletarian Orientation, p. 3) But how then do they explain the party's successful work in the GI movement? A party adapting to petty bourgeois influence could neither have developed our program nor carried it through in practice.⁷ I would like to get the minority's explanation for this anomaly.

CONCLUSION

When attempts are made to force into play a preconceived notion of how the radicalization will or should unfold rather than observing reality and moving with it, the transitional program becomes catechism. I believe that both reality and the resources of the party go generally unappreciated by The Proletarian Tendency. Consequently these comrades have lost their ability to measure the extent of achievement—for better or for worse—of the party given the possibilities extant at any one time.

To an extent the collectivity of people that make up the SWP make their own history. That is what it's all about. We are no less deterministic than mechanistic. We move with what we have in to the openings afforded to us. With regard to our participation in the unfolding GI movement we have "made our own history," so to say, rather well, in my opinion.

The Proletarian Tendency's all too brief and totally unsubstantiated undocumented charges serve no positive purpose. They do not attempt to size up the realities of the GI movement or the resources of the party. They do not say what the party did wrong, or right, or what it might have done differently. If the party has been deficient in any respect a serious comrade would learn nothing from any of the documents that the minority offers up as an alternative to the National Committee resolution. Criticism like this is criticism of the worst sort. It is not constructive, but mere carping, a practice alien to our tradition.

Lastly, this method reveals a negative pessimistic bias. This species of attitude—the opposite of revolutionary optimism—as our active cadre will attest, and as any exhaustive compiler with an encyclopediac bent could document with a swarm of quotes . . . is petty bourgeois.

July 24, 1971

The SWP approach to military policy and its evolution since 1940

Military policy is an essential part of any transitional program of the revolutionary party in the imperialist epoch with its monstrous growth of capitalist militarism. The naive outlook of the early socialist movement which disregarded the military aspects of the class struggle has long since become outmoded. The actual relations between nations, peoples and classes compel every political tendency to take a position and work out a policy toward both imperialist and class warfare.

The position of the SWP in this field as in other has been derived from Marxist principles and the methods and traditions of Bolshevism as interpreted and applied by the Fourth International. This general line has been consistently followed from the beginning of our movement in this country. But since 1940 the tactical application of this course has twice been modified because of changes in objective circumstances.

In 1940, on the even of the impending World War II, the SWP set forth its revolutionary socialist antiwar program in the form of the proletarian military policy. This represented a specific application of the methods of the transitional program adopted in 1938 to the working-class psychology and political conditions of the time.

The program was based on the following concepts. (1) It continued our irreconcilable opposition to imperialist war and the capitalist system which breeds it. (2) It projected the perspective of a struggle to win leadership of the working class in order to carry through a fight for state power and establish a socialist society. (3) It laid stress on the need to build a Leninist-type party to fulfill these objectives.

Our approach was categorically counterposed to the misleading ideas and political confusion sowed by the professional pacifists and the Stalinists and Social Democrats on the issues of militarism.

The pacifists proceed on the utopian premise that the laws of the class struggle and capitalist competition can be nullified by the cooperation of people of goodwill who can prevail upon the imperialists to refrain from warmaking. Pacifists oppose the development of the class struggle in favor of class peace at almost any price.

From their moral and religious opposition to violence as such, and not simply reactionary violence, flows a rejection of the right of armed self-defense. They substitute the individual "witness" for organized collective action. Their conscientious objection to military conscription and training leads to draft evasion or victimization by imprisonment which further isolates antiwar elements from the masses.

Pacifist ideology is as pernicious and prostrating under wartime conditions as in times of sharp class conflict. It demoralizes and disorients antiwar activists and movements, deters mass mobilizations, and plays into the hands of the imperialists.

Pacifism as a policy may look plausible so long as peaceful relations prevail but it collapses like a pricked balloon as soon as hostilities are declared. In previous periods many professional pacifists have turned into fanatical war supporters once the ruling class has plunged the nation into battle.

Marxists, on the other hand, have always recognized that under military conditions a military policy is mandatory.

In addition to their false line of class collaboration and supporting "peace" candidates who surrender to the warmongers, the Stalinists and Social Democrats take positions which are not essentially different from the simple anti-militarist attitudes of the pure pacifists and which prove to be equally impotent in the struggle against capitalism and its wars. Historically, they, too, have capitulated to the warring state power after war has broken out, or else they have refrained from advancing or acting upon a program of struggle to take state power from the capitalist rulers, the only way that capitalist militarism and imperialist wars can be abolished.

The military policy adopted in 1940 was a revolutionary line designed to promote the anticapitalist struggles of the workers under the given wartime conditions.

It was anticipated that proletarian revolutions would emerge in the advanced capitalist countries directly out of the consequences of World War II and that the worker masses in the giant conscript armies would play the decisive role in them.

The transitional measures proposed in the program were to be a bridge from the revolutionary vanguard to the young worker-soldiers drafted into the U. S. armed forces, who were imbued with a mixture of anti-Hitler, antifascist, defensist, democratic and patriotic sentiments. They aimed to develop an assertion of their class independence within the capitalist military machine so that it would be possible to proceed step by step toward winning ideological and political hegemony among them in preparation for the anticipated revolutionary upsurge.

This undertaking was politically prepared and reinforced by the party's public opposition to the imperialist war dramatized by the 1941 Smith Act trial and its documentation.

As part of its program, the party continued its unconditional opposition to capitalist conscription. At the same time it took cognizance of the fact that the antifascist and patriotic sentiments of the workers led them to favor compulsory military service. It therefore counterposed the concept of conscription by the workers' organizations to the capitalist military draft. It advocated military training under trade-union control, financed by the capitalist government.

These proposals aimed to build class-conscious workers' military formations capable of defending labor's interests under conditions of capitalist militarism, imperialist war and the threat of fascist counterrevolution.

Party members called up for military service submitted, as individuals, to capitalist conscription. In the armed forces they lent themselves to learning military skills and sought to win the political confidence of their fellow soldiers. Their participation as socialists in the military machine was viewed as a prerequisite for revolutionary action if a favorable turn of events made it possible to gain a majority to the idea of transforming the imperialist war into a struggle for workers power and socialism.

This set of measures, presented in propaganda form at the outset of the war, did not become the basis for any substantial action during the conflict because the actual pattern of events took a different turn which did not coincide with our expectations.

The most radical development which took place in the army was the "I want to go home" movement of the GIs at the end of the war in the Pacific which upset the plans of the Pentagon strategists by weakening their armed forces.

Although revolutionary situations erupted in Western Europe, no victorious revolutions occurred in the advanced capitalist countries. The axis of the world revolution shifted to the colonial world.

These postwar conditions created a world situation which was qualitatively different from that of the 1941-45 period. However important interimperialist rivalries remain, they have been subordinated to imperialism's cold war against the workers states and its military interventions against the colonial revolutions. The U.S. armed forces have become the principal instrument of world imperialist aggression.

These global developments have generated marked changes in the views of the American people toward the issues posed by Washington's armed interventions. U.S. involvement in World War II was almost unanimously accepted under the illusion that it was a progressive war waged against fascism.

While a noticeable and significant decline in patriotic fervor was registered during the Korean war of the early 1950s, active and overt opposition was pretty much confined to circles on the left which were then on the decline.

Vietnam has brought about a decisive shift in popular attitudes toward imperialist war. An unprecedented antiwar movement has emerged which continues to win more and more supporters in the midst of a shooting war. It is led by insurgent youth who belong to the post-World War II generation and who have been radicalized by the colonial revolution and the black liberation struggle.

Instead of urging on the government to victory at all costs, defeatist moods have been gaining ground among large sections of the population since 1965. This resistance to the imperialists expresses itself directly in sympathy for the Vietnamese revolution and indirectly through condemnation of the war as illegal, immoral and unjust and in the reluctance of the organized workers and blacks to make any material sacrifices for the war effort.

This country's ruling class is having to pay the toll of its function as the chief guardian of world capitalism. In becoming the top dog of the imperialist pack, it has fallen prey to all the basic contradictions of international capitalism in its death agony. Washington is obliged to finance and provide the main military means required for increasingly massive measures to stem the tide of the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist mass struggles throughout the world.

The heavy costs of this course are being levied upon the people in the form of conscription and sizable military

casualties; mounting taxes and inflationary pressures on real wages; and gross neglect of urgent social needs. These consequences of imperialist militarism have caused more and more Americans to question the Vietnam conflict and the official rationale for its prosecution. The official demagoguery and barefaced deceit employed by the government to justify U.S. intervention have generated widespread suspicion. The growing criticism of imperialist policy and resentment against the war keeps adding to the number of Americans who want to bring it to a speedy halt.

The pacifist sentiments of the masses have a different significance than the ideology and policies of the professional pacifists. They grow out of distrust of the foreign policy imposed by the monopolists and militarists and revulsion against their aggression which have a revolutionary potential. If these healthy instincts can be deepened, politically developed and properly directed, they can become the basis and point of departure for the creation of a mass anticapitalist consciousness which can pass beyond the narrow political limits set by the professional pacifists and their fellow class collaborationists who have dominated previous "peace" movements.

The task of our party is to direct this antiwar protest into class-struggle channels. To make its military policy fit the new international and domestic conditions, the party has introduced the following changes in its tactics.

The slogan of military training under trade-union control has been laid aside along with the advocacy of conscription into workers' military organizations.

More emphasis is placed up on opposing capitalist conscription which is becoming increasingly unpopular.

As in the past, party members called up for military service submit to the draft.

In doing so, they refuse to sign the unconstitutional loyalty oath now made part of the conscription procedure.

Although the main weight of the antiwar movement continues to center in the civilian population, the opposition to the war which has developed within the present conscript army has added a new and extremely important political dimension to the forces involved in the fight against the imperialist warmakers. Revolutionary socialists within the armed forces focus their political activity on the assertion and defense of their constitutional right to express their views as citizens upon the war and other issues of government policy, using sound tactical judgment in exercising that right and avoiding disciplinary hangups and penalties over routine military matters and orders.

The basic aim of our current transitional approach is the same as its predecessor. It seeks to promote a struggle for power and socialism by the workers and their allies and to build a strong, democratically disciplined combat party capable of leading that struggle to the end.

AGAINST A PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION

by Sudie and Geb, Boston Branch

Comrades Charous-Gregorich-Massey-McCann-Passen and the others of the Proletarian Orientation tendency, have claimed that our movement used to have a proletarian orientation, which it has since abandoned. In an important sense they are quite correct. Our orientation is no longer exclusively toward the proletarians, but broader — toward labor in general, one might say.

The PO comrades will surely be shocked to hear the

notion that we could have a labor orientation without thereby having an exclusively proletarian orientation. This is because they have learned their sociology, and in particular their economics, by reading the texts of the bourgeois professors.

We can all agree that politics is an expression of economics, and that political struggles are rooted in economic struggles. The bourgeois professors teach us that

economics is what you get paid for. The PO comrades unfortunately agree. Thus in their minds the labor struggle, and the labor orientation, are equivalent with the wage-labor struggle and the wage-labor orientation.

We spoke in the feminist party article of the Marxist concept of the division of labor. The guts of this concept is the separation of what Marx calls "intellectual" and "material" labor. We saw that by this Marx meant the separation between decision and performance — one type of person decides what shall and shall not be done, and the other type of person actually does it. Thus on the one hand is the power, and on the other hand is the labor proper.

Marx made it clear that he thought the significance of classes was derived from the fact that there was a division of labor between them; the capitalists decide what the workers do. Marx also made it clear that he did not think that the division of labor between the classes was the only division of labor in society; in fact, he emphasizes that the original division of labor — which existed in various forms even before classes themselves did — was the division of labor between the sexes.

Another point to be clear on is that a division of labor may involve one category of people telling another what they must *not* do, as well as telling them what they *must* do. The difference between an action and a refraining-from-an-action, is a bit too subtle for anyone but a bourgeois philosopher to attach a central importance to it.

There are four basic divisions of labor within bourgeois society. There is a division of labor among nations or nationalities (where one nation or nationality "has the power of disposing of the labor power of others"), another division of labor between classes (where one class "has the power of disposing of the labor power" of the other), another division of labor between the sexes (where one sex "has the power . . ." etc.), and yet another division of labor between the generations (where one generation "has the power. . ." etc.).

Since the task of the socialist revolution is to abolish all division of labor, it is thus a combined revolution (whereas the bourgeois revolution in France, say, had only the one aspect of abolishing the division of labor between nobility and commoners). Since any such a thing is done by the oppressed group in struggle against the oppressor group, the socialist revolution is thus the combined revolution of the working class, the oppressed nations, the female sex, and the youth.

The bourgeois professors teach that economics is what you get paid for. So when they calculate the Gross National Product, they forget to include the unpaid domestic labor performed by women. But housework is just as much work as any other kind, and we demand that it be treated on an equal footing with the labor of men; that is, we demand that it be paid for, so long as the labor of men is paid for. Were this change to occur, housework would cease being domestic-slave-labor, and would become wage-slave-labor. The occupation, "housewife," would become a proletarian trade worthy of the attention of the PO. This would be an enormous victory for women — not so much because the PO would pay them more attention, but because their general social status would have greatly improved, for the social status of the housewife is now much lower than that of her workingman husband.

On page 31 of the Proletarian Orientation's first document, we find a clear statement of the theoretical basis

for their attitude on women's liberation. It is proposed that our women's liberation work be concentrated on "the women who are most affected — those who work." They say "those who work", but they *mean* "those who work *for a wage*", and they are quite open about it. We are told to involve ourselves in the struggles of "our sisters who work for their daily bread". But they *mean* "who work *for a wage*". They do not consider housework to be work at all. A housewife who works 365 1/4 days a year, 24 hours a day, cooking, sweeping, changing diapers, catering to her husband's sexual needs, etc. — such women don't "work for their daily bread" in the minds of the PO tendency. They just loaf around the house all day, parasiting off their productive, working husbands, which of course makes them a petty bourgeois milieu. Presumably the conservatism of the workers must be the result of the fact that they come home each night to a petty bourgeois milieu in the form of their wives. Such reasoning was more understandable twenty years ago. Today it is embarrassing.

For the purposes of denying women the right to abortion, the capitalists consider the fetus to be a human being. But once the fetus is born, they cease to consider it a human being until it becomes an "adult".

So when they calculate the Gross National Product, they also neglect to add in the bulk of the work done by youth. In particular, we are referring to schoolwork. We demand that students be paid for their schoolwork, because it is just as much work as anything anyone else does, and if everyone else gets paid for their work, why not kids too?

The PO tendency sees "youth" as meaning "early twenties", and sees "student" as meaning "college student". Let's be clear that by "student" we mean from kindergarten on up. We think most comrades would agree that we've given too little attention to high school and junior high school campus work. But the Proletarian Orientationists would disagree, because for them, kids become workers only when they become wage-workers.

The PO notes that kids are not proletarians. But they'd have a hard time convincing most kids that their schoolwork isn't really work. The reason why kids are not proletarians, even though they do schoolwork and are thus workers, is just that they are something lower in status than the proletarians, they are wage-less workers who must be content with their room and board, much like the housewife and the chattel slave. Marx himself notes that youth are domestic slaves, of a status even lower than that of the housewife.

The main potential of the college student movement, and the main potential of our winning political hegemony within it, is not that it gives us a springboard directly into the working class. Rather, it gives us a springboard directly into the high schools and junior high schools, hence into the youth as a whole, and hence, with time, into the population as a whole. If you wait until people receive their first paychecks before you begin to try to recruit them, you just won't recruit them as soon as you might have.

* * *

If Marx was correct in saying that a division of labor is when one group has the power of disposing of the labor power of others, then it is a secondary question whether that power is used positively or negatively, to command or to forbid. Because an action and a refraining-from-an-action are linguistic opposites, the bourgeois phil-

osophers incorrectly assume that they are actual opposites. When the patriarchy denies a woman the right to an abortion, is it *commanding* (that she have the kid) or *forbidding* (that she have the abortion)? When the patriarchy denies her the right to child-care, is it *commanding* (that she be confined to household drudgery) or *forbidding* (that she escape from household drudgery)?

Kids find it all pretty much the same, when their oppressors tell them what to do, and when their oppressors tell them what not to do. Come home early, don't stay out late, don't hang around with so-and-so, you're much too young to do this-or-that, get yourself a haircut — remember that great record, "Yakety-Yak"?

You just put on your coat and hat,
And walk yourself to the laundromat,
And when you finish doing that,
Bring in the dog and put out the cat!

Obeying such continual, oppressive, authoritarian demands, is literally hard work. It's just as much hard work to obey the prohibitions as to obey the requirements. Commodities may not be produced either way, but it's still hard work — hard work — to keep your parents satisfied. The same labor orientation which makes us orient toward the one class that has to take its orders from the other class, and which makes us orient to the one sex that has to take its orders from the other sex, — that same labor orientation makes us orient toward the one generation that has to take its orders from the other generation.

The workingmen, if they don't like their living conditions have a fair amount of freedom to move, and often do so. The housewife has hardly any freedom to move out of an unsatisfactory living condition. Kids don't even have the legal right to do so. We should advocate the repeal of these laws.

The workingman has the legal right to vote, even if that power is largely negated by his lack of wealth. Women have only very recently won the legal right to vote (only very, very recently in some bourgeois countries). Kids still don't even have the legal right to vote. Our labor orientation makes us advocate that kids be given the right to vote.

None of this can be found in a proletarian orientation, while it's an important part of a labor orientation. We orient toward every sector of society which must labor under the thumb of another sector; this means the oppressed class, the oppressed nations, the oppressed sex, and the oppressed generation.

* * *

Recently a PO comrade was seen reviving the good old days by browsing through the old bound volumes of the *Militant* in the Boston bookstore. When he went away for a minute, a curious glance at the page he left open revealed a note of interest. This issue of the *Militant* was dated 1948. On the open page was a *Militant* ad. It said SHOW THIS COPY OF *THE MILITANT* TO YOUR SHOPMATE. TRY TO SELL HIM A SUBSCRIPTION. "Him", it said. Him! Hmmm!

Shopmates are, of course, normally male. All those revolutionists who have only a proletarian orientation, naturally assume that the male sex plays the overwhelmingly preponderant role in the revolution, and the PO com-

rades are no exception. The party as a whole used to make this same mistake in the thirties and forties. We made a serious error when we encouraged readers of the *Militant* to sell subs to men without thinking to also mention women. We made the same sort of mistake in other ways, all the time.

While comrade Hedda Garza's contribution on words and deeds is rather defective in some respects, the comrade deserves a lot of respect and gratitude for having said what so many had thought but not had the nerve to put into print. Namely that women in the party have traditionally had a second-class citizenship. This resulted above all from our proletarian orientation. As a result, male comrades have had unconscious and even conscious anti-female prejudices, and women comrades for their own part have had too little self-respect to fight them on it — for fear of dividing the party, dividing the working class. So women comrades stepped back when male comrades stepped forward. Male comrades spoke, and female comrades listened.

This is the explanation for the fact that, while America is perhaps 53% female, and the party is 38% female, still the party's national committee is only 17% female. This is the explanation for the fact that the main historical leaders of the party have been 100% male. Comrade Dobbs in his convention call at the March plenum, names seven top historical leaders of the party in his own sample: James Cannon, Ray Dunne, Joe Hansen, George Novack, Tom Kerry, George Breitman, and himself. We could even name several more in order of historical importance, before we finally got around to naming the first woman. If we had always had an orientation toward all laborers and not just wage-laborers, then both the ranks and the leadership would have been predominantly female — and more than 53%!

Can anyone offer a different explanation for the relatively subsidiary role that women have played in the party? The oppressed are a somewhat heterogeneous lot, with some sectors being relatively more privileged and others relatively worse oppressed. The most oppressed sectors of the oppressed, tend naturally to be the most militant in the long run — they make the best cadres of the revolution. The fact that housewives and working women are a more militant lot than workingmen, is shown by the way they have had a clearly superior understanding of feminism. Their secondary role in the party's history, is not to be blamed on them, but on the weaknesses of the party, and on our proletarian orientation most of all.

We have always had faith in the capacity of the mass of workingmen to revolt against their oppression. We have not always had faith in the capacity of the mass of women to revolt against *their* oppression. As a result we have instinctively tended to look to men for leadership, more than to women.

* * *

The PO tendency offers us a laboratory-pure specimen of the dogmatist approach to Marxism. They bore us to distraction with endless quotes from the Great Books, and even more endless paraphrases of the quotes. They even have the nerve to insult our intelligence by *repeating* the same lengthy quotes.

But their dogmatism shows through best in their analy-

sis of inventors. They wish to deny that inventors have been proletarianized over the past century, their evidence being that Marx said that inventors were not proletarians. It is unclear whether Marx ever said that inventors couldn't become proletarians; however.

The reason why Marx did not consider inventors to be proletarians (not even privileged proletarians), is that in his time inventors were generally self-employed, owning their own labs and equipment, owning their own patents, even sometimes (as for instance, Edison) being small-scale capitalists who exploited the labor of others. Owning their own patents, they received the full exchange-value of the techniques they produced. So they didn't produce any surplus value.

But nowadays very few inventors are self-employed. What with the tendency of capital to be concentrated as constant capital, now one needs the use of immense and fabulously expensive labs and equipment. And invention factories — like auto factories — have grown fewer in number, with more workers needed in each factory. To invent anything nowadays, you have to figure on a research staff of hundreds, or even thousands, of people. So nowadays the labs aren't owned by enterprising inventors. The labs are owned by AT&T, by General Electric, by Allied Chemical or Dow or IBM. And now the inventors themselves are salaried, they have to sign over their patents in advance to the corporation they work for, they have to surrender part of the exchange values they produce in the form of new techniques, to the capitalists that exploit them; the surrendered part is called "surplus value". Now inventors find themselves laid off in slack times, pounding the sidewalks looking for work.

The reason why Marxists used to call inventors petty-bourgeoisie, but now call them relatively privileged proletarians, is that inventors used to be petty-bourgeoisie, but now they're relatively privileged proletarians.

* * *

The PO tendency is even dogmatic with reference to the *Militant's* traditional cartoons. The *Militant* used to run these cartoon representations of the people we stood for. The drawings were of a workingman. A tall, muscular chap. Not a woman, not a kid, nor some sort of intellectual laborer—he wore work clothes. The PO comrades are still obsessed with this image. They repudiate inventors solely because they wear the wrong color work clothes.

Waitresses are even further from the hearts of the PO tendency, since even a clothing change would not suffice to make them look like that old cartoon. The PO apparently fears that the party has been overly sympathetic to waitresses. The PO comrades point out on page 6 of their first effort, that waitresses have not traditionally been a leading, militant sector of the trade-union movement (we take it that this is all they are saying when they say that waitresses have not been "among the most revolutionary sections of the working class," since there is clear empirical evidence that they have been more anti-war, more feminist, etc., than the average worker). We are apparently to infer that this characteristic of waitresses makes them, though nominally proletarian, still especially susceptible to petty-bourgeois ideology. The analysis we are given is that waitresses are non-productive workers, like foremen and night-watchmen. Such non-productive

trades can exist only in an irrational system like capitalism. So waitresses have a stake in the present system, a stake which productive workers lack, since socialism would end all such unproductive trades. Hence their subsidiary role in the labor movement. Oh, for shame, comrades the POers!!

Suppose you go into your local restaurant and order a raw clam. You will have to pay for it, surely. It is a commodity; it has an exchange-value. Where did this exchange value come from? From the worker who produced it? But clams are not produced by workers, they are produced by other clams! Or perhaps a very revolutionary oyster. But never by a worker.

The clam digger who first got hold of that clam, merely transported it from the ocean bed to the nearby fish market. From there a truck driver transported it to your local restaurant. From there a kitchen helper transported it into the refrigerator. From there the waitress transported it to your table. The exchange-value that that clam now has, appeared only once it started getting transported by people (it had no exchange value while it was on the floor of the sea). It was the labor of the various sorts of transport workers who transported it here and there, which planted in it the exchange-value it had by the time you took possession of it.

The fact that transport workers produce value, was noted by Marx in *Capital*, volume two, chapter four, we are told. Thank heavens that Marx himself said it, for the PO tendency will believe no lesser authority!

Where did the exchange value of that clam come from? From its mama? Or from the workers who transported it? But why credit the truckdriver with producing value in such cases, but not credit the waitresses with doing likewise? Are waitresses parasites, like night-watchmen, or productive workers, like truckdrivers?

But why have waitresses played a subsidiary role in the organized labor movement? Because the organized labor movement has been traditionally led by its most privileged layers in general. The various factors that make certain trades super-exploited, give the workers in these trades less maneuvering-room in which to fight for union, contract, etc. The traditionally black trades are super-exploited, because of the general "skin-tax" blacks must pay, as a result of having less opportunities, less even than the white workingmen. The traditionally female trades are also super-exploited because of the general "sex-tax" that women wage-workers must pay due to their unequal opportunities. The foreman is a parasite because he, unlike most people, had more opportunity to choose to be a privileged parasite rather than a less privileged worker. The waitress is a waitress because she had far less choice—to be a night-watchman (you never heard of a night-watch woman, did you?), or to be a longshoreman, a teamster, or a foreman (ever hear of a longshorewoman, a teamstress, or a forewoman?). Or to be a fireman, a fisherman, an iceman, a repairman, a milkman, a craftsman, a handyman, a businessman, a brakeman, a seaman, a doorman, a newsman, a marksman, a spaceman, etc. (Ever hear of a . . . ?)

Waitresses are not parasites, like foremen, but rather superexploited workers, like the traditionally-black janitors, maids, porters, etc. The super-exploited workers may move slower and later because of their super-exploitation, but they will in general prove the most militant in the long run, and the only reason to make an exception for waitresses, is called "sexism."

This may not be understandable within the narrow context of a "proletarian orientation." Waitresses may not like the old *Militant* cartoon image of the workingman. But now that we have a labor orientation and not merely a proletarian orientation, we understand this very well.

* * *

We haven't fully completed the process of developing

a labor orientation and leaving behind our proletarian orientation. Thus our program for women is much less fully developed than our program for workers. Our article advocating the perspective of a female party, was necessary only because the party hasn't fully developed its program for women; we will have some more to say about completing that part of our program. We will also present a criticism of what we consider to be a serious underappreciation of the youth, that is current in the party.

July 24, 1971

THE GENERATION GAP — WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?
or FOR A BETTER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORD AND DEED
IN OUR YOUTH ORIENTATION
By Sudie and Geb, Boston Branch

It's that time of year again. The party leadership seems to be coming in for a lot of criticism these days, and we feel really bad about having to aggravate the situation. We hope it will be of some comfort to the leadership, that our criticisms come from quite the opposite direction as the criticisms of the Proletarian Orientation tendency or the mysterious new "Communist" tendency. We'll leave it to the comrades and future generations, to decide which criticisms are coming from the right and which from the left.

We also promise not to tell any atrocity stories about the notorious "Barnes clique". After hearing so many atrocity stories about the SWP, from our political opponents, we're sort of disillusioned about the atrocity story as a medium for revolutionary political struggle; we're even inclined to suspect that atrocity stories tend to get in the way of clarifying political questions.

* * *

The party is correctly oriented toward the youth radicalization. However, it has in general been oriented toward youth-radicalization-in-the-abstract. It hasn't been too happy about a number of aspects of this particular youth radicalization, and has tended to long for the good old days, the days of well-behaved youth radicalizations, of clean-cut youth radicalizations.

It is a very serious criticism, to say as we do that the party has in general ignored the special, concrete characteristics of this particular youth radicalization — a very, very unique youth radicalization — and that the party has instead related only to youth-radicalization-in-the-abstract. In recognition of the seriousness of the charges we are making, we'll try to present our arguments very clearly and distinctly; we hope this will make it easier for the comrades to respond to what we say.

Our argument will review various main characteristics of the current youth radicalization, ways in which it has affected the younger generation as a whole. One by one we will review how the party has related to these mass phenomena.

* * *

1 - OPPOSITION TO THE WAR: But this is not so unique. Youth is traditionally the vanguard of antiwar movements, and there is nothing iconoclastic, nothing

new, about contemporary youth being antiwar. As a result, the party has understood this phenomenon quite well, and has related to it quite successfully. Sorry to say, the positive list ends here.

* * *

2 - MUSIC: Both the young Black and the young white generations have changed radically from previous generations. Young Blacks have contempt for the white society their parents envied. Young whites on the whole are ashamed of the racism of their elders, and consciously identify with Blacks in their struggle for freedom. So far this isn't news to the comrades.

But what will apparently come as news to many comrades (judging from the actions of the party itself), is the information that the main cultural medium which has been responsible for this drastic change, is the medium of music.

Ever since the days of slavery, the main form of communication on a mass scale within the Black community has been music. Black nationalism has been intimately bound up with the realization by Blacks that the ghetto has *soul*, which the white community lacks. . . an articulation which has taken place almost wholly through music. At every point the motions of consciousness of the mass of Blacks, have taken place largely through the music medium. B. B. King's "Why I Sing the Blues," the Crystals' "Uptown" and "He's a Rebel," Martha and the Vandellas' "Dancing in the Streets," Sam and Dave's "Soul Man," James Brown's "Say It Loud! — I'm Black and I'm Proud" — these and similar records have played a vital role in the advancement of Black nationalist consciousness. Given the way Blacks have been so thoroughly excluded from most mass media, such as the printed word, the role of the music medium has been indispensable for the collective thought of Afro-America.

Music is also the main vehicle that Blacks have used to win the sympathies of the white youth. Blacks invented rock'n'roll in the early fifties, and have contributed the bulk of the advancements that have been made in the medium. The young generation as a whole — for the first time among whites — has come to see popular music as a major arena of human intellectual life, if not *the* major arena; previous generations didn't credit popular music with being anything more than pleasant, certainly not calling it art. Despite the large number of Blacks' songs which have been "covered" into hits by white artists,

still the white youth have been largely aware of the leading role that Blacks have played in this medium. Thus any arguments about the intellectual mediocrity of Blacks, have seemed quite absurd to the mass of white youth. Fats Domino a savage? Ray Charles slow-witted? Chuck Berry lazy? The young whites didn't even have to see a Black, their ears told them that the racist myths of their elders were insane. We listened much closer to Chuck Berry's "School Days" than we ever listened to the white teachers he parodied.

It is worth noting for future reference that the main point of attraction of Black music for white youth, has been the radically different set of values and life-style concepts that were expressed in Black music.

Rock'n'roll was born as a youth radicalization medium, the oppression of youth being one point of communication between the ghetto and the white youth, providing a wedge that Black musicians could drive between the young whites and their elders. The contemporary generation gap in the white community, has its roots in such works of the 1950's as Chuck Berry's "School Days," the Coasters' "Charlie Brown" and "Yakety Yak," and similar records. The rock tradition of articulating the protest of youth was taken up quickly by such white groups as Dion and the Belmonts, and has continued to this day to be a defining characteristic of rock'n'roll.

While the American youth radicalization has been inseparable from the rise of rock'n'roll music, rock has also played a major role in each of the other aspects of the general radicalization. The first major ghetto uprising of recent years was in Harlem in the summer of 1964. Responding to this, Marth and the Vandellas quickly put out their classic, "Dancing in the Streets." Most ghetto youths can tell you that a "vandella" is a female vandal, and that "dancing in the streets" is what Blacks had done that summer in Harlem. The record played a major role in spreading those rebellions across the country.

Antiwar sentiment has been a theme in rock music throughout the sixties, but even 1959 saw action in the form of the Kingston Trio's "Where Have All the Flowers Gone." Such records as Larry Verne's "Mr. Custer" and the Searchers' version of Malvina Reynolds' "What Have They Done to the Rain," set the tone before the first major demonstrations occurred; the theme has been continued with the Byrds' "Turn! Turn! Turn!" and more recently, Edwin Starr's "War," the biggest soul record of 1970, but the list is much longer than this.

Such greats as Gale Garnet's anti-marriage polemic, "We'll Sing in the Sunshine," and Jan Bradley's "Mama Didn't Lie," set the tone for the rise of mass feminist consciousness, a mood which has been carried forward by records like "Both Sides Now" and is now seen snowballing with Carole King's "It's Too Late" and Carly Simon's "That's the Way I've Always Heard It Should Be," but again the list is longer.

Donovan's whole career has helped set the tone for the rise of the gay liberation movement, with special mention going to "Sunshine Superman" for its destruction of the Superman mystique. Now Alice Cooper, male leader of an openly gay, transvestite-transsexual group, is making his-or-her contribution.

Even the Red Power movement has been helped—note the recent hit, "Indian Reservation."

And rock has devoted much attention to articulation of alienation from this whole society and its values. "Sounds of Silence" and "Satisfaction" will go down in

history as among the most important artistic works of the sixties.

Last but far from least, we'll note the proletarian character of rock. Rock music from its inception has been centered around the 45 rpm record, thus staying within the financial means of the mass of Black and proletarian white youth. This is reflected throughout rock's history, in its clear proletarian orientation; note the Silhouette's "Get a Job," the Four Seasons' "Dawn," the Animals' "We Gotta Get Out of This Place," etc., etc. Rock and soul artists have traditionally risen up from the very heart of the working class (what other artistic medium can say as much for the artists who make it up?). This includes the most important composers as well, such as the Beatles and Donovan.

But you won't hear much about this sort of thing by reading *The Militant*. *The Militant* has a weekly culture page. Most weeks there is a lengthy book review, and also a lengthy film review. Occasionally there is also a review of a play, or even a magazine. If you can find a record reviewed in *The Militant* (which is already a tough job), you can be pretty confident it won't be rock or soul. In this respect *The Militant* has something in common with the *New York Times*, which has the advantage of unlimited space, but which allots its unlimited space in roughly the same proportions as *The Militant* allots its limited space. Neither seems to care very much what song is currently the most popular in the country.

After all, you can go to the bourgeois university and get a degree in film-making or in various types of book-writing. Or in play-writing. Even magazine-writing. But you can't go to the bourgeois university and get a degree in the writing of either rock or soul music.

Comrades, the accusation that we used to face, that the SWP was Old Left, would have been fully accurate if it had been restricted to the culture page of *The Militant*. The accusation that the SWP is white-dominated will be justified with reference to the culture page of *The Militant*, so long as we don't review soul music. The mass of Blacks and the mass of youth in general, consider music to be the most important artistic medium in use today. They are quite right. The bourgeois universities, the *New York Times*, and *The Militant* editorial board, are quite wrong.

If the Proletarian Orientation tendency offered our neglect of rock and soul music, as evidence of our caving in to the alien class pressures of work on college campuses, then they would have at least one good thing going for them.

* * *

3 - CLOTHING— This past June the Boston SWP held a campaign banquet at which Comrade Peter Camejo gave a speech which in large part dealt with the lessons of his 1970 campaign for Senate. One central point he made was that he found that wearing a suit and tie was a real handicap, which consistently caused the youth he spoke to to distrust him—but as he started to dress more and more informally, that problem progressively disappeared and the kids became spontaneously friendly where they had been spontaneously unfriendly.

Comrade X gives us about the most extreme example in the party, of the very opposite concept in clothing styles. His outrageous colors and styles are designed to dazzle, and they succeed. Comrade X holds most national

records for *Militant* sales. He sells especially well to high school and junior high kids, black youth, and young women—a good 60% of his sales are to women. Some comrades will find consolation in the fact that few of his sales are to hippy-types.

Comrade X's sales would suffer severely if he wore a suit and tie. Many of the women he sells to in downtown Boston, work in the department stores or offices in the area. Whenever they see a suit and tie, they instinctively react: "That's the sort of person whose role is to tell me what to do all day" or "He dresses just like my boss," etc.

The suit and tie are in no way a symbol of the working class, except for its most highly privileged upper layers. It is the ultimate in patriarchal sex-stereotyping, and hence utterly sexist in its symbolism (hence the unconscious phallic-symbol of the tie); it is also a clear symbol of the general culture of the bourgeoisie. Radicalizing Black youth rightly see it as a racist symbol of the white culture.

Dungarees, jeans, overalls, etc., are symbolic of the working class; the preference of youth for such clothes displays their proletarian orientation—is that such a bad thing? Flashy colors and creative styles are worn by very many women, by very many Black and Latino men, and by very many gay white men. Isn't it going a little too far, to fear that a male comrade will alienate the workers if he doesn't wear a suit and tie?

If the comrades of the Proletarian Orientation tendency had given the party's attitude toward clothing, as evidence of the party's supposed petty-bourgeoisification, then they wouldn't have been quite so far off base as they are. For a Proletarian Orientation in Our Clothing, Yes, Yes, Right On! Right On!!

The question is not restricted to male comrades. At the Election Campaigns panel at Oberlin last year, after being told that male candidates should appear in public in jacket and tie, we were then told that women comrades should wear "corresponding dress." This seems to have been left intentionally vague. We take it to mean something like dresses and skirts. Surely the only kind of slacks for women that could "correspond" to jacket-and-tie, are the ultra-ritzy sort that are smiled on by high fashion. Obviously hot-pants are out. Is the mini-skirt ok? Is it ok if it is visibly noticeable that the woman is bra-less?

For our candidates, any appearance of informality is considered too gauche—as it were. The reasoning is that we want our candidates to "look like they're ready to take power, to take office, and are ready for business. That's the kind of appearance we want to have. . . . We want to be taken as seriously as possible by the broadest possible sections of the population." In order to satisfy the "broadest possible sections of the population" in all of these ways, our candidates must not merely be properly attired, they must also be old white men.

An orientation to "the broadest possible sections of the population" is not the same as an orientation to the youth. It's a tactical question, which we choose. Can there be much question, what is the answer to this tactical question?

The suit and tie are extremely offensive to large sectors of the present radicalization, and for good reason. The best use nowadays for ties, is dipping them in dyes, then applying to your white shirt, until the once-white shirt is attractively decorated.

* * *

4 - HAIR AND MAKE-UP— Here we are again discussing the present mass rejection of anti-female sex-stereotyping. Young women have largely rejected the use of make-up and the beauty parlor hairdo, and have exercised the right to wear short hair if they wish. The feminist consciousness of the party causes us not to be so paranoid of alienating the working class as to pressure women comrades to conform to the traditional make-up and hairdo.

Among Black youth, nationalist sentiment has led to the near disappearance of hair-processing among males, with big steps in that direction among females (which has additional overtones of feminism). Many young Blacks flaunt their views by wearing the biggest, most flagrant Afro they can get up. Since the party well understands the significance of Black nationalism, Black comrades need fear no pressures to conform to traditional hair styles.

The phenomenon of long hair on young white men is apparently less crystal-clear. Again, comrades, we have rejection of patriarchal sex-stereotyping. We also again find ourselves discussing rock'n'roll, for the Beatles played the central role in leading the masses through the recent changes. It was young *women* who overnight made the Beatles the biggest success in show business history—more than any other single factor, because of their hair! The mass of young women—the great majority, perhaps 80%, of the teenage women in the US in the sixties—thought that the Beatles' hair was just wonderful. This is because the Beatle hairdo represented opposition to patriarchal sex-stereotyping. The Beatles knew that there was nothing masculine about short hair, nor anything feminine about long hair—which women knew all along, and they were rather glad to see someone else finally catch on.

Would it be safe to say that the young generation as a whole is fairly sympathetic to long hair on men? Madison Avenue thinks so!

Yet the party has pressured its white male comrades to wear short hair, and it continues to do so. The party fears that such long hair would alienate the workers, divide the working class along generational lines. The answer to this is rather elementary. The working class is *already* divided along generational lines. The solution is not for the young to continue to kowtow to the prejudices of the old, and the party has no interest in a public image of favoring such kowtowing. That could only serve to make it hard for youth to distinguish between us and the establishment.

The effect of our present attitude toward long hair on white males, is to make it easier for the Yippies and the like, to portray themselves as the political representatives of the young generation. Groups like Progressive Labor help to isolate themselves from the youth, by their obstinacy on this point, and it is well that they should. But we hurt ourselves by imitating their obstinacy.

* * *

4 - SEX— In the PC memorandum on our policy on gay membership, adopted that fateful Friday the Thirteenth last November, we are reminded that "One characteristic of the radicalization itself, especially in the youth movement, has been discussion about sex. . . . So there's a widespread and growing opposition in very broad layers

of young people in this country against sexual repression and the enforced mutilation of sexuality."

One thing that the party will have to get through its head, is that there are a whole number of human biological needs which are mutilated by decadent social systems, forcing people to overthrow them and set up new ones. The contemporary mutilation of human nutrition is only one factor which will force the masses into the arms of the revolution. Mutilation of human sexuality is another. Just because it hasn't played a big role in earlier, less ripe revolutions, that doesn't mean that it won't play a big role in the American revolution. Recent experience has made it clear that it will.

While noting in words on a few occasions, the strong tendency of the young generation to rebel against sexual oppression, the party has been at best slow to act accordingly. We have been predicting the rise of the new labor radicalization, ever since the decline of the last one; we have been preparing ourselves for it, educating ourselves and our periphery to expect it and understand it in advance.

But the party did not predict the rise of the new feminism. It was taken by surprise by it, and began to relate to it only a year or two after it had already gotten off the ground. The party also did not predict the rise of the gay liberation movement (to put it mildly). It was only about two years after the gay liberation movement got off the ground, a full year and a half after the Christopher Street uprising, before the party and the YSA even acknowledged that we needed no special membership policy for gays, and we are at this writing not yet intervening in that movement.

The party as yet shows no signs of anticipating the rise of the nudist movement or the free love movement. Consider them hereby predicted.

Because the experiences of previous generations of struggle have been so centered around the struggle of organized wage-labor, we are still not so well prepared theoretically, for what is clearly becoming a major aspect of the American revolution—the struggle against sexual oppression.

The Political Committee noted the changes in the attitudes of the young generation toward sexuality. We can note further that the youth are rapidly developing a consciousness that the distinctions that have been drawn between friendship, love, and sexuality, are artificial. They pay little attention to the archaic notions that sexuality is evil, even for women—they even reject the notion that an eagerness for sex is degrading to a woman. In fact, they think sex is good. They are learning that the present social system deprives them of the sexual freedom and satisfaction they desire and deserve.

It is our task to explain to the masses of youth, that it is the capitalist social system which mutilates their sexuality. It is our task to publicly defend the right of the young to have the same sexual freedom as the old. We must identify ourselves with the view that civil liberties apply to sexual matters as well as to any other.

The traditional civil-libertarian movement has put forward such slogans as:

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE!

NO INVASION OF PRIVACY!

NO LEGISLATION OF MORALITY!

NO CRIMES WITHOUT VICTIMS!

Demands like these will gain greater and greater political importance, as the struggle against sexual oppression deepens and as more and more facets of that struggle come into their own.

Consider nudity. Many people are offended by it, but then others are offended by the sight of unnecessary clothing. The simplest democratic principles require that no one have the legal or other right to force others to wear clothes, any more than anyone has the right to force someone *not* to wear clothes.

This is already a significant issue. Millions of women today appear in public in conditions which only a few years ago would have resulted in their arrest for so-called indecent exposure. They go without bras, and wear clothes that make it obvious. They wear transparent and semi-transparent clothing. They wear mini-skirts and hot pants.

The power of the capitalists to enforce the indecent exposure laws, is crumbling before our eyes. Already in situations where there is safety in numbers—at People's Park demonstrations in Berkeley, at big rock festivals (rock'n'roll, again!), at the June 27 gay liberation demo in NY's Central Park—women, and men, have publicly disrobed and gotten away with it. We will likely see more of this.

The reason why capitalism requires the taboo on nudity, is obvious enough—it must inhibit natural human sexuality, since the sorts of personal relations capitalism requires, are so unnatural.

But it is not necessary at this point that the party publicly advocate nudism. What is necessary, is that the party publicly advocate the democratic right to wear clothes or not, as one sees fit. The young generation will be quite favorably impressed to see such a consistent application of democratic principles.

The young generation will also respect us more as the first to call for a democratic freedom—a freedom which in all probability will be a big issue within a few years. We can't say that we were the first to call for repeal of the anti-gay laws. While this demand has been in our program going all the way back to the Russian Revolution, it has been kept in the closet, along with our gay comrades.

The PC memorandum notes that in the 1970 election, "the two main New York State candidates of the Democratic party and one of the candidates for the Republican party—Goldberg, Ottinger, and Goodell—all came out with public statements endorsing what was in essence a Bill of Rights for homosexuals, demanding that they be treated like other citizens, that their private lives be their own and not be subject to legal or police restraint. . . ." When big-name Republican and Democratic candidates already felt enough pressure to force them to advocate repeal of the anti-gay laws, the SWP still felt that it would be ultra-left to let the masses know that we agreed. We couldn't believe that the revolt against sexual oppression could develop great political significance. We must learn this!

Anyone who is in real contact with the moods of the younger generation, knows that the revolt against sexual oppression *already* has great political significance. The youth are as interested in a program for ending sexual oppression, as they are in any other single aspect of our program. Let's tell them where we're at!

The masses of women are chipping away at the power of the state to enforce its "indecent exposure" laws. They can't go much further without posing the issue of the legal right to public nudity. The fact that so many women so often test to see how far they can go and get away with it, suggests that they are interested in the subject. Are we going to wait until "the two main New York state candidates of the Democratic party and one of the candidates of the Republican party" come out in favor of legalizing nudity, before we do likewise?

* * *

We should be honest and conscious about our shortcomings. One thing that's making it harder for us to relate to modern youth, is our relative lack of theoretical preparedness for the struggle against sexual oppression. If in 1965 some comrade had predicted that we'd see a gay liberation movement by the late sixties, the comrade would have been laughed at at best, and very possibly encouraged to leave the organization.

Our theoretical backwardness can be seen in many comrades' thinking about the gay liberation movement. On the one hand, some fear that the women's liberation movement is being turned into a "conversion school for lesbians." If this is the case, is it such a bad thing? Surely no non-lesbian is ever converted into a lesbian. Perhaps some repressed-lesbians are turned into conscious-lesbians. And this may just be quite unpreventable.

On the other hand, many comrades assume that the gay liberation movement can't directly involve more than a certain small percentage of the population. They assume that since X percent of the population is gay today, therefore exactly X percent will be gay tomorrow. They just apparently haven't heard about the conversion school for lesbians that's being run by today's women's liberation movement. And its student population is growing ever larger!

We already mentioned that the party didn't anticipate the rise of feminism, and even reacted a little slowly to it when it appeared. The party has also responded somewhat slowly to the idea of a feminist party. The perspective of a feminist party was proposed at the 1970 YSA convention, in a document by one of the authors of the present article. The response of the YSA leadership was basically that it was too soon to judge, so the issue was left pretty much unresolved at that point.

The March plenum of the party National Committee managed not to deal with the subject. The Political Committee draft resolution on women's liberation also manages not to mention the subject. The party was reminded of the issue, by our article in the party preconvention discussion, which has been out for some time now. Articles published after ours, have already seen replies in print. One article printed after ours, saw not only a reply, but even a reply to the reply. A phone call to the NO on July 15 revealed that as of that date no reply had yet been submitted, though one or more replies were to be expected, someday.

Our struggle to win the party to this position has been greatly, and perhaps somewhat unfairly, handicapped, by the leadership's silence. It is easier for us to speculate how the Proletarian Orientation tendency feels about the female party; the section in our female party article which discussed the Marxist concept of division of labor, was written partly with the PO in mind. It is harder for us to

speculate how the party leadership feels. Until we hear what the leadership's misgivings are (if any), we're defenseless in dealing with them.

Does the leadership plan a last-minute response in a deliberate attempt to avoid giving us a chance to deal with their response? We have enough faith in the party's leadership, to assume that this isn't what's happening. On the contrary, we suspect that the party leadership's slowness in relating to the issue, is just the result of their not knowing off the bat what to say.

While we're on the subject, let's clarify a possible misunderstanding. We don't advocate that the female party be put in the very center of our present work in the women's movement. We quite agree with the party leadership, that the fight for repeal of all abortion laws, with no forced sterilization, is the proper central focus in the present period.

But the Political Committee saw fit in its political resolution, to remind us of our ultimate perspective of a labor party based on the trade unions. A feminist party is an idea that is much more relevant to the present radicalization as it now stands. It is an idea which is quite understandable to the feminist movement we're now working in.

Steps in the direction of a feminist party, are even more immediately relevant. Boston's Female Liberation is a strong and healthy feminist organization which is now organizing around a child-care referendum to be put on the ballot in Cambridge. It takes all of fifty signatures to get a *candidate* on the ballot in Cambridge. Our comrades play a leading role in Female Liberation. As far as the present authors know, it would be perfectly realistic for our comrades to seek to convince Female Liberation to run a candidate in Cambridge this year. We think this would have a major national impact, setting an excellent example of everything we stand for in strategy for the feminist movement. Is this *too abstract* for us to consider? Is it "too soon to tell" whether Female Liberation should run a candidate in Cambridge *this summer*? Pretty soon it'll be *too late*!

Since this article is supposed to be a discussion of the party's weaknesses in relating to the actual consciousness of the radicalizing masses of youth, we will summarize this section by noting the obvious fact about the actual consciousness of the radicalizing masses of youth. The idea of a labor party based on the trade unions, would be a little too abstract and unreal for the youth of 1971. But the idea of a feminist party would be very real, would make lots of sense, to many of them, even now.

* * *

One way to summarize our weakness on this score, would be to note that we have tended to view political struggles as being struggles for dollars. From the start this made us slower to see the possibility of a mass, revolutionary feminist movement. Even after we began to intervene in this movement, it still took us a while to catch on to the fact that the most important issue of the day for feminism, was repeal of the abortion laws. We tended to assume that free-abortion-on-demand would be a better slogan, since it contains a more direct struggle for dollars; the preconvention discussion has shown that some comrades still can't see the revolutionary potential of any struggle, such as the struggle for legalization of abortion, which isn't openly and directly a struggle for more dollars. Of course, gay people aren't in any significant way demand-

ing more dollars, and so the party was startled to see their movement develop political importance; again, some comrades still are instinctively hostile to the gay movement, consciously or unconsciously for this reason. Today's radicalizing youth are just more interested in *things that money can't buy*, then we ever anticipated.

* * *

5 - AGE OF MAJORITY — Today's 12-year-olds are better informed about, and more concerned with, current events, than their parents are. This is shown by the surveys which have indicated that this age group is far and away the most militantly concerned about ecology, the most strongly opposed to the war, etc. This is already enough to show how wrong the age-chauvinists are, who claim you must be 18, or 21, or whatever, before you have the necessary competence to handle the right to vote, to drink, etc.

But the right to vote does not depend on some idle speculation on who is the most competent to judge political questions. The reason that teenagers deserve the right to vote, is that no one else will represent their interests. In a sense, it is true that the young are less fit for political struggle than the old; that is why the old are able to mistreat the young so badly, and still get away with it. Like any other age group, teenagers are limited in their political sophistication. But they are more fit to represent the interests of teenagers at the polls, than anyone else, and the effect of disallowing the teenage vote, is to insure underrepresentation of teenagers in the government.

Today's teenagers and pre-teenagers in their overwhelming majority *strongly* favor the right of teenagers to vote. It is not in the interest of the party to advocate lowering the voting age one year or maybe two years below what the capitalists themselves favor. The youth will not be very impressed to see a radical party which is just a tiny little bit better than the parties of the establishment. Our party should put forward the demand, GIVE TEENAGERS THE VOTE! Whenever we have a chance to speak before an audience consisting largely of the under-18, we ought to put that demand in the very forefront of our program — after all, citizenship rights seem rather important to those who don't have them!

The party has an unfortunate tendency to equate youth with college students — to define "youth" as "young adults." Our youth orientation has in practice been too much a college campus orientation, and not enough an orientation toward the high schools and junior high schools.

Some other things which we ought to be telling every teenager we can get our hands on, are that we favor teenagers winning the right to drink, to have all sexual and similar freedoms their elders have (going to the movies, etc.), the right to hold public office, the right to move out of their homes, to take off from school, and every other right that any other citizen has.

In short, FULL CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS FOR TEENAGERS!

The main effect of such a policy, would be to get across to the young, that we are really different, that we're what they want. When someone offers you citizenship rights that you don't have, you tend to sit up and take notice. Such a policy would in all likelihood lead to drastic growth

of the YSA, and rightly so. It is to the credit of today's teenagers, that they insist on being treated as the equals of their elders, and that they would come see about an organization which agreed.

* * *

6 - LIFE STYLES — The younger generation as a whole is rebelling against the life-styles of their elders. And well they should.

The party's consciousness on the question, was shown at last year's activist conference, especially in the summary of the report at the election campaigns panel. We heard: "We're not running as alternate life-stylers or anything like that. We want to be taken as seriously as possible by the broadest possible sections of the population."

The second sentence of the quote reveals what we all must agree is at best a risky logic!

It would be unrealistic to imagine that we could *directly* reach the middle-aged white male workers. We are going to reach the youth first, and we ought not to sacrifice our attractiveness to the youth, in the vain hope that we might take a short-cut directly to the most conservative layers of the oppressed.

If we are not running as alternate life-stylers or something like that, we ought to be.

The very first and most important plank of the general program of socialism, is that we want to replace a system based on competition and hate, with one based on cooperation and love.

That's what all this talk among the young, about alternate life-styles, is about. They don't understand that very clearly, and we ought to explain it to them — they will catch on quickly.

Does the party think that the young generation's concern with a new life style, is about something as trivial as burning incense all the time, or putting the mattress directly on the floor instead of having a complete bed?

To borrow a note from Guevara, the party ought, at the risk of sounding ridiculous, to say that the revolution is based on great love.

If our pride forbids our admitting that socialism is the new life-style that youth are looking for, then we needn't use the term "life-style." If we just openly and unashamedly tell the world that what we're after is a social system based on love, the youth will know that we have what they want. And the youth will not be the only ones who respond favorably. Such a concept will "be taken as seriously as possible by the broadest possible sections of the population."

More than anything else it is just the word "life-style" that the party wants to repudiate. It's thought of as a hippy word. So also is the phrase "Right on!" which we were cautioned against using, at the same panel last year, on the grounds that it was a *campus* phrase. The phrase "Right on!" is actually a *ghetto* phrase — the fact that ghetto lingo has recently tended to be picked up by white college students, is a sign of the depth of their radicalization, for terminology is not all that they are picking up from the ghetto.

Not a whole lot is gained by using the phrase "Right on!" in campaign speeches or elsewhere. But not enough is lost by using it, to justify a special caution about it at the activist conference.

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7 - THE SO-CALLED "YOUTH CULTURE":— The party's fear of being associated with words like "life-style" or "Right on!" among others, is the result of the party's fear of being associated with noforious "uouth culture."

The "youth culture" is called that by the mass media, in order to discourage the older generation from identifying with it. The mass media have at least succeeded in discouraging the party from identifying with it.

The "youth culture" is just the cultural expression of the present radicalization, which, it is true, is largely a youth radicalization, but it is other things besides. The "youth culture" is equally much a Third World culture (hence the tendency for it to adopt the lingo of the ghetto—such as "Right on!"—as well as other ideas originating in the ghetto). It is equally much an antiwar culture—its main symbols are the peace symbol and the V-sign. It is a culture which is deeply rooted in the rebellion against sexual oppression in its various facets—hence the rebellion against patriarchal sex-stereotyping in hair and clothing, the relatively open attitude toward sex, etc. And it is a culture which is consciously anti-bourgeois—hence the preference for dungarees and jeans over suits and ties, hence the contempt for bourgeois status symbols, for money-worshipping.

Is such a culture really all that terrible a thing? Is it really necessary that the party be on a continuous campaign to disassociate itself from that culture? Can't we at least be neutral?

The degree of the party's frenzy in this matter, can only be seen in its fullness, in relation to what is known as the "hippy" phenomenon. Nobody seems to have a very meaningful analysis of this phenomenon, but *Time* magazine teaches us that hippies are characteristically petty-bourgeois kids who have dropped out of life, who are politically apathetic and devoted to escapism. Progressive Labor and the Workers League agree, and the SWP seems to agree as well.

While most comrades are aware that most "hippies" are working-class, still many domrades seem to insist that the defining characteristic of a hippy is being an apathetic full-time escapist; they thus feel that it is a logical impossibility to be at once a hippy and a revolutionary socialist. This is despite the fact that at any YSA convention nowadays, you'll see hundreds of kids who you'd call hippies if you saw them some place else. We hippy comrades are constantly confronted with straight comrades who, granting that we are hippies, refuse to admit the possibility that we might also be bona fide revolutionary socialists. We also run into comrades who, granting that we are revolutionary socialists, refuse to admit the possibility that we might also really be hippies.

Until we arrive at a definition of "hippy" that doesn't conflict with the data, the party really ought to hesitate about such giving such eager support to the mass media's anti-hippy crusade.

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8 - REPEAL OF PROHIBITION—One of the biggest successes for the SWP in recent years, was the famous Camejo-Kennedy debate at Boston U. during the 1970 Senate campaign. Fifteen hundred kids crowded into the auditorium to take part in a pro-Kennedy rally. While

the kids waited for Kennedy, old Petey invited himself to entertain them until Ted arrived. The initial response to Pete was rather hostile. But the kids decided to hear him out, what the heck, they had time to kill. Pete posed some questions for Kennedy which forced Kennedy to relate to him and debate him after the speech.

By the end of the meeting the kids had switched their sentiments decidedly against Kennedy and toward Pete. There were three main issues on which our position received an ovation and Kennedy's received generalized booing. One was for cutting off funds for the war. Two was for legalizing abortion. Three was for —?

If you guessed the answer, it must be because you cheated and peeked at the title of this section. Yes, Pete declared for legalization of grass. Kennedy, who drinks liquor, said no, he thought our age couldn't afford yet another intoxicant.

To Pete: we apologize for dragging you into the mud once again. Hope your political work isn't hampered too much by your being repeatedly, wantonly used as a good example by the party's hippy comrades.

Outside of a rare case or two like the Camejo-Kennedy debate, the party has kept its demand for legalization of grass in the same closet where we (justly) keep our demand for disarming the police. But the demand for legalization of grass is much too close to the felt needs of the masses today to deserve to gather dust in that closet.

Our apathy toward the movement for legalization of grass must somehow or other be related to the common idea among comrades that grass-smoking is petty bourgeois—the PL position. In Boston we heard this from a branch exec member (who was in the process of shutting down the Proletarian Orientation comrades for not having empirical evidence for claiming that this, that, and the other thing, were petty bourgeois!). The PO comrades could at least misquote from the great books to back up their claims. What would one do to argue for the claim that use of grass was petty bourgeois?

One might empirically observe who has used the stuff. It started with various pre-capitalist societies, and in America spread first to the Latinos, then the Afro-Americans, then the poor urban whites, and then only quite recently to radical college students, and now finally to virtually all sectors of the younger generation. The government concedes that 70% of the GIs in Vietnam smoke grass. All sources agree that use is heaviest among Third World and other poor urban youth. So the petty bourgeois character of smoking grass must be found elsewhere.

Perhaps the reason why pot-smoking might be petty-bourgeois is that it is said to be so much fun. Maybe it's petty bourgeois because people are known to do it out of intellectual curiosity.

Anything pleasant can be used in an escapist way. Some people escape by going to the movies, others read novels or books on math, some get into music, some fall in love, others use alcohol. Only some kind of nut could survive in this world without some source of occasional pleasure.

But grass has a certain special political significance which is missing in most forms of recreation. It's illegal. But maybe some of us haven't noticed the relevance of the fact that nowadays even perfectly average kids are smoking grass.

The first effect of all this is called the *credibility gap*.

Every bourgeois politician from the left to the right, agrees, GRASS IS A NO-NO! The more than ten million kids who are now smoking grass, are thereby rejecting the unanimous advice of all the leaders of this great nation. As a result, the young generation on the whole tends to consider the whole lot of the politicians, the bishops, the army brass, the university presidents, etc., to be ignorant, insane, dishonest, or some combination thereof.

When these same youth hear the same story from Progressive Labor, they rightly assume that PL has something in common with those bourgeois politicians. It is impossible, to get them to swallow the story that they shouldn't smoke because grass is petty-bourgeois!

We ought to be conscious of the way the credibility gap concerning dope, and the credibility gap concerning the war, have been intimately intertwined, reinforcing and strengthening each other. This applies especially to the GI radicalization, and has something to do with the noteworthy behavior of the Vietnam veterans on Boston Common May 31, despite their conservatism in other matters.

Another effect of masses of youth smoking an illegal plant is that a whole generation of Americans are growing up with a very unusual attitude toward the police. After all, nowadays most kids are outlaws, or at least some of their best friends are. No longer do they have the notion that the policeman is our friend. The young generation runs and hides from the police. It fears the police. It hates the police.

When we tell the world that we want to legalize grass, our prestige among the youth rises sharply, and well it should. But we don't tell them very often, unfortunately. We have a written policy in favor of legalizing grass, but we have an unwritten policy of forgetting to tell anyone about our written policy.

It is not for the party to try to decide a controversial medical question like the question of the merits of grass. But millions of youth feel strongly that it has great benefits. These millions of youth argue that if their smoking is hurting anyone, it is only themselves, and that if they want to take their chances, they should have a right to.

It is our duty as revolutionists to defend the younger generation, not just in those ways in which they ideally should need to be defended, but above all in those ways they *actually* need to be defended. A basic part of the concept of transitional demands, is understanding the necessity to relate to the actual *felt* needs of the masses.

These reasons make it especially in the interests of the party to win legalization, above and beyond the main reason, which is that every time the masses win repeal of an arbitrary, undemocratic law, it is a victory for revolutionists.

Nobody in the party could defend the practice of waiting to take our cues from "the two main New York State candidates of the Democratic party and one of the candidates of the Republican party," as we did regarding democratic rights of gay people. We ought not to wait until mass pressure gets so great that even big-name capitalist politicians begin to defend the democratic rights of youth to use grass, before we begin to issue campaign leaflets explaining our position, issuing campaign buttons that say LEGALIZE MARIJUANA — VOTE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY, etc. Every indication is that it won't be long before major capitalist politicians begin to energetically advocate legalization of grass, so we'll have to

move fast if we want to be there first.

"The hatred of many of the oppressed of this country" for gays and grass-smokers, is the creation of the bourgeois media, and we have no interest in compromising with such backward notions when we don't have to.

* * *

SUMMARY:

The party has been guilty of a tendency to be enthusiastic about youth-radicalization-in-the-abstract, about the youth radicalization in Russia in 1917, and the youth radicalization in the US in the 1930's. But we tended to look very disapprovingly on the concrete forms that today's youth radicalization in America has actually taken.

We have compromised too much with the bourgeois university and the bourgeois media, by implicitly agreeing that soul and rock music really aren't that important—the culture page of *The Militant* has ignored two artistic media which have played an enormous historic and political role within the current youth radicalization.

We have had a policy on clothing for comrades, which has in practice made it harder for us to reach radicalizing youth, in the vain hope that we could jump over their heads and appeal directly to the older generation of workers. We have missed the political significance of the massive rejection of the patriarchal sex-stereotyping of clothing—the rejection of the suit and tie, the rejection of the dress and skirt, in favor of dungarees, jeans and such—a cultural change in the mass of youth which has far greater importance than we have seen.

We have similarly failed to understand that the long hair on white males which is universally recognized as a basic symbol of this youth radicalization, is a major progressive cultural change, again rooted in opposition to anti-female sex-stereotyping. Again our policy has served to alienate radicalizing youth, in the vain hope of reaching directly to their parents.

The Political Committee has noted in words, that "there's a widespread and growing opposition in very broad layers of young people in this country against sexual repression and the enforced mutilation of sexuality." But we haven't had the theoretical preparedness we've needed to carry this recognition over into practice. So we failed to anticipate the rise of the feminist movement, and when it appeared we responded more slowly to it than is desirable. The same is even more true regarding the gay liberation movement. Further, the party has been slow to grasp the signs of the impending mass movement demanding the legalization of nudity—seen most of all in contemporary clothing styles that women wear. All of these are failures to see the political importance of the struggle against bourgeois sex norms, a major characteristic of the present youth radicalization.

The party has tended to equate "youth" with "young adults." Thus we have largely abstained from the struggle for full citizenship rights for teenagers, again something which is very close to the hearts of the mass of youth.

The party has missed the significance of the growing alternative culture—which is more than just a "youth culture" but which is today largely a phenomenon of youth. We've had a paranoid fear of being identified with the growing "cultural revolution" in America, causing us to even taboo the use of common ghetto slang because

of its identification with youth.

Our dread of the "youth culture" has caused us to largely abstain from defending the right of the masses of youth not to face grave legal dangers just because they prefer to use a different intoxicant on Saturday nights than what their parents use.

This general tendency to favor youth-radicalization-in-the-abstract, but to be apathetic or hostile to the concrete

forms that this actual youth radicalization has taken, has among other things, resulted in our missing real opportunities to be more attractive to youth, because we've missed real opportunities to be more *deserving* of their respect.

Expressions of the party's sympathy for the actual youth that exist in America today, should not be confined to *The Militant's* "Great Society" column.

MISCELLANEOUS RESOLUTIONS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE CONVENTION

proposed by Sudie and Geb, Boston Branch

1- It's high time *The Militant* began to treat the major cultural media of the proletariat and youth masses—soul and rock'n'roll music—as having cultural validity and political significance; if *The Militant* has space to review books, movies, plays, and magazines, then it should also review popular music.

2- In the end the world socialist revolution is a combined revolution; its major ingredients are the revolutions of the oppressed nations and nationalities, the revolution of the oppressed class, the revolution of the oppressed sex, and the revolution of the oppressed generation. In countries where only one or two of these revolutions have occurred, capitalism may have been abolished; but socialism does not yet exist until all four of these revolutions have occurred. At present there is every indication that in America and certain similar countries, all four of these revolutions will be closely linked up and will occur more or less together. So it is an oversimplification to refer to the coming American revolution as "the proletarian revolution"—it is all four of these. In particular, the revolution of women and youth against sexual oppression, will play a far greater role in the coming American revolution than any leading Marxist of previous generations ever suspected.

3- In such questions as clothing and hair styles for comrades, the needs of the party are primary and the desires of individual comrades are secondary. Within that context the question of our policies is a tactical question based on the concrete conditions of the place and the time. In America at present, informal and/or hip styles may still have some tendency to make it somewhat harder for us to reach the more backward layers of the oppressed, but at the same time they can tend to make it easier to reach those layers which are most in motion, such as the youth. So in the present context there is in general no burning need for us to regulate comrades' clothing and hair styles one way or the other. So in the present context we will cease all formal or informal pressures on comrades, including public representatives, to conform to any particular styles; the decision should be the individual's without any prejudice.

4- A serious orientation toward the youth requires a political concern for their democratic rights. Today's youth are rightly outraged at the legal inequality of teenagers. We call for FULL CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS FOR TEENAGERS! One of the most important aspects of that demand, is the demand to GIVE TEENAGERS THE VOTE!

The demand for female suffrage alienated many male workers, and the demand for teenage suffrage will sure-

ly alienate many older workers. But we take a principled stand of demanding full democratic rights for any and all sectors of society which are denied them. This is the only road to winning the allegiance of the masses.

Both of these demands, but especially GIVE TEENAGERS THE VOTE! must be made major planks in our campaigns and in our propaganda in general, most especially in situations where we can be heard by many teenagers and pre-teenagers.

5- We already have the correct position of advocating legalization of marijuana, on the grounds of the simple democratic right of the individual to "pursuit of happiness" in whatever way they see fit, so long as the rights of others are not materially infringed upon.

This is already a burning issue for today's youth, especially Third World youth, those most strongly opposed to the war, GIs and veterans, etc. It is our duty as revolutionists to energetically defend this right, to make legalization of marijuana a major plank in our campaigns and propaganda, in order to obtain, and deserve, the respect of the masses as the only party which consistently stands for democratic rights.

6- When new movements rise up, we must have an attitude of probing within them for long periods of time. But we can begin intervening even when we haven't yet finished probing. We can't begin intervening in a movement until we have prepared to a certain degree, at least a nucleus of an analysis for that movement. The following is an adequate nucleus of an analysis for gay liberation, sufficient to enable us to begin intervening in the gay movement and struggling for political hegemony within it; it is now possible for us to begin that intervention.

A- The human animal is bisexual. The contemporary repression of parts of human sexuality, is an oppressive social phenomenon rooted in private property and the family structure, which can be ended when its roots are destroyed.

B- Homosexuals and bisexuals are united, as gays, in consciousness of the existing mutilation of human sexuality, in oppression at the hands of the law, employers, landlords, etc., and in sharing a potential for struggling together for an end to the social system which oppresses them. Each of these things results from the gay person's ability to love their own sex, an ability which they have every reason to be proud of.

C- While our general program for gay liberation can be summarized as END ALL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GAYS, still the first task for the gay movement is to win legal equality for gays, so we advocate the central de-

mand REPEAL ALL ANTI-GAY LAWS and the building of united-front struggles around that demand.

7- No revolutionary party or leadership could ever hope to be infallible; one good test of revolutionism is the ability to openly admit an error and understand it. Our former policy on gay membership is not merely outdated; it was a mistake all along. It showed a greatly exaggerated estimate of the danger to gays in recent years, from "blackmail" or the law. And it showed a greatly exaggerated notion of the tendency toward emotional instability among gays as compared to straights.

This latter point can be seen in the PC memorandum on the subject, dated 11-13-70. In explaining why we had had that policy, the PC twice associates allowing gays to be members, with the danger of turning the party into a "therapeutic organization." Many other passages reveal that the party had been motivated largely by fear of the presumed tendency of gays to emotional instability—which is the rationale for prohibiting gays to hold such jobs as teaching, and which is simply false.

Insofar as gay comrades found it a greater emotional strain to be members of the party, than straight comrades have, it's because gay comrades had to hide even from their own comrades. If the problem was emotional strain on gay comrades, then the solution was political education of the straight comrades. The fact that straight comrades did not get this education resulted in their inability to anticipate the rise of the gay liberation movement.

The party had the attitude that gayness was a handicap to a revolutionist, a handicap which some comrades might be able to overcome. The reverse is the case. Gayness is a perpetual reminder to the gay revolutionist, that capitalism's gotta go.

The party's inability to anticipate the rise of the gay liberation movement or even to recognize it when it first appeared (like its inability to anticipate the rise of the feminist movement) was a part of our general underesti-

mation of the revolutionary potential of the struggle against sexual oppression in its various forms.

9- The following is a proposed amendment to the Political Committee draft resolution on women's liberation. The draft resolution contains a section which is introduced as "the broad outlines" of a transitional program for the women's liberation movement. The first subsection is titled "The Right to Control One's Own Body"; at present it mentions only the right of abortion and birth control. Amend it with the following addition:

The right to control one's own body includes the right to use it according to one's own personal views on morality and sexuality, so long as one does not materially infringe on the rights of others. No one has the right to compel anyone else to observe a moral standard they don't agree with. Millions of women are coming to see this with increasing clarity and to demand changes. This will be articulated around demands like the following traditional civil libertarian slogans:

- Separation of church and state!
- No crimes without victims!
- No legislation of morality!
- No invasion of privacy!

In particular we demand repeal of all laws against "obscenity," "indecent exposure," "immoral acts," extramarital sex, gay sex, etc. The rise of the gay liberation movement, recent trends in women's clothing, trends in the ideas of the masses especially of youth, and other things, indicate the likelihood of increasing relevance of these demands to the masses of women, and also to the masses of youth and the population as a whole.

**WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT GAY?
(or HOMOSEXUALS ARE REALLY REVOLTING!)
by Sudie and Geb, Boston Branch**

In determining a political attitude toward gay people and their movement, all points of view find that the central question to be dealt with is the question, WHAT IS GAYNESS?

Capitalism's answer to this question is dictated by its need to rationalize its form of social organization. It needs to keep people intensely alienated from one another. Sex—which is also, and correctly, called love—is the great natural magnetism which binds us together and makes us a social animal. So capitalism is forced to struggle against the biological tendency of people to seek erotic pleasure.

But on the other hand, capitalism must produce heirs. So it makes an exception to its general rule of opposition to sexuality. It approves sex in those situations where it produces heirs (even if all there is to inherit is the family name).

There is a whole system of taboos and similar devices, which have been pragmatically devised in order to limit the natural human tendency to love one another. These include: the homosexuality taboo; the incest taboo; the

taboo on nudity; the taboo on masturbation; the taboo on even mentioning certain words or subjects, in various situations, such as "mixed" company or in front of children; the denial of children's right to any sex life at all; the restriction of even heterosexual love to married couples (and the taboo on various "perversions" even within that context); the taboo on women "robbing the cradle"—having sex-love with a younger male; the myth that there is no sexual pleasure in breast-feeding; etc.

But the bourgeois theory that sex exists solely to encourage us to produce heirs, runs up against the empirical fact that many people get sexual pleasure from contacts which are completely unrelated to reproduction—such as contacts with the same sex. Capitalism has to condemn such pleasure, but it also has to explain why it exists.

The first analysis that straight society put forward on this matter was that gayness is a vice, a sin. They say that God gave people sex drives solely to get them to reproduce and that any other use of the sex drive, such as gay sex, is a violation of God's plan, a crime against

God which must be eliminated by any means necessary.

Due to the progressive weakening of organized superstition over the centuries, capitalism must now state that gayness is a disease, either physical or psychological (a theory which the Stalinists approve). A female deity, Mother Nature, substitutes for the male deity, God. They now say that it was Mother Nature who gave us sex only to get us to reproduce, that it is Mother Nature whose plan is violated by gay sex, and that it is Mother Nature for whose sake gay sex must be eliminated by any means necessary.

The Marxist answer to the issues raised by gay liberation is not restricted by the scanty data that the Marxists of previous generations worked with. We have inherited Engels' enthusiasm for sex-love and his belief that sex-love was the cement which would hold people together in a communistic society. But we have learned much since his time about the capacity for flexibility in the human sex-love drive. For instance, none of us would seriously defend his speculation in *Origins* that perhaps communist sex-love would resemble contemporary forms, in being exclusive, in the sense that one couldn't fully love two people at the same time.

We have also learned that sex-love is not restricted to heterosexuality. As other comrades have argued and continue to argue, THE HUMAN ANIMAL IS GAY!

Human beings have a strong natural tendency to form friendships with any other available human beings, regardless of their sex. Given half a chance, friends will play with each other, playing erotic games as well as others. Such is our nature.

But social forces can overcome natural tendencies and even make them appear nonexistent. It is not the existence of sexuality, in any form, that is unnatural, but rather the apparent non-existence of a form of sexuality for which the natural potential exists. Neither the capacity for gay sex, nor the capacity for straight sex, is unnatural. But the *incapacity* for either gay sex or for straight sex is indeed an unnatural—i.e., social—phenomenon.

Three main axioms of Judeo-Christian anti-gay mythology are the notions that sex exists only to encourage reproduction, that people are either exclusively straight or exclusively gay, and that gay sex is so horrible that it would be foolish to even try it once as an experiment.

Straight society needs to keep the majority of people from even trying gay sex as an experiment, for the obvious reason that such experimentation would lead to people realizing that they are gay. Straight society also needs to keep the people from seeing the results of the experiments of others, for then people would see that other people they can identify with have tried gay sex and liked it, and managed to enjoy life anyway. So straight society won't allow gay people to visibly display their gayness and won't even give gays the right to exist unless they keep their gayness an absolute secret.

We have seen how gay-baiting is used as red-baiting is. Communists of various persuasions have only recently started to win the right to exist. In the antiwar movement of a decade ago communists did not have the right to exist, the right to participate in groups like the Student Peace Union with the same simple human rights that others had. Only with the anti-Vietnam-war movement have we won the right to exist, the right to be accepted and welcomed like any other opponents of the war.

Gay people have had similar problems. In the early years of the anti-Vietnam-war movement, reactionaries sought to queer-bait the movement, in a way quite reminiscent of the mass media's red-baiting of it. When the women's liberation movement rose up, they sought to lesbian-bait it, the most famous incident being *Time* magazine's attempt to lesbian-bait Kate Millett. It was a decisive moment when the women's movement reacted by openly welcoming gay women and solidarizing with Millett. Another major victory for gays has been won as the antiwar movement now openly welcomes gays to take part as gays, in gay contingents—a victory comparable to communists winning the right to march openly as communists.

The reason why reactionaries don't want to give communists the right to exist is that they rightly fear that the masses would end up being communist. *The reason why reactionaries don't want to give gay people the right to exist is that they rightly fear that the masses would end up being gay.* When straights get to know gays, and see that gayness does not cause instantaneous death or anything comparable, give a little time and the straights will end up trying it once, just to see what it's like. Once people start doing that, they're well on their way to becoming gay.

We can surely all agree that it's better—more scientific, more revolutionary—to be a conscious, proud gay, than to be an unconscious, repressed gay. It is commonly understood that repressed homosexuality lies behind the typical cop mentality, for instance. It is also commonly understood that, thanks to the continuous anti-gay propaganda campaign of straight society, enormous numbers of people are repressed gays, gays who don't dare admit it even to themselves. It is a natural task of the gay movement to encourage repressed gays to realize their own gayness and every time any repressed gays realize their gayness, superstition is weakened and the revolution is strengthened as a result.

It is for this reason that gays on the June 27 march in NY chanted to spectators, HEY, HEY!—WADDYA SAY?—TRY IT ONCE—YOU MIGHT BE GAY! It is again for this same reason that gay people for decades have scrawled on bathroom walls the slogan, DON'T KNOCK IT IF YOU HAVEN'T TRIED IT! The gay movement is quite right to encourage people who've never tried gay sex to try such an experiment—such an experiment can only result in learning.

Bourgeois ideology is very much dependent on the strength of the myth that everyone is either exclusively heterosexual or exclusively homosexual. The masses, having tried it with the other sex and liked it, as a result of this myth just assume that they wouldn't also like it with the same sex. In fact, most gay people are actively bisexual, loving members of both sexes at one time or another.

This is reflected in the choice of terminology of the gay liberation movement. Gay people have largely rejected the term "homosexual" and tend to insist on being called "gay." One part of this is just that "homosexuality" sounds like a disease, like "tonsillitis" or "claustrophobia," whereas "gay" carries the pleasant, and appropriate, connotation of happiness and well-being. But perhaps the main reason for this choice of words is that "homosexual" is traditionally understood in the exclusive sense, and thus is thought of as an *inability*, the inability to love those of the opposite sex. Gayness, on the other hand, refers both

to exclusive homosexuals and to bisexuals as well—if you're capable of loving someone of the same sex, you're gay, whether or not you're also capable of loving someone of the opposite sex. *Thus gayness is not an inability, but rather an ability—the ability to love someone of your own sex.* Gay people, as they develop pride in their gayness, come to see the question of ability to love your own sex as the great distinction between themselves and straights.

Employers have quite the same attitude toward bisexuals as toward exclusive homosexuals. So do landlords. When cops beat up gays they don't first ask them whether they're bisexual or exclusively homosexual. In general, both types of gays share the same oppression in contemporary society, as punishment for their violation of God's or Mother Nature's plan that sex was to be used only for reproduction. While many gays don't feel strongly about which word is used with reference to them, on the other hand many do, especially those who identify most with the gay liberation movement. It's thus a good idea to use the term "gay" rather than "homosexual."

Since bisexuals are able to fulfill at least part of their sexuality without rocking the boat, exclusive homosexuals suffer a worse oppression in modern society. The inability to love the opposite sex is not such a critical issue under present conditions; the pressure on a bisex couple to conform to bourgeois norms of female submissiveness and male dominance is much greater than the pressure on a homosexual couple, so it is natural that many people who rebel against bourgeois norms in their sex lives find it much easier to do so in a homosexual relationship. So it is appropriate that bisexuals identify with exclusive homosexuals rather than with straights, and it is fitting that the gay movement poses the issue as straight vs. gay. And when the gay liberation movement argues that the ability to love your own sex is better than the inability to do so, who can disagree? (Dave Thorstad's article in bulletin #12 suggests—through his reference to the slogan "2, 4, 6, 8--Gay is Just as Good as Straight"—that he didn't notice that the June 27 NY march replaced that slogan with "2, 4, 6, 8--Gay is *Twice* as Good as Straight." The importance of the bourgeois myth that the only purpose for sex is to motivate us to reproduce (as well as the importance of the myth that everyone is either exclusively heterosexual or exclusively homosexual), can be seen in the comment made by Comrade Hedda Garza in her article on words and deeds. Hedda argues against the theory that communist humanity will be gay by asking what the purpose of the revolution would be if it would lead to the extinction of the human race because people, having become gay, all stopped reproducing.

There are three good reasons for *not* worrying as Hedda does. First, even most exclusive homosexuals would be willing to undergo an occasional heterosexual act if the very survival of humanity depended on it. Second, if all else failed, this is after all the twentieth century and we know about such things as artificial insemination (and we will surely use it, in any case, in order to scientifically control heredity). But third, and most important, when gay people predict that communist humanity will be gay, we don't mean exclusively homosexual—we mean *bisexual!*

Communist humanity will forget the unreal distinction drawn in bourgeois society between friendship and love. Under capitalism, people ordinarily have friends of the

same sex and lovers of the opposite sex. There are reasons for this, reasons which are rooted in the bourgeois family structure, reasons which will disappear with the disappearance of private property and the family. Under communism people will form friendships without any regard for the sex of the friend, people will fall in love without any regard for the sex of their lover, and people will express their love sexually with their lovers, without regard for the sex of their partner. To question whether love will be bisexual under communism is like questioning whether friendship will be bisexual under communism, for the distinction between friendship and love will disappear.

In a sense, the basic task of the gay liberation movement, like the basic task of the women's liberation movement, is to overthrow the hold of superstition and build the power of science over society, specifically within the realm of human sexuality and sexual relations.

On a practical level, the most pressing need of gay liberation is to win equal rights for gay people; so we demand **END ALL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GAYS!**

But in struggles for equal rights in general, we find that the first need is for equal rights under the law. We demand **REPEAL ALL ANTI-GAY LAWS!** To win this demand the gay movement must seek coalitions with all forces which are willing to agree with repeal of the anti-gay laws, regardless of whether such forces are gay, straight, or mixed, even if they think that gayness is a disease or a sin. The demand for legalization of gay love must be argued for on the basis of simple democratic principles such as separation of church and state, no legislation of morality, etc., principles which liberal politicians must support or risk serious discreditation among the masses. We must fight to have the courts nullify the anti-gay laws as unconstitutional on grounds of separation of church and state, invasion of privacy, etc.

It may not be very easy for us to win the gay movement to the concept of centering their actions around **REPEAL ALL ANTI-GAY LAWS**, forming the broadest possible coalitions even including liberal politicians. Just having a strategy of doing so will give us plenty to differentiate ourselves from other tendencies, and will give us plenty to recruit gay people with. It is already enough of a strategy that we can without further hesitation begin to intervene in the gay movement—continuing to take notes and gather information, just as we always do in every movement—and fight for hegemony within it.

We can put forward within such a broad repeal movement the left-wing demand **BAN ALL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GAYS**—demanding legislation forbidding discrimination against gays in the private sector, such as housing, employment, etc. Those two demands, plus our materialist answer to the question "What is gayness?" are a very adequate program, one which no one else can come close to.

Our intervention in the gay movement should not be restricted to those situations where we're speaking only to gays. Rather, our program for gay liberation should be a basic part of our campaign program. Our candidates when speaking on radio and TV should take the initiative to explain the difference between ourselves and the capitalists on the question of the democratic rights of gay people, pointing out that we're the only party in the country that supports gay liberation. In cities where we have a large number of comrades to choose from—where we would usually try to run a black candidate, a Latino candidate,

a women's liberation candidate, an antiwar activist candidate, a welfare mothers' candidate, and so on, and so forth--in such cities we should make every attempt to also field a gay candidate.

POSTSCRIPT: Comrade Lee Smith, in "Some Further Remarks," answers Comrade Hedda Garza by saying that "No gay comrade . . . has said . . . that it is more revolutionary to be gay than to be straight." But the difference between gay and straight is very much the difference between the ability to love someone of the same sex and the inability to do so. Thus it is in one respect the ability to break with conformity to bourgeois norms of life vs. the inability to do so. This may not mean that all gay people are more revolutionary than all straight people, but it does mean that it is in a very real sense more revolutionary to be gay than to be straight, and if the authors of the present article are the first gay comrades to say so, then we accept that distinction with a feeling of pride.

Comrade Dave Thorstad argues against the concept of proselytizing to gayness; in the same issue of the discussion bulletin, Comrade Smith denies the existence of a "gay will to convert." It is clear that within the gay movement there exists a substantial "will to convert"--hence the chant "HEY, HEY--WADDYA SAY?--TRY IT ONCE--YOU MIGHT BE GAY!" on the June 27 NY march. It would be wrong for several reasons for the party to proselytize to gayness, partly because most comrades couldn't do it with sincerity, but further because the party's task is not to proselytize to different life styles. But there is nothing wrong with the women's movement proselytizing against a woman staying sexually faithful to one man, proselytizing for the use of contraceptives and/or abortion where desired, etc. And there is nothing wrong with the gay movement proselytizing for gayness. And there is further nothing wrong with individual comrades taking part in these forms of proselytizing.

Gay comrades should be totally free to state publicly, if they want to, that they as individuals have found gayness to be an immensely liberating experience (nothing can solve all problems, true, but some things can solve some problems), and to recommend it to others, just as women comrades should be free to state that they have found the use of contraceptives to be liberating, and recommend it to others.

Presumably the party is agreed that it is a step forward when repressed gays realize their gayness--which usually occurs through fruitful experimentation. When gay people chant "HEY, HEY--WADDYA SAY?--TRY IT ONCE--YOU MIGHT BE GAY!" we are aiming at our repressed gay sisters and brothers (which we think includes everyone who isn't consciously gay). No one should fault us for encouraging repressed gays to realize their nature through experimentation.

This chant must also be seen as advocating a spirit of scientific experimentation. The party certainly should be against the practice of people taking their parents' word for it that they aren't gay. Anyone who hasn't tried it, doesn't know. The general bourgeois sexual mythology rests largely on forbidding of scientific experimentation. Youngsters aren't encouraged to try pre-marital sex to see for themselves how evil it is. On the contrary, they are taught that you have to stay away from such temptation, for people aren't strong enough to handle such temptation, and would end up surrendering to it if they got too close.

It's quite a constructive thing, that the gay movement so

eagerly advocates a spirit of scientific experimentation. It's quite in line for the party to state its approval of such a spirit, and to explain how organized superstition depends on people taking the word of others rather than seeing for themselves.

Is the term "straight" a put-down which should not be used to refer to heterosexual comrades? The authors of this article do consider the term "straight" to be, in a sense, a "put-down," like the term "hung-up" and others. We have explained that we think it means the inability to love your own sex, whereas gayness is the ability to do so; we have explained that we politically prefer that ability to that inability. But whatever word we might choose to use to refer to straight comrades would continue to describe their inability to love the same sex, and thus would also be, in that sense, a "put-down."

What other words might be used instead? Not the word "heterosexual," for bisexuals (which includes most gays) are heterosexuals who are also homosexuals. We might say "exclusive heterosexuals," but it isn't usually very easy to get people to use a nine-syllable phrase where a one-syllable word could replace it.

One thing you can bet your life on, though. Gay comrades are not going to refer to straight comrades as "normal."

Is it "rash," as Comrade Thorstad suggests, to expect that people will be bisexual under socialism? Under capitalism sex is heterosexual and friendship is homosexual. Is there any possibility that the distinction between friendship and sexual love will continue to exist under socialism? Is there any possibility that friendship under socialism will continue to be homosexual (or will become heterosexual)?

If it is rash to expect that friendship-love-sex will be bisexual under socialism, then it is rash to expect that friendship-etc. will be interracial under socialism. But that's o.k. The revolutionary spirit is rash to its very core.

SUMMARY

ONE--The human animal is bisexual. The repression of part or all of human exuality is an unnatural -- i.e., social -- phenomenon, which is oppressive to people.

TWO--Capitalism hates gayness because it hates all sex which cannot be justified as necessary for producing heirs -- because capitalism hates love.

THREE--The reactionary ideology is based largely on the myths that sex is just for reproduction, that everyone is either exclusively straight or exclusively gay, and that experimentation is bad.

FOUR--Gayness is an ability -- the ability to love the same sex. Whether or not you're also capable of loving the opposite sex is not a basic issue at this time. This is one good reason for using the term "gay" rather than "homosexual."

FIVE--In a very real sense, the ability to love the same sex is better (more revolutionary, etc.) than the inability to do so. In a very real sense it is better to be a conscious gay than to be a repressed gay -- and everyone is one or the other.

SIX--The distinction between friendship and sexual love is artificial, and will disappear when its roots -- private property and the monogamous family -- disappear.

SEVEN--The contemporary restriction of friendship to same-sex pairs, and the restriction of sexual love to opposite-sex pairs, will likewise disappear.

EIGHT--Our program for gay liberation can be sum-

marized as END ALL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GAYS!

NINE—The first task for the gay movement is winning legal equality. REPEAL ALL ANTI-GAY LAWS is the best demand to organize around now, and gay groups should unite around that demand with non-gay groups that agree with it.

TEN—Because of the uncontrolled hostility of nearly all our opponents to gay people, we have exceptionally good possibilities for recruitment out of the gay movement, and should take full advantage of this fact. For instance, wherever possible we should run gay candidates for office, just as we run black candidates, antiwar-activist candi-

dates, women's liberation candidates, etc.

ELEVEN—Gay comrades should be free as individuals to publicly describe their own personal experiences — including what benefits they may feel they have gotten from their gay experiences — and hence to publicly recommend, as individuals, that others might also find similar benefits. This should be understood to include the right to dress or wear one's hair in characteristically gay styles, if one so desires.

TWELVE—The party as a whole should favor the spirit of scientific experimentation, including experimentation with gay sex.

July 9, 1971

IN DEFENSE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:

AN ANSWER TO SUDIE AND GEB

By Matilde Zimmermann, Boston Branch

The four documents submitted by Sudie and Geb of the Boston branch outline their own peculiar analysis of the present radicalization, version of party history and interpretation of Marxism. I want to go into three important questions on which they present incorrect positions: the labor party and feminist party, the proletarian orientation of the SWP, and the relationship between the present radicalization and cultural changes among young people.

The Labor Party Question

There is only one working class party in the fullest sense of the term. That is the mass revolutionary socialist party. All other "working class parties" reflect to one degree or another the pressures of and compromises with the needs of the bourgeoisie. Our central goal is the construction of a mass combat party of the working class.

We have at times advanced as a propagandistic idea or as an agitational slogan the concept of a labor party based on the trade unions. We have done this when specific historical circumstances indicated that such a maneuver would help build the revolutionary socialist party. To us the labor party is a way to move workers away from the bourgeoisie and towards revolutionary ideas. Two characteristics of U.S. society prompt us to employ this tactic at the present time. One is the smallness of the Marxist vanguard of the working class expressed in the SWP. The second is the massive organization of the working class in trade unions which remain tied and subordinated to the bourgeois political parties.

American Trotskyists opposed a call for a labor party in the 1930's until the rise of the CIO. It was impossible at that time to predict what political form the developing radicalization would take within the working class. The possibilities could have included a rise of the Socialist Party into a mass party or some other variant. Historically, the variant which arose and encompassed the radicalization was the industrial unions of the CIO. We therefore raised the slogan of a labor party based on the organized forms the class struggle was taking. Although we knew such a party would have a reformist, that is pro-capitalist program, we favored the break by the workers with the Democratic Party as a first step towards political class consciousness. We would then fight for a socialist program within the labor party.

Under certain conditions we would give critical support to the candidates of a labor party, but we would never

support abstractly a labor party; on the contrary, our whole strategy would be to fight against it as we fight against all bourgeois parties, though in a different manner because of its class composition. Under certain conditions the actual formation of a labor party based on the unions could be a step backwards for the working class.

Sudie and Geb's position, "A labor party would be a progressive step, because it would increase the social power of a progressive force in history, the working class," is totally mechanical and incorrect.

We can counterpose to Sudie and Geb's confusion on this question the clarity of Cannon's remarks on election policy in 1948.

Our *fundamental* attitude towards such parties [as the British Labor Party] is the same as our attitude towards a bourgeois party of the classical type—that is an attitude of irreconcilable opposition. But the composition of such parties gives them a certain distinctive character which enables, and even requires, us to make a different *tactical* approach to them. . . . We would oppose such a 'bourgeois workers party' [in the U.S.] as ruthlessly as any other bourgeois party, but our tactical approach would be different. We would most likely join such a party—if we have strength in the unions they couldn't keep us out—and under certain conditions we would give its candidates critical support in the elections. But critical support of a reformist labor party must be correctly understood. It does not mean reconciliation with reformism. Critical support means opposition. It does not mean support with criticism in quotation marks but rather criticism with support in quotation marks. (Aspects of Socialist Election Policy, pp. 30-31; emphasis in original)

Cannon's approach is a political one, based on concrete historical circumstances, involving real mass social forces in the process of struggles. Geb and Sudie develop an a-historical formalistic political party fetish-theory. They claim that "the most powerful kind of organization is the mass political party." Is the working class organized in a trade union-based labor party more powerful than in soviets? Mass political parties are progressive, according to Sudie and Geb, if the social layer they are composed of is progressive. Therefore all progressive layers should form political parties in order to have the "most powerful kind of organization." This logic would require us to declare, regardless of circumstances and at all times, that

we favor the formation of a women's party, a gay people's party, a children's party, unemployed people's party, etc.

A Female or Feminist Party

The resolution "Toward A Female Party" starts from a misunderstanding of our use of the labor party slogan, and also from an incorrect analysis of the feminist movement as it exists today.

The feminist movement has yet to reach, much less move into action, the masses of women. The question before us is how to help the movement reach millions of women and launch massive actions against the capitalist oppression of women. Sudie and Geb say, "The question of whether to *vote* feminist is the quickest way of bringing the issue of feminism to the masses of women." This is dead wrong. The way to reach women is by creating broad, mass action coalitions around issues which can draw millions into struggles. The beginnings of mass consciousness against female oppression will find expression in action. This conclusion is carefully explained in the Political Committee draft resolution "Toward A Mass Feminist Movement." In effect, Sudie and Geb counterpose voting to action as the "quickest" way of bringing feminist issues to masses of women.

The creation of a feminist party or female party would immediately pose the problem of program. Its primary organizational effect would be to divide the presently small organized feminist movement into innumerable sub-factions around the question of program. Our whole orientation is to *unite* the feminist movement around actions.

Sudie and Geb seem pleased by the thought of the factional warfare which would erupt as soon as a women's party were formed. They say, ". . . once the basic step of a feminist party is taken, the field would be made more clear for the struggle between right and left wings of feminism." This field-clearing is cited as one reason why the forming of a feminist party would be a progressive move.

The formation today of a woman's party would cause the feminist movement to turn inwards rather than looking out toward the masses of women. It would create a sterile discussion — that is, one which would not involve the masses — about what program an abstract a-historical mass women's party should have. This kind of sectarian abstract "struggle" between "right and left" is precisely what we want to avoid in the feminist movement.

We will clarify our program and defeat the sectarians, opportunists and utopians in the feminist movement primarily by confronting them with the mass action perspective and forcing them to relate to it politically — not by abstract programmatic arguments.

It is necessary to examine more closely the question of what a female party would actually look like at this time. Sudie and Geb neatly avoid this topic in their resolution. Such a formation would naturally be affected by the general climate and political situation in the country today. Above all else, it would be confronted with the fact that the working class, and the Black and Chicano nationalities on a mass scale remain in the Democratic and Republican parties. At this stage a new female party, limited to the as yet relatively small feminist groups, could become nothing but a Women's Caucus of the Democratic Party (already in formation) or at "best" of a group like the Peace and Freedom Party. In either case it would be

a step backwards for the feminist movement.

It is not surprising that these comrades who poorly understand the second wave of feminism also incorrectly appraise the first wave. Their dismissal of earlier struggles as "the thoroughly bourgeois feminist movement" reveals an inability to comprehend the dynamic of mass movements penetrating and causing upheavals in every social layer. Do these comrades know that International Women's Day celebrates the struggle of masses of working women around the issues of working conditions and suffrage? Many of the militants who fought to organize female textile and garment workers into unions had their first political experience in the suffrage movement. Were their strikes and demonstrations "thoroughly bourgeois"?

From the above it becomes clear that Sudie and Geb are presenting a counter line to the Political Committee resolution on the feminist movement and not just an addition or amendment to it. It is impossible to vote for both since they present opposite orientations for the women's movement.

My concern in this discussion has been to show why building a women's party is the wrong strategy for the feminist movement today. I have not attempted to resolve some of the major theoretical considerations which are raised by the long-range question of a future mass women's political party. But the following are some of the points which comrades should keep in mind in future discussions on the question.

1. We do not base our program on abstract future possible variants of the class struggle — that is, "if" situations.

2. The call for the trade unions to form a political party is associated with the idea of a workers government. Likewise the call for a mass independent Black or Chicano party is associated with self-determination, the establishment of some form of Black and Chicano political power, including possibly a separate state. We do not call for a women's state or government. Therefore the importance of program (including questions of class and nationalities) becomes much more overriding than in the case of a labor or all-Black party.

3. Any suggestion of the formation of a female party must be based on the concrete historical circumstances and its relationship to the class struggle.

4. The question of our extending critical support to specific individual candidacies which might develop out of the women's movement cannot be predetermined by reference to an abstraction like Sudie and Geb's "mass feminist party." Each concrete instance must be examined critically from the standpoint of our class principles and our experience in the use of the tactic of critical support.

Proletarian Orientation

One of the historic contributions of Marxism is the use of precise, scientific, meaningful language and concepts. Sudie and Geb's stream-of-consciousness on the question of a proletarian orientation has nothing in common with Marxism. Rather than the scientific concept of labor power, they seem to prefer the idea of labor or "work" — housework, schoolwork, and the work of a child obeying her of his parent's prohibitions. They believe that the most fundamental division in society is not between classes based on their relationship to production but between those who tell others what to do and those who get told what to do.

This theoretical concept is their justification for asserting that the conflicts between nationalities, generations and sexes are basically similar and analogous to the conflict between classes.

The authors of "Against a Proletarian Orientation" have one thing in common with those of "For a Proletarian Orientation." Both groups believe that the Socialist Workers Party once had a proletarian orientation and now is moving or has moved away from this orientation. Both of them are wrong, and both of them thus differ from the NC draft political resolution on the central political question of the party's orientation to the working class. One set of critics believe that the alleged departure from a proletarian orientation was a good thing and the other that it was a mistake, and so they end up proposing different strategies. One wants the party to turn its back on the present radicalization; the other wants the party to adapt to all manifestations of the radicalizations. One leans toward sectarianism and the other towards opportunism.

The Youth Culture

The basic error of method that runs through Sudie and Geb's analysis of the youth radicalization is their confusion of form and content. They continually take the manifestations of youth rebellion, the concrete forms that this radicalization has assumed, and translate them into a program of action for the revolutionary party. Thus they want to pass resolutions that the press orient more towards rock and roll music, that a big campaign emphasis be given to legalization of marijuana, and that there be a positive orientation toward informal or hip styles of dress.

It is in their analysis of the youth culture (which the authors of the document claim to be more sensitive to than the allegedly unsympathetic party leadership) that they make their crudest political errors. Their belief that white youth have become less racist than their parents largely in response to Black musical ability is of course absurd. What about the mass, militant actions of Black people, the fight for human dignity through nationalist consciousness, the colonial revolution?—surely it is these which have affected America's youth. Instead Sudie and Geb present a stereotype racist natural-sense-of-rhythm argument.

Equally blatant is the sexism of the section of the document dealing with nudity. The authors applaud the wearing of "transparent and semi-transparent clothing," or "hot pants and mini-skirts" or of nothing, as an expression of female rebellion. They give no recognition to the fact that females are oppressed as sexual objects, that for years women have been forced in many different ways to display their bodies clad and unclad, and that many feminists find apparel like hot pants and transparent blouses degrading toward women. If, as Sudie and Geb suggest, a woman chips away at the power of the state and moves toward freedom each time she takes off another piece of clothing, then girlie magazines must be the vanguard of the revolutionary press and a topless dancer is less oppressed as a woman than a covered dancer. This is an absurd and hostile caricature of the women's movement.

There are two other indications of the fact that Sudie and Geb have little comprehension of the depth of female oppression in capitalist society. As they point out, females represent only 38% of the SWP and only 17% of its Na-

tional Committee. It is of course perfectly in order to cite this statistic and attempt to explain how such an undesirable situation developed. The document lays the blame on "the weaknesses of our party, and on our proletarian orientation most of all." What about the real, material oppression which all women suffer, including revolutionary socialist women? Sudie and Geb either think the party exists on the moon or they do not perceive that the oppression of women is a universal and heavy burden on every member of our sex. They do not even raise this as a factor, but rather hint that anyone who refuses to admit the SWP's program is wrong must think that women are biologically inferior. The real explanation lies not in programmatic deficiency but in the thousand ways a female's development is stunted, diverted and intimidated by capitalist society. The party is the creation of existing society as well as the agent for changing society. One way this particular fact of sexual disproportion within the party can be corrected—and is being corrected—is by building and participating in the mass feminist movement, and not by revising or abandoning our Marxist program.

The long panegyric to the youth culture contains no recognition of the fact that rock culture also oppresses women, that there are many aspects of modern hip music, dress, living arrangements, sexual norms, the underground press, etc., which are at least ambiguous and often clearly anti-female. These two comrades are far behind some non-socialist sections of the feminist movement on this question. They would profit from reading some of the excellent articles on sexism in rock culture in the feminist press.

It is not hard to uncover Sudie and Geb's position on the question of dress. In their resolution they say that in such questions as dress and hair styles, "the needs of the party are primary and the desires of individual comrades are secondary." The only political considerations which they raise in the document are the contentions that it is beneficial to *Militant* sales to dress in "outrageous colors and styles designed to dazzle" and that informal dress makes a candidate more appealing to young audiences. The implication is clearly that the "needs of the party" would be best served by discouraging comrades from dressing according to conventional norms.

Their whole formulation on this question is incorrect. In fact, while dress and hair style are personal matters, we must not allow personal decisions to get in the way of reaching people with our politics and explaining our ideas with the greatest possible clarity. The fact that Comrade Peter Camejo wore a suit and tie every time he debated Ted Kennedy during the senatorial campaign (which is not exactly the impression one gets from reading the Sudie-Geb article), obviously did not stand in the way of his reaching the young people and students who formed the bulk of his audiences. If, on the other hand, he had dressed in "outrageous colors and styles designed to dazzle," it would have obscured the main political lessons of the campaign, and made it appear less serious.

YSAers and SWP youth are very much a part of the rebellion of young people. The youth movement is not something we analyze from a distance but something we live, in student groups, action campaigns, women's organizations, etc. We have already had considerable discussion of the youth radicalization and its various manifestations—in *The Militant*, the *Young Socialist Organizer*, on the floors of branches and locals, in preconvention discussions. We can hope and expect that there will be more such exchange of information and ideas, through

the press and local discussions, especially as we gain strength in and learn from the high school movement, women's groups and gay liberation. The Sudie-Geb articles do not open up a new area for our consideration, nor do they represent a positive extension of the discussion already underway. In my opinion they are an insult to the seriousness with which we have analyzed—and will continue to discuss and develop positions on—the youth radicalization. Without going into great detail, this can be demonstrated by a list of a few of the absurdities, major and minor, to be found in their documents.

1. "The young generation as a whole . . . has come to see popular music as a major arena of human intellectual life, if not *the* major arena."

2. One rock and roll record, by Martha and the Vandellas, "played a major role in spreading those [ghetto] rebellions across the country."

3. Certain rock songs were responsible for setting the tone for the Black movement, antiwar movement, feminist movement, gay liberation movement, and Red Power movement.

4. The suit-and-tie "is the ultimate in patriarchal sex-stereotyping."

IN REPLY TO GLENN JENKINS ON THE HIGH SCHOOLS
by David Keepnews, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

Glenn Jenkins, in his document "On the High Schools and Trade Schools," attempts, in his own words, to give an initial contribution to "a discussion on the youth." One of the major points he attempts to make in the course of this contribution is that our movement has given insufficient attention to an important sector of the American youth: high school students. He also requests further discussion on the questions he raises from "those comrades with experience in the high schools." As a student about to enter my third year of high school, I would hope that I have this "experience."

Before going more deeply into the political points that Comrade Jenkins makes, it is important to note that the answer to any charge of ignoring the high schools is quite simply this: such a charge is false. It is not made quite clear in his document what would lead Comrade Jenkins to say otherwise. He merely makes the completely unsubstantiated statement in his first paragraph that work among high school students "is episodic and seen as strictly secondary to work on the college campuses," and proceeds from there. One need only read any of our publications to realize the work that *is* being done in high schools. The YSA has been an obvious central force in the establishment and functioning of high school SMCs, which constitute the backbone of the high school antiwar movement. As Comrade Jenkins himself points out, high school students are a major factor in the success of every antiwar demonstration, both through their participation in them and their building of them. High school comrades are also consistent activists in the women's liberation and the nationalist movements. Many YSA election campaigns have been run on high school campuses. HS YSAers have also been a main force, both through initiation of and participation in high school rights struggles all across the country, wherein students have fought for the extension of their constitutional rights of free speech into the high schools.

Rather than being ignored by the YSA and the party, high schools are seen as one of our main areas of work.

5. "The Beatles played *the central role* in leading the masses through the recent changes" [toward rejection of patriarchal sex-stereotyping] (emphasis added)

6. Alleged pressure on white male comrades to cut their hair could only "make it hard for youth to distinguish between us and the establishment."

7. The Socialist Workers Party has "tended to view political struggles as being struggles for dollars."

In conclusion, it seems to me that, contrary to what is said by the authors in their introduction, the resolution on a mass feminist party and the "miscellaneous resolutions" do represent a different and contrary line to that presented in the NC and PC draft resolutions. The feminist party document puts forth a different analysis of where the feminist movement is today, where it is going, and what our strategy should be to help it get there. The document and resolutions on youth work represent a crude adaptation to petty bourgeois radicalism and a tendency to place a specific cultural milieu in the foreground and the working class in the background. It is inconsistent to vote for the NC draft political resolution and PC resolution on feminism and to vote for the resolutions being presented by Sudie and Geb.

The National Committee of the YSA, at its recent plenum, devoted a major report to the high schools, which is being reported on and discussed in all the YSA locals. Ten percent of the members of the YSA are HS students, and they are actively building the mass movements and the YSA to as large a degree as would be done on any college campus. Our only real weakness in high school work is the lack of the cadre on high school campuses that we would need in order to accomplish all that we would want to achieve there. Every one of our activities in the high schools—*Militant* and *ISR* sales, supporting SWP campaigns, building the mass movements, running YSA election campaigns inside the high schools, etc.—is geared toward recruiting the cadre that can enable us to begin providing the necessary political leadership to this country's 18,000,000 high school students. While every single political tendency in this country is forced by the reality of the high school movement to speak at great lengths about high school students and the need to recruit them, it has been the Young Socialist Alliance that has distinguished itself through unconditional support of the mass movements in which high school students are involved, and has proven itself able to recruit and assimilate high school students to a larger degree than has *any* political opponent. To maintain otherwise is to deny fact.

Comrade Jenkins gives this alleged refusal to do work among the "correct" sectors of youth as the reason why "the YSA is as far from being a mass revolutionary youth group as it was at its 1969 convention." Now that's curious! The YSA has *not* grown more rapidly than any other revolutionary youth organization; it is *not* the largest revolutionary youth organization in the United States; it has *not* recruited hundreds upon hundreds of the best activists of this radicalization into its ranks—because we are ignoring the high schools!

That's confusing, to say the least. Not only are the causes of the YSA's tremendous "failure" pure nonsense, but the failure itself is likewise a figment of Comrade

Jenkins' imagination. Rather than our movement being unable to grow because of an orientation toward the wrong sectors of American youth, the reverse is quite clearly the case: our correct orientation has given the YSA and the party a chance to experience a very rapid growth, both in size and in influence on this radicalization, a growth that is obviously continuing and expanding.

The reason for Comrade Jenkins' "observations" is *not* to advise, in thinking that it is not done, that the YSA and the party enter an area where in fact very fruitful work has already been done. He makes it abundantly clear that he wants to *counterpose* work in the high schools to work on the college campuses. "The vast majority of youth," says Comrade Jenkins, "are not included in the college sector. Students in high schools and trade schools . . . consist of those sectors we should want to recruit to the YSA . . ." To insist that college students are "only a select minority" of the American youth, as Comrade Jenkins does, is totally ridiculous. It is not necessary here to go into all the statistics involved in refuting this claim: this has been done more than adequately in the National Committee draft Political Resolution and in much of the pre-convention discussion.

Likewise, every political question involved in the present discussion need not be gone over at great length here: other comrades have done, and are doing this most adequately. I hope that Comrade Jenkins does realize, however, that the universities and colleges of the United States are no longer institutions for the intellectual cultivation of a few hand-chosen children of the wealthy. Eight and one half million people were enrolled last year at colleges and universities, six and one half million of them at public institutions. Especially important is the fact that 53% — a majority — of high school students go on to college. In such a situation wherein, for instance, the City University of New York plans to open at least 230 *more* community colleges within the next ten years, the tremendous presence of working-class and especially Third World youth is obvious.

Every time Comrade Jenkins mentions the high schools, he finds it necessary to always, in the same breath, say ". . . and the trade schools." Trade schools, of course, do not exist as schools in the same way as do high schools or colleges. They exist exclusively for the purpose of train-

ing people with the skills necessary for specific jobs (they should not be confused with public vocational schools). Trade schools are for the most part privately-run institutions. The only relationship they share with high schools is a superficial one: they both teach people things. Although they are predominately attended by young people, such as high school graduates and push-outs ("drop-outs"), they tend to be more heterogeneous in terms of age composition. As opposed to the high schools, political activity within the trade schools is a very rare thing. Even public vocational schools, which have on the whole been less active politically than the regular high schools, have by no means been quiescent. Third World vocational school students, for instance, made up a major portion of a high school rights demonstration held in New York City on April 15, 1970. Vocational schools, however, are *not* what Comrade Jenkins is discussing in his document.

Comrade Jenkins, in stating the necessity of work in the high schools, is absolutely correct. He is wrong, however, in assuming that high school work is incompatible with doing political work on college campuses. In pleading for a "turn" toward the high schools, he even finds it necessary to produce for us a stagnant YSA, a YSA unable to grow due to its avoiding this work. Such a beast is of course non-existent. Should we follow Comrade Jenkins' advice and leave the colleges, however, his nightmare would most certainly be a reality.

The observation in his first paragraph about the necessity of the growth and development of the YSA for the growth of the party in this period are correct. Why, then, does he suggest that our movement turn its back on this area where the YSA has been able to consistently recruit and to develop its membership in the heat of today's political struggles? Rather than insisting on taking our comrades off the campuses, Comrade Jenkins, having stated himself the necessity for the expansion and political growth of the YSA, should advocate the opposite. It is on the college and high school campuses that the political struggles and politically aware young people are to be found today. It is the task of the YSA and the party to win to our ranks the political fighters of this radicalization. That is just what we have been doing. And that is just what we must continue to do if we are serious about seeing this radicalization come to a successful conclusion.

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LIVINGROOM FEMINISTS, CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING GROUPS AND MANHATING

By Myrna Hill, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

Toward a Mass Feminist Movement says on page 14, "Most livingroom feminists believe that the oppression of women has grown up in society not as a result of class oppression but because men personally benefit from the subjugation of women." I don't see any conflict between recognizing that, like everything else, women's oppression originated in the material conditions of class society based on the institution of private property, and holding men accountable for oppressing and exploiting us when conditions gave them the opportunity. It's not only capitalism and the family that oppress women. Obviously it's men, too. The first eight pages of the PC draft resolution omit reference to the not inconsiderable culpability of men in

the oppression of women. It's no accident that men oppress women. Later on that page, the document says, "The existence of a powerful feminist movement will have an impact on men and help force them to change." I think "force" is the key word: force, not just educate a group of people who have innocently been conditioned into a role.

On the man-hating that Comrade Garza brings up, man-hating is not our "line," or basis for recruiting people. But the revolutionary rage of women against men is, I think, based on understanding that for women to take an understanding attitude about male oppressors, like rapists, is comparable to Black people being soft on white

people, and saying "Don't blame them, they don't understand that lynching hurts us."

The PC draft resolution says on consciousness-raising groups, (page 12) "consciousness-raising groups can help give women confidence to get out of the isolation of their homes, and courage to lead independent lives and gain independent identity and strength. Small-group consciousness-raising is not an end in itself, but can be a vital part of laying the basis for taking action against female oppression." In addition, consciousness-raising groups provide a continuing contribution to feminist theoretical analysis of ultimate goals, just as feminist strategy is developed in the course of political action. C-r groups do valuable work that is in no way in conflict with simul-

THE GAY ISSUE IN THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT By Myrna Hill, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

At the July National Abortion Repeal Conference, our opponents wanted to add to the demand for repeal of all abortion laws a demand for freedom of sexual expression. The Women for the Inclusion of Sexual Expression asserted that the oppression of lesbians is a feminist issue, and insisted that it should be a priority issue. The WISE women's proposed addition of a Fourth Demand was clearly incorrect, and was based on a failure to understand the effectiveness of the single issue campaign. But I think they are perfectly correct in asserting the the oppression of homosexual women must be a priority issue of the feminist movement.

One of the ways in which class society has kept women powerless has been to keep us divided, to keep us thinking that our individual fates are not contingent on each others' fates, to keep us isolated and alienated from each other, to keep us competitive and hating each other because of men, and so on. One thing that we are seeing in the current upsurge to liberate women has been change in relation to this alienation. Women, in leaving the isolation of their homes, are beginning to see the way in which society has manipulated them into hating and being contemptuous of each other. They are rebelling against having society dictate to them that the only intimate relationships they can hope to have must be within the nuclear family, and with a member of the opposite sex. They have begun developing a sense of solidarity with their sisters, and many of them have been quite bold about the fact that they are loving women, instead of fighting women over men. Some of these have been loving women physically. All feminists have been asserting

taneous participation in mass action. In fact the c-r groups often sustain people with the "why" they are in the women's movement after they get into the more alienating environment of the mass conference or demonstration. So I hope it is clear to everyone that it is not non-progressive, or turning in on themselves, for women to be seriously involved in reflective small group activity, and that the term "livingroom feminist" refers only to those women who *limit* themselves to such activity to the *exclusion* of other forms of political activity, most importantly participation in such mass action as the current abortion law repeal campaign.

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that women belong, not to the state, as breeders, or to men, as sex objects, but to ourselves, for our own purposes. Some of these feminists have chosen that their bodies, too, would no longer remain the exclusive property of men. These women are in rebellion against society's program for women as breeders and chattels, and for that reason, are oppressed by the society legally, economically, socially, and even physically, in police brutality. Lesbian organizations and meeting places are periodically raided by police, and lesbian bars are even being included in Mayor Lindsey's Clean Up New York campaign. Even those women who express their sense of solidarity by saying that they love women, or who speak out too militantly against the oppression of women are punished by the society by being accused of being lesbians, and even by being treated as lesbians. I hope no one will misinterpret my argument as a claim that the gay sector of the women's movement is more militant than the straight. But lesbianism is rightly considered subversive by this society, and lesbianism is one of the issues that the ruling class has concentrated on in its effort to push women back into our place. Feminists must both refuse to be divided by the ruling class along gay/straight lines and must take up the issue of oppressive anti-lesbian laws directly. Just as the Black feminist movements overlap in that for both a central concern should be the oppression of Black women, such as the fight against forced sterilization, so must the struggle against the oppression of lesbians be a central concern of not only the gay movement, but of the feminist movement as well.

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ON THE WOMEN'S PARTY by Myrna Hill, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

An independent feminist political party could serve as an alternative to the capitalist parties for women to exercise collective power in elections. It could be the same kind of transitional mobilizer of masses of women that the Black political party can be to mobilize masses of blacks. For women with socialist consciousness, the revolutionary party, composed of both men and women, is the appropriate organization through which to work. For masses of women who can support women's liberation demands but do not yet recognize the need for socialism, an independent women's party is an appropriate organi-

zation through which to work. When we advocate the formation of the Black political party, we are still conscious of the need for black people to also unite in mass action in the streets. Similarly, there is no conflict between our being in favor of an independent women's party and our understanding that women must unite in such mass action as the November 20 demonstration to repeal all abortion laws.

It has been objected that a women's party is inappropriate because women are not a nation and are highly unlikely to demand a separate state. That is not the issue

in considering the women's party. Of course women are not a nation, nor does it appear likely at this time that women will one day demand a separate state. But it is unnecessary that women be or do either in order for it to be appropriate that they form an independent political party. What is relevant is the fact that women are a sector of the population who, long before the emergence of capitalism, suffered the *collective* loss of power. Women as a group have been oppressed by being kept isolated from each other in separate homes and have for thousands of years been kept *collectively* powerless. And in the women's movement and ultimately in the revolution, women must seek to *regain collective power, as women, as a group*. One vehicle through which women can be mobilized in the struggle to regain that collective power is an independent women's party.

It has been argued that the discussion of the women's party is premature, and that we should discuss it when the question arises in the movement. The question already has arisen in the women's movement. Feminists from Betty Friedan to Florynce Kennedy and numerous CP reformists in Boston and New York are already saying that women should run for office and are trying to lure

independent feminists into the arms of the Democratic Party. Many of these independent feminists are not yet ready to join a socialist party, but could run as individuals or, more effectively, support an independent women's party. We should be able to answer our reformist opponents' argument that the masses of women who are not yet Marxists should vote for female Democrats, and run as Democrats, by pointing out that women have the alternative, *in addition to relating to mass action*, of voting for, and running as candidates of an independent women's party.

According to Firestone's *Dialectics of Sex*, the women's party issue came up in the first wave of American feminism, so it's reasonable to expect that the question will be raised during the current feminist upsurge. I understand there is precedent for discussing this issue before a move has begun to make the women's party a reality, in that from the late 1950's Comrade Breitman initiated a discussion of the Black political party that began several years before our party related to it in the concrete in the form of the Freedom Now party.

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SOME UNANSWERED QUESTIONS FOR THE PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION TENDENCY

Dave Wulp, Boston Branch

Because the Boston branch has within its membership supporters of both of the announced tendencies, the Boston pre-convention discussion has been exceptionally lively and educational. Despite an already lengthy discussion on the political resolutions (at this writing, we have not yet seen the Communist Tendency resolution) it has been rather difficult to determine exactly what the political program of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency is. In their original document, the initiators of this tendency criticized everything the party had been doing in the movements which make up the current radicalization. However, when they defined themselves as a tendency, the Proletarian Orientation Tendency announced that, "our documents clearly support the positions taken by the SWP on the developing movements. . . ." Almost immediately thereafter we received a "discussion piece" authored by two leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency on how we should proceed in the feminist movement which rejects the essence of what the party has been doing. Now we understand that a counter-resolution on the Chicano struggle is being submitted by supporters of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency.

The discussion in Boston has not been much different. Various analyses, contradicting each other, have been presented by supporters of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency. The basic conclusion that one must draw is that either these comrades are totally confused and naive, or they are participating in what may be the most unprincipled combination in the history of the party.

Comrade John McCann gave the report for what has become the Proletarian Orientation Tendency here. He raised some thoughts, criticisms, and interpretations and analysis that do not appear in any of their documents. For that reason, I thought it would be of value for the entire party if the presentations from Boston, both by myself and by Comrade McCann, could be printed in the

Discussion Bulletins. To facilitate this, I arranged for Comrade McCann's presentation to be transcribed, and gave it to him for editing. However, Comrade McCann refused to submit it for the entire party to read.

In my presentation, I asked the Proletarian Orientation supporters a series of questions. Now, based on the evolution of the discussion, I would certainly have to ask a different set of questions. Nevertheless, it is interesting how few of the questions I posed to them have been answered either in written form or verbally, in the branch discussion. I am, therefore, submitting the last part of my original presentation for the N.C. resolution. Although time may not permit a written answer, I challenge the Proletarian Orientation supporters who are elected delegates to the convention to answer these questions. I think the entire party would like to know where they stand.

* * *

What does the minority claim?

First, that the party no longer has a proletarian orientation. They state this in the second paragraph of their document. If the party no longer looked to the working class as the only revolutionary class in society, the class which the party must be composed of, penetrate, and lead, in order to achieve a socialist revolution, the SWP would no longer be either a Marxist or a revolutionary party. In fact, if this were true, the SWP could only be considered a roadblock to the development of a revolutionary party of the working class.

The second claim by the minority is that the party now has a *permanent orientation* to the petty bourgeoisie. This can be found on pages 15 and 32. I quote from page 32, "The party has transformed a tactical turn toward a petty bourgeois milieu into a permanent orientation." And from page 15 "the SWP, influenced by the

petty bourgeois milieu it was working in and recruiting from began to see work in that layer as the party's primary and permanent orientation."

Their third contention is that the party is petty bourgeois in composition and mentality. I quote from page 20, "The party today is predominantly petty bourgeois in composition and mentality."

Fourthly they hold the elected leadership of the party is developing new concepts which are directly opposed to Leninism. This you will find on page three.

And the fifth point they make is that the above four points outlining the degeneration of the party took place between 1957 and 1964. That is, it began fourteen years ago and was completed seven years ago. This enlightening information is to be found on pages 14 and 15.

For the moment we will put aside the various other charges, such as the contention that the party now feels it must *never* enter the trade unions or that students are now the vanguard of the socialist revolution, or that you can win the working class without being in it, because all of these points are minor conclusions drawn from the above list.

Let me repeat the five points.

1. The party no longer has a proletarian orientation.
2. The party now has a permanent orientation to the petty bourgeoisie.
3. The party is petty bourgeois in both *composition* and *mentality*.
4. The leadership of the party is developing new concepts which are directly opposed to Leninism.
5. The above four points took place between 1957 and 1964.

These are very serious charges. Very serious. And they raise some obvious questions unanswered by the minority.

1. Does the minority believe the SWP is a revolutionary workers party or a reformist petty bourgeois party?

2. If they believe we are a revolutionary workers party could they explain how an organization composed and oriented permanently to the petty bourgeoisie with an anti-Leninist leadership and petty bourgeois mentality in its rank and file for at least seven years can be a revolutionary *or* workers party much less a revolutionary workers party?

3. If the SWP is not the continuator of Marxism in the United States who is? The present minority which appeared in 1971?

4. If the SWP no longer has a proletarian orientation, how can it have developed a basically correct Marxist approach to the present mass movements — antiwar, women's liberation, gay liberation, Black nationalism, Chicano nationalism, etc.? Or does the minority think our approach to these movements has been *incorrect*?

Let us look at what the minority favors.

Their solution to all problems is to concentrate our forces in basic industry and to make trade union work our central axis.

This we must do *no matter what*.

They *say* no matter what and they *mean* no matter what.

On page ten they explain they mean no matter what the political climate of the country may be, that is, what the concrete forms of class struggle are, and on pages 11, 24, 26 they state or imply that the *size* of the party does not matter.

Although they may claim otherwise the minority would

remove comrades from other areas of work in order to make this so-called industrial concentration. On page 32 they state that: "Every comrade should be considered for this work." And although they propose the leadership pick which comrades to send in, their very next sentence states: "They [the leadership that is] must also give general encouragement to all comrades to enter." They also make clear that "Except in special cases, comrades engaged in this work should consider trade union work their primary field of activity." Unless we are to assume that their entire document is a put-on, we would *have* to weaken our forces in antiwar, women's liberation and other fields to carry it out.

The Minority is wrong because:

They generalize one aspect of what the party needs in order to make a revolution — to be in basic industry — into a rigid, formalistic, permanent orientation under all conditions, for all time.

In the present concrete context this formal logic leads to a sectarian abandonment of the living class struggle which is developing *outside* of the trade unions and *outside* of basic industry.

They are wrong on the composition of the party. The present composition is neither industrial proletariat nor petty bourgeois as they claim. Our present composition is, in its majority, working class from non-industrial sectors.

They are wrong on the relationship between composition and program. A revolutionary organization without a mass base must be judged before all else by its program. The predominance of non-proletarian elements in the original cadre of the Bolshevik Party did not prevent it from developing a revolutionary working class program and later becoming a mass workers party.

They are wrong in saying we have abandoned our previous proletarian orientation. We hold that the industrial proletariat is the most important and powerful sector of the working class and therefore a key sector for the party. We also have held and hold today that to win a mass base in the industrial proletariat the party must be itself in the factories and within the mass organization of the industrial workers, the trade unions. We do *not* say, as we did when the most lucrative field of work in terms of party building was *in* the unions, that we should at this time concentrate our forces in the trade unions. Our whole strategy has been, and is today, to build a revolutionary cadre that can intervene into the living *class* struggle and build a mass base for the party in the working class and oppressed nationalities. It is precisely the orientation of the *majority* which will result in the building of the party and the penetration of basic industry and the trade unions.

The minority is wrong when they state the party rank and file has a petty bourgeois mentality. The mentality of our membership and the party as a whole is *Leninist*, that is to say *proletarian*, not petty bourgeois. This is true in our day to day conduct, carrying out party assignments, in our internal norms, including this discussion and in our norms of decision making. This is something which would be *impossible* if our composition, mentality and orientation was petty bourgeois as the minority claim.

The minority document is composed of a long list of quotations. Their quotes are out of context, truisms, and at times deliberate distortions. Undoubtedly the discussion will deal with many of these, their quotes on Russian his-

tory, their confusion on Marx's second volume of *Capital*, the incorrect version of the Cochran split, their misrepresentation of Mandel's and Breitman's views and so forth. I would like to give but one example of how they twist words.

On page 20 they make a claim that we have revised our basic policy of going to the workers and instead that we expect the workers will come to us. That is a very serious charge. What is the proof used by the minority? They quote Jack Barnes as saying, "We have already seen the beginning of the tendency for some working class militants regardless of what issues they're struggling over, to emulate the struggles of Blacks, the national minorities, the students, the antiwar fighters. And secondly we see some individuals attracted to the party or organizations leading these general struggles because that is proof that it is a conceivable party of their struggles. That is our most direct road to the recruitment of young workers today."

Does Jack Barnes say that we believe we no longer have to go to the working class, that it will come to us? Barnes says no such thing in that quote or any place else. All that quote does is state a simple fact, namely, that today some young workers, attracted by the ongoing movements, are joining us. At this moment this is the way we are recruiting most young workers. Yet the minority says that the Barnes quote, "revises our basic policy of going to the workers. Instead says Comrade Barnes, the workers will come to us." Their document is full of these out-and-out distortions.

The minority is wrong when they claim that students today have no more social weight than they had in the past. They say in their document, "the current student radicalization does not indicate any new social power on the part of students." The huge numerical increase in the student population alone gives students more social power. This is true about any sector of society. The drop in the number of farmers gives farmers less social power. The drop in the number of small property owners gives the petty bourgeoisie less social power in the United States. To deny that 8 million students are not having an impact on the United States qualitatively more important than the less than 1-1/2 million did in 1930 or the only 250,000 did in 1900 is to blind oneself to reality. May of 1970 showed that a general strike of students could have such a deep impact that the ruling class had to devote full time for several weeks trying to minimize its impact and trying to prevent it from spreading beyond the students. I know some minority comrades think it was the *monsoons* which forced Nixon out of Cambodia. They are *wrong*. It was the massive antiwar protest led by the student population.

Lastly, the minority is basically conservative and pessimistic. The orientation of the majority is based on the analysis that the present radicalization is not a passing phenomenon. The majority believes the radicalization has already begun to affect the working class as a class and that it will do so in a deeper and deeper way as time goes on. The minority document mentions the current radicalization only as an afterthought. On page 33, it states, "In fact, the only way the question of power can be posed is through the political mobilization of the working class: and it is not at all clear that this will be accomplished before this radicalization subsides." That is,

the minority believes that the political mobilization of the working class may not occur in the next historic period. They believe that the whole new wave of radicalization, which we hold to be the deepest one yet, *may subside* without a confrontation between the ruling class and the working class. The *majority* holds the exact opposite position. If a sufficiently large revolutionary cadre can be gathered to enter into the objective relationship of forces, such a confrontation could lead to a revolutionary victory.

It is precisely by participating in the present mass movements that this can be assured. The minority instead wants us to retreat into the trade unions to carry out long range work aimed at being there when the working class moves possibly sometime after the present radicalization has ended. To take our cadre base of less than 2,000 and bury it in the thousands of factories rather than concentrate it in the living struggles of the antiwar, feminist, oppressed nationalities, etc. would be, regardless of what the minority might claim, political suicide.

Our present orientation is the surest way to build a party of tens of thousands that will have a mass base not only in basic industry but in other essential sectors: the oppressed minorities, the women's movement, and other mass movements.

It is no accident that the minority document provides no analysis of the present objective situation, no analysis of the present struggles, and no analysis of the living movements. Does it mean they agree with the majority? Or that they disagree among themselves and cannot take a position? They have promised a new document. Surely Comrade McCann, already acquainted with the new document, can answer the following questions:

1. Should we support the gay liberation movement?
2. Should we support the feminist movement?
3. The minority document refers to working class consciousness-raising for women. Are supporters of the document against feminist consciousness-raising? Why is consciousness-raising in quotes?
4. Since everything is secondary to the industrial proletariat, according to the document (p. 7), does that mean that Black nationalism will not be an independent aspect of the third American revolution? If so how is it secondary?
5. The minority says we are adapting to the trade union bureaucrats in the antiwar movement. A party with a petty bourgeois composition, mentality and orientation, which abandoned over seven years ago a proletarian orientation, is working with all kinds of reformists and bourgeois elements not to mention real live petty bourgeois in the antiwar movement. Why does it only adapt to trade union bureaucrats? What about other petty bourgeois layers? Is our line otherwise correct?
6. What is the minority analysis of La Raza Unida Party? Since it is the only existing working-class-based independent political formation participating in the electoral arena, we wonder why it wasn't even mentioned in the minority document entitled *For a Proletarian Orientation*?
7. Are these independent movements we have been speaking of part of the overall class struggle? If not, what are they? The minority does not explicitly state they disagree or agree with the present party policies towards, and policies within, the antiwar movement, feminist movement, gay movement, Black and Chicano nationalist movements,

etc. Instead, their document makes a series of sniping criticisms of each — always drawing the conclusion that entering the trade unions solves the problem. Their document is written so that you could be in favor of or opposed to gay liberation, in favor of or opposed to feminism, in favor of or opposed to Black nationalism and in favor of or opposed to our line in the antiwar movement and still vote for it. That, comrades, is not accidental. These comrades have been in the party for almost a decade. We have to assume they are serious political people.

* * *

Trotskyism within the United States has never made such excellent progress as we are now making. We are stronger today than ever before relative to our opponents

and the existing mass movements. It is revealing that it is at this moment that the minority comrades are becoming most pessimistic and concerned that all is lost. To them, each day is leading us further away from the working class. We say each day is leading us closer to the working class. Each victory in the antiwar movement, every breakthrough in the women's movement, the development of La Raza Unida Party, every new recruit to the YSA and SWP, is moving us closer to, and preparing the groundwork for, our building a mass revolutionary working class party. The 1970's will undoubtedly be a crucial decade for our party. The question before us is whether to turn our backs on the present radicalization or, by entering it, and developing mass movements, build what has never existed in the United States — a mass revolutionary party.

July 24, 1971

THE QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE AND THE UNCONDITIONAL CALL FOR A FEMINIST PARTY

By Lynn Henderson, Atlanta Branch

In their contribution *Toward A Mass Feminist Party* Comrade Sudie and Comrade Geb of the Boston branch have introduced a line resolution on the feminist movement for consideration and vote by the party. The essence of this resolution is that the party should call for the formation of an "independent feminist party" and that the S.W.P. should support such a party irrespective of its program.

A number of practical considerations immediately come to mind which would argue against the tactical advisability of the S.W.P. calling for and building such a feminist party. The relative immaturity of the new women's liberation movement which is still grappling with the initial problems of building its first national single issue coalition. The divisive and splintering effect that any attempt to draw up a full political program would have on the women's liberation movement as a whole, are just a few.

However, my remarks here are not directed at the tactical and practical questions involved. When considering support to political candidates and parties the first question that Marxists have to address themselves to is the question of principle. Only when that has been settled can we turn to the problems of tactical considerations. In deciding to vote for or against this line resolution we have to decide whether or not it's principled for revolutionary Marxists to call for the formation and support of a feminist party irregardless of the nature of its political program.

First a few words on the nature of political parties as organizations. A political party is a qualitatively different kind of organization than any of the other organizations that we build, support and participate in, i.e. mass action united fronts, mass action coalitions, defense committees, trade unions, etc. A political party is an instrument whose purpose or goal is the exercising of state power. As such it can not base itself on a single issue or select group of issues. It has to take a stand, an inevitably class stand, on all the issues that the exercising of state power poses. For us, the question of state power and support or non-support of a political party is a class question. The basic principle that we're guided by is that

we don't cross class lines in politics. We participate in mass action coalitions and other types of organizations with even elements of the capitalist class if they support the demands of the coalition. When it comes to a political party, however, that's a qualitatively different question. Our posture and attitude toward participation in a multi-class party is quite a different one.

Comrade Sudie and Comrade Geb indicate some confusion on this point when they state that, "There is really not such a sharp difference between a feminist party and other types of feminist organizations." There is considerable difference and it is essential to recognize it.

It is precisely confusion on this point that leads these comrades into the rather simplistic argument on page 8 of their document, which paraphrased takes the following form. Since our support to feminism is unconditional, we thus advocate feminist organizing (correct so far L.H.) and as we advocate feminist organizing thus we advocate organizing an "independent female political party and all steps in that directions". Not necessarily or automatically so. We have in the past, do now, and will in the future support and encourage and build the organization of many movements with a revolutionary thrust and content, but in very few of these cases have we or will we advocate or support their formation into political parties.

If the dividing line determining whether support to a political party is principled or not is the class line the question arises how do you determine the class character of a party. We have a rich experience in analyzing the class character of a party based on three criteria; one by its program, two by its actual policy in practice, and three by its composition and control.

By its very nature the resolution discounts the first criteria. Our support to a feminist party is to be extended irregardless and irrespective of its program. The second criteria is also discounted as the resolution does not ask us or even allow us to wait and see how such a hypothetical party would emerge in real life and what its actual policies and concrete practices would be. We are to put ourselves on record *now* as supporting a feminist party, any feminist party, when and if it comes into existence. Thus the entire weight of our principled support

to such a party rests on the third criteria, its class composition and control.

The authors sense that this is the nub of the question and devote much of their document to "proving" that the female sex because it "like the working class is an inherently progressive force in history" is an equivalent to the working class. And that the "struggle between the sexes"... (like the class struggle) "plays a decisive role in history" and thus is an equivalent to the class struggle. In creating and maintaining these equivalents comrades Sudie and Geb have to base themselves on not a small amount of theoretical confusion. To begin with they have to contend that Marx really didn't mean it when he said in the *Communist Manifesto* that: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle".

What is certainly true is that the subjugation of women as an oppressed sex and the struggle of women against that oppression have played a crucial role in history. It is also true that the present increased self-consciousness of that oppression and the struggle against it is an integral part of the present radicalization and will be an important part of the coming American revolution. None of this means however that the female sex is an equivalent of the working class or that the "struggle between the sexes" is an equivalent of the class struggle. Even a superficial probing of these assertions reveals all kinds of theoretical problems. If the "struggle between the sexes" is an equivalent of the class struggle, then who is the principal oppressor and enemy of women in this struggle. One is led to the rather non-Marxist conclusion that it is not the capitalist system or class but men who are the prime enemy of women. The Marxist position and the position expressed in the Political Committee's draft resolution, *Toward A Mass Feminist Movement*, is that the oppression of the female sex grew out of and is part of the class struggle. And in modern society the capitalist system and class is the prime enemy of the female sex. It is our position, as I understand it, that women are neither a class or a caste, that women belong to all strata of the social pyramid, that women are divided by class differences.

It is also true that women are an oppressed sex, that their common oppression is a unifying force. This is why we know it is possible and desirable to mobilize women, as women, in a struggle against their oppression, around a program of democratic and transitional demands, and such a movement will have a revolutionary and anti-capitalist logic.

Women are at the same time both united by sexist oppression and divided by class society. Further, as Evelyn Reed points out in her article *Women: Caste, Class or Oppressed Sex*: The notion that all women as a sex have more in common than do members of the same class with one another is false. Upper-class women are not simply bedmates of their wealthy husbands. As a rule they have more compelling ties which bind them together..." "In short women like men are a multi-class sex."

Comrades Sudie and Geb concede the relative "privileges" of some sections of women over others but compare this to the relative "privileges" of some sectors of the workers over others. This is not the Marxist or party position as I understand it. The class divisions among and between women are of a fundamentally different char-

acter than the divisions within the working class as the result of wage differentials.

In summation then, it is difficult to justify principled support to a female or feminist party (the authors use the terms interchangeably) on the sole criteria of its class composition when such composition is of a multi-class nature. The nature of Comrade Sudie and Comrade Geb's error becomes clearest in their misunderstanding and misuse of the party's position on oppressed nations and nationalities to justify their unconditional call for support to a female or feminist party irrespective of its program. The logic of their reasoning runs as follows: The struggle of oppressed nations and nationalities against their oppression is progressive and deserves unconditional support. Thus we advocate the formation, and support, political parties of struggling, oppressed nationalities and nations even though they might not have a socialist program.

The struggle of the female sex against their oppression is progressive and deserves unconditional support. Thus we advocate the formation and support for a female or feminist party even though it might not have a socialist program.

We have in this argument a theoretical can of worms, some of it true, some of it not so true, and some of it clearly false.

First, it is true that we unconditionally support the struggle of oppressed nations and nationalities against their oppression. It is not true that we automatically support whatever nationalist party may emerge out of their struggles irregardless of the class character of its composition and program. Lenin supported the struggle of the Polish people against their national oppression—unconditionally. He and the Bolsheviks did not however support the Polish Socialist Party and its split off the Fracy which were the major Polish nationalist parties of the period and whose programs were based on the national liberation of Poland. Lenin looked at the class character of these parties, found them to be petty bourgeois in composition and the remainder of their program bourgeois in content. A clear separation was made between support of these nationalist parties and the struggle of the Polish people against their national oppression.

A more contemporary example exists in Canada today. We support the struggle of the French Canadians against their national oppression—unconditionally. We and our co-thinkers in Canada do not, however, support the major nationalist party of the French Canadian movement (Parti Quebecois). Our co-thinkers in Canada applied the class criteria and found this party somewhat lacking.

Comrades Sudie and Geb also cite our support for the concept of an independent Black party and independent Chicano party even if these parties lacked a working class program, as an argument for our supporting a female or feminist party irregardless of its program. But a major factor in our support to a Chicano or Black party is the almost unalloyed proletarian composition of Blacks, Chicanos and Chicanas in this country. In both these cases as in the case of a labor party we say the proletarian composition and control of these parties is so solid that we can accept quite a bit less than a full socialist program.

Finally comrades Sudie and Geb also cite our support of oppressed nations to substantiate support to a political

party of the oppressed female sex. It is true that we support oppressed nations against oppressor nations. During WWII we supported the nation of China against the attack of imperialist Japan. We did not however support the Kuomintang even though it was probably the largest political party carrying on the struggle against Japan. China's status as an oppressed nation did not somehow magically exempt the Kuomintang or any other Chinese party from the class criteria we use in deciding principled support or non-support to any political party.

This is the line of reasoning the Stalinists use to justify popular front parties and governments in colonial countries. They argue the entire country is oppressed by imperialism, not just the workers but all classes. Even the national bourgeoisie are oppressed by imperialism. (There is of course a certain kernel of truth in this) This common oppression, they argue, can supercede class divisions and make it possible and necessary to organize the "progressive" elements of all classes into a single party. A party

which would needless to say not have a working class program.

I in no way wish to imply here that comrades Sudie or Geb are exhibiting Stalinist tendencies, that is obviously not the case or the point. But to argue that because of their common oppression, as an oppressed sex, we do not have to consider the question of class divisions within the female sex or that somehow these class divisions don't really exist—or to argue that a female or feminist party is somehow exempt from the same class criteria we use in deciding principled support or non-support to any party is a serious error in methodology.

We should not extend support to a hypothetical feminist party irrespective of its political program. We can only evaluate such a formation as it would emerge in real life, examining its program, its composition and its policies in actual practice. In this examination we would apply the same criteria and methodology that we do to any political party or candidate.

July 18, 1971