



Discussion Bulletin

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COMMENTS ON THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT

by Michael Maggi, Houston Branch

The following remarks were made on July 25 during the branch pre-convention discussion. These remarks are slightly revised but are taken from the notes of that discussion.

Comrades, what I want to do now is make some general comments on the links between the antihomosexual campaigns launched by the ruling class and anticommunism and show some of the ways that antihomosexuality is used to enforce social conformity and social stability. I want to go into a brief outline of the development of the gay liberation movement and then into some things the SWP might do in relation to this new movement.

Witch-hunts and Gay-hunts

The United States has always been antigay, from its earliest beginnings, but what I want to do here is sketch the development of the campaign launched in the late 1940s and 1950s against homosexuals that was linked with the cold-war and witch-hunt.

The United States State Department began a purge in the late 1940s. Apparently the first large number of people fired were dismissed for being gay. In a US Senate investigation in 1947 into the dismissal of 91 persons from the State Department, an Assistant Secretary of the State Department declared that these persons "weren't Communists, just homosexuals." The Joe McCarthy-Army hearings were spiced up with charges and countercharges of homosexual perversion in McCarthy's staff and in the Army and State Department. In government jobs, including the military, there was an average of 1500 persons dismissed every 18 months between the years 1953 and 1959 in Washington, D.C. alone.

This gay-hunt was extended throughout the civil service and all state employment and private employment. In Idaho there was a national scandal that was later reported in John Gerassi's book, *The Boys from Boise*. Private investigation agencies were employed to look into the sexual orientation of employees. All of this was heaped on top of the employment discrimination that gays had always faced, for example, the laws forbidding gays to hold jobs such as teachers, doctors, or lawyers.

State laws against homosexuals, already medieval in origin and character, were strengthened in many areas and given an additional dimension with the supplement of pseudo-scientific psychiatry judging gays to be not only criminal, but also sick. For example, California changed its laws in the mid-1950s to include a maximum punishment of confinement to a mental institution for life, on top of the possible severe prison sentences and possible punishment of castration for males.

As I said at the outset, this legal and extralegal discrimination against gays was not new, even though it reached a new pitch. I haven't found much material from previous radicalizations; however, I have one example. This drawing from a Chicago newspaper during the Palmer raids period in 1919 depicts two Chicago policemen arresting "two leading anarchists in one of their dens." The two policemen are using a lantern in a dark room to arrest two anarchist men in bed. This is an example of the way antihomosexuality is used to bait the radical movement.

But what is the purpose of this baiting? The fear of being homosexual or being accused of being homosexual is one of the deepest fears inculcated into people by the ruling class. This is used with other methods to divide people into separate oppressed groups with norms, attitudes, and economic differentiation designed to enforce the greatest possible degree of social conformity and individual adherence to attitudes and practices of which the ruling class approves.

Individuals are labeled "queer" if they even dare to like a different kind of music, something other than the shaboom, shaboom stuff that was being peddled in the late '50s and '60s. But, after all, most people took for granted that those bohemian jazz-freaks were not the straightest people ever made by God.

This "queer-baiting" was especially vicious during the rise of the antiwar movement. One of the most common accusations leveled against the antiwar movement by the ruling class was that not only was the antiwar movement controlled by the communists, but it was composed of "dykes" and "faggots" as well.

This "queer-baiting" of the antiwar movement is still used. In an interview with an antiwar GI that was printed in March 1971 in the *Village Voice*, the GI commented, "I know of guys in Nam who completely disagreed with the war, but would volunteer for dangerous missions as soon as their manhood was questioned." Comrades might also reread the news reports about the company of GIs who refused to go into combat last year. All of the threats of court-martial by the commanding officer and all his pleading for patriotism did not force those GIs back to the fighting. It was after a top-sergeant was brought in that attacked the GIs as cowards and sissys that those GIs went back into combat.

The ruling class uses the participation of lesbians in the women's liberation movement as a club against the movement as a whole in the hope of beating it to death.

While sexism isn't the foundation of class society in the same way as private property today, sexism is a pillar of the status quo and is used in a conscious way to enforce social norms of what "real men" and "real women" are. Behind these definitions of "real men" and "real women" are institutions of class rule, such as the family, and other political and economic needs of the system, such as the Vietnam war and the oppression of women.

There is much more about the interrelationship of the antihomosexual campaigns and the enforcement of social norms that should be investigated and written about. These are just my initial thoughts.

Gays Organize

There isn't much material available on the history of organization by gay people, but comrades should be aware of some general things and conscious of the need to gather this information.

In the Henry Wallace campaign of 1948 there was a campaign support group called "Bachelors for Wallace." I think we can safely put the word bachelors in quotation marks. Although there isn't much information on the activities of this group, references to the group in material I have found make it clear most of these bachelor groups were gay men trying to organize themselves,

in distinction from other males, attempting to improve their situation in society.

In 1950 there were two groups formed, first was the lesbian group, the Daughters of Bilitis. The other was the Mattachine Society, a group which was almost entirely male. At first both of these groups were isolated in San Francisco, but they later spread to Los Angeles and the east coast.

The repression against gays, legal and extralegal, was at a high point in the 1950s. For example, there were only three gay bars in all of Manhattan which were allowed to operate by the police at any one time. Gay bars *per se* were illegal until the late 1950s, when the Supreme Court ruled that a bar could not have its liquor license revoked for selling gay persons drinks. The Mattachine Society estimates that there were 200 cases of entrapment each night in Manhattan. For these reasons, and the other general reasons relating to the period, the gay groups were mainly underground, very small, and almost totally concerned with job security and social activities.

Nothing much happened that I know of until July 4, 1964, when the Mattachine Society picketed a public building in Philadelphia. The gays were asking to be treated like human beings, demanding an end to employment discrimination, and an end to legal harassment.

The next year in San Francisco, the Mattachine Society picketed the Federal Office Building demanding the "right" of gay people to be drafted, an end to job discrimination, and an end to the antisex laws. (Incidentally, this was my first demonstration as a seventeen-year-old gay high school student.) The demand of the "right" to be drafted may seem strange to comrades now, but the central aspect of the demand at the time was that gay people should not be rejected from the draft because the Army labeled gays as degenerates and thought gays would undermine the Army with perversion, etc. It was this that we were protesting. We were demanding that we be treated as human beings.

I can't speak about the state of gay organizations in other parts of the country, because I only participated in the Mattachine Society in San Francisco.

At this time in San Francisco and Berkeley there was the development of groups called the Sexual Freedom League. Most of the activities of these groups were forums on sexuality and sex-roles in this society and the legal situation individuals faced. They sponsored "encounter-groups" which attempted to answer individual questions about sexuality and help individuals with their personal sexual problems. These groups had members who were both gay and straight, married and unmarried. (There was also the SF Sexual Freedom Forum, whose major activities were being arrested in two public nude-ins.)

On April 5, 1967, members of the Mattachine Society marched in the antiwar demonstration in San Francisco under a small banner reading "Faggots for Peace." The banner was partially destroyed en route and finished off by a demonstration marshal.

In 1968, there were two militant gay struggles in San Francisco involving job discrimination. The first was a weekly picket by 25 to 50 gay persons protesting the firing of a clerk from the Capitol Records store in the North Beach section of the city. The gay person was fired for winking at a customer. After several weeks of picketing, the gays forced the store to rehire the gay clerk.

About the same time, there was a picket of the States Steamship Lines for firing a gay person. After a long period of picketing the gay person was rehired.

In the course of these pickets, the gay community was first moved to organize in its own defense around issues of its oppression. Groups called something like the "Militant Homosexual Committee" were formed. These groups later led to the organization of the gay liberation organizations there.

By this time, the Mattachine Society had declined sharply due to several of the key persons leaving the Mattachine Society to work on a project related to the poverty programs that were funded by the city administration. These projects were geared toward personal help to male prostitutes and drug addicts in the central city area.

In June 1969 the police raided a gay bar in New York, which has become known as the Stonewall Riot. This led to demonstrations by a few hundred gay persons protesting police brutality and the death of a gay person who was thrown or jumped from a window several floors up in a police building. This marked the birth of the gay liberation movement.

All the gay liberation organizations see themselves as an outgrowth of this explosion in the gay community, and through publicity of the occurrence all gay liberationists look to this action as the first definitive step forward by gay people, as gay people, in a movement for the rights and dignity of all gay people.

In the last two years there has been a tremendous growth of the movement in numbers, organization, and geographic spread. On Gay Pride Day (June 27) in 1970, over 5000 gay persons marched in New York. This year over 20,000 gay persons participated in demonstrations, conferences, and rallies in several cities across the country. In addition, a gay underground press has grown up alongside of the other movement press.

In all sorts of job situations, gay persons are standing up and demanding their rights. In a recent issue of *The Advocate* I noticed a decision by an appeals board for the Post Office which ruled that the sexual orientation of a gay postman was not to be considered sufficient cause for his dismissal. He was ordered rehired and paid back pay. Of course, I'm not saying that discrimination in Federal employment has been abolished, but what has happened is that a gay person stood up for his rights and the rights of other gays to have jobs.

The Character of the Gay Movement

A number of comrades have talked to me in the past several months about the possibility of the gay movement having a reactionary potential as well as a progressive character. Some comrades have said that we can't analyze the movement as it now is and the roots of its development; instead, we should adopt a wait-and-see attitude toward the movement so we might observe any reversal of the direction of its development. No one has yet explained what factors in the make-up of the gay population or the roots of the gay movement that might lead to this reactionary development.

I think the comrades are incorrect to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. Social phenomena involving tens of thousands of people from all classes, all sectors of all classes, all oppressed nations, and both sexes, don't change their (reactionary or progressive) character without a reason.

An organization might appear to be one thing and actually be quite another, but our analysis of organizations is based on analysis and not just observation.

The fact that the gay liberation movement is a movement and not an organization must be stressed. Some comrades have referred to the gay liberation movement as though it were a political party and the question before us was to decide if we could give such a formation critical support.

In general, I think there are two criteria for analysis of a movement to see if it is progressive or reactionary. First: Is a movement directed and mobilized in defense of or in opposition to the interests and institutions of the ruling class? Second: Is the movement mobilized in support of or in opposition to other oppressed peoples fighting for social change?

I think the answers to these questions should be obvious. There is no one institution in society that gay people can be mobilized around. After all, aren't gay people oppressed by the state, the military, the police, the courts, the schools, the church, the family, private business, etc.?

As for the second question, have gay people been used against other social movements? No. There is a tendency for all oppressed people initially to radicalize around their own special oppression and then go on, because of their experiences and struggles, to see that their oppression is connected to the oppression of others. The gay liberation movement has grown up after the development of the antiwar movement, the feminist movement, the nationalist movements, and the international struggles of the oppressed. Not only has gay liberation grown up after these struggles, but in some measure it has grown up because of them.

These other movements have set the example of militancy, mass action, and independence that is critical for the future development of the gay movement.

The gay liberation movement clearly supports the antiwar movement, the high school movement, the women's liberation movement and the nationalist movements. Why would the gay movement break this solidarity and allow itself to be used by the ruling class against other oppressed groups?

The political document and report points out that the Cubans articulated a sentiment that is sweeping through all the oppressed people of the world: "For this great mass of humanity has said, 'Enough!' and has begun to march." The political document goes on to say, "That captures part of the spirit of this radicalization. There is no layer too oppressed, too prejudiced against, too repressed, too denigrated as an outcast by capitalist society to stand up, to assert their humanity and to demand that they be treated as fully human, that the quality of life they live be improved. This American capitalism cannot grant" (page 25).

All of this applies to gay people. Gay people are placing demands on the ruling class and the government and looking for allies in other movements that they can work with. The gay movement can hardly be presumed to have some sort of inherent weakness that will manifest itself someday as a hostility and opposing force against other social movements in the interest of the ruling class. If comrades feel that there is some inherent weakness that could lead to this, then they have an obligation to

come forward with arguments and facts that go beyond a glib characterization and deal with scientific reality.

Gay liberationists, like Black liberationists and women liberationists and Chicano liberationists and all others fighting for liberation, must eventually challenge the foundations of the class society that obstructs their efforts to improve their quality of life, and, in fact, is the root cause of their oppression and exploitation.

Our Strength Is Our Program

Now, I want to say a few words about the general question of recruitment. Some comrades have asked questions like, "Will the inclusion of gay liberation in our program and gay liberationists in the party ranks hurt, or help, in the ability of the party to recruit and build the SWP into a mass revolutionary party? We can be sure that the ruling class will attack our party as a 'queer' party and 'queer-bait' the radicalized workers. Would the party be better off if we didn't give the ruling class this opportunity to bait our party?"

The answer to questions like these lies in our analysis of society and homosexual oppression. If we are correct about how radicalizing workers are drawn into struggles then it follows that we will not ask workers, or anyone for that matter, to change their personal preference in sexual matters to join our organization. We must build our party on the basis of educating militants to the necessity of building a party of all the oppressed, and especially a party of the most oppressed, in order to build a movement actually capable of changing this society.

Just as the radicalization among other sectors of society is molded by all the aspects of the radicalization—feminism, nationalism of the oppressed, and now gay militancy. We should have confidence that other people will be able to reach at least the consciousness that we have reached. I think that the youth who are radicalizing today seem to throw off bourgeois ideology and indoctrination much faster than the radicalizing youth of just a few years ago. Today's radicalizing youth embrace the struggles at their high points, and they do not repeat the experiences of earlier movements. In fact, how could it be otherwise? It is the social reality of today and the fighting movements that mold the consciousness of individuals fighting against the system—that material fact will change the attitudes of many. For example, NPAC expanded labor and gay participation in the coalition in the last period—one did not obstruct the other.

The political document

Now I want to go into a fairly lengthy consideration of what I think the party's position is toward developing movements and what this means to the gay liberation movement. The document doesn't say much directly about the gay movement, although all of the specific references are generally favorable. What I want to do is point out the general remarks about our attitude toward the movements of oppressed peoples and how we conduct ourselves as revolutionists.

There is no document on the gay movement. I don't think that at this time we could write one. From the sketchiness of my remarks on the 1940s and 1950s and the development of the gay movement I certainly pointed out that at this time I cannot write a resolution. But I

think that the political resolution has a lot in it that applies to the gay movement.

The political document lists four "key facts" in the development of the mass independent movements and the new developing movements; these are:

"1) There is no layer too oppressed to struggle, no reactionary prejudice and oppression too sacrosanct and deep-rooted to be challenged.

"2) The actions of each new layer of the diversified movement have raised greater doubts about the fundamental values of bourgeois society.

"3) Each extends and deepens interest in radical ideas about the reconstruction of social life.

"4) Each drives home the conclusion that new issues and independent struggles will continue to emerge as the radicalization deepens" (page 14).

The political document has the following point on page 16: "7) In all stages of building the mass revolutionary-socialist party its cadres must be alert to, recognize and embrace the new forms of struggle and the demands of oppressed groupings that appear as the radicalization develops. The Leninist party champions the fighting movements of all oppressed social layers and advances and develops their key democratic and transitional demands as part of its own. The revolutionary vanguard consciously uses its participation in these movements to draw the lessons necessary to bring revolutionary socialist consciousness to as broad a layer of militants as possible."

Comrades should excuse me for quoting the next rather lengthy section from the political document, but its importance to the discussion I will next raise will be obvious.

On page 26 the document states: "4) There is a fourth general point that runs through the resolution. That is the importance and implication of the fact that we *act* as revolutionaries in how we relate to emerging movements as the radicalization develops. We first talked about this at the 1969 convention when we discussed the evolution of our understanding of Black nationalism. We did not have to wait for the codification of our position at the 1963 convention to act as revolutionists in the Afro-American movement. We are not able to instantaneously develop a total understanding and rounded analysis of, and put in the right framework in our program, each new movement against the oppressions of capitalism at the beginning of its rise. The key thing is that as the radicalization deepens, as new movements arise, as new sectors come into struggle against the anti-democratic bias of capitalism, against the inequities and inequalities of capitalism, that we embrace the progressive demands of those movements, and we act as revolutionists toward them and in them. Then as long as we're clear about our political principles we should find no insurmountable obstacles to coming to grips with these new movements, analyzing them and incorporating generalizations and demands flowing from them into our program.

"There's a section in the resolution that deals with this. It says our job is to champion the movements of all sectors of the oppressed that rise in struggle against the oppression of capitalism. And, over time, we add to our transitional program, our program for the socialist revolution those demands flowing from these struggles which fit into the strategy of the transitional program. We do

not see these struggles—regardless of their current leadership or limitations—as something separate from or alien to the SWP. The revolutionary party wants to be connected with the genuinely progressive goals of every movement of the oppressed. An example of this process was the development of our Transitional Program for Black Liberation. Another example, in relation to the student movement, was the development of the red university resolution. We are also beginning to grapple with the question of demands and strategy in the women's liberation movement. We will repeat this process in relation to other movements."

Let me repeat this last sentence, "*We will repeat this process in relation to other movements.*" I think this is the process we are using in the analysis of the gay movement.

The Probe

Leaving aside all speculation on the probe, let's look at what it says. First, the probe motion makes it clear when it says that the party unconditionally supports the struggles of gay people for their civil and human rights. This means we support the gay liberation movement in its broadest demands and general direction. Some comrades have used the formulation used by the PC to justify saying we do not support "gay liberation" or the "gay liberation movement." The danger in allowing comrades to make this petty differentiation is that this argument may later be used to justify comrades not supporting gay struggles as they develop on the grounds the party doesn't have a position on "gay liberation."

The second part of the probe motion outlines that the party branches may assign comrades to build specific actions around issues we support. Several party comrades have been assigned to do this in different areas of the country by different branches during the recent Gay Pride activities.

The most important aspect of the probe is probably the systematic information gathering on the gay movement that is requested and sent into the national office. This will allow us to formulate a position nationally as soon as possible and as correctly as possible.

Further Party Intervention

I hope that the probe can be ended at the convention and an outline be given for intervention in the gay liberation movement. There does not have to be a resolution submitted to do this; all that is necessary is an elaboration under the political report. From the political report's general considerations and remarks about this radicalization and emerging movements, I think that it is clear that we should move toward intervention in situations where we have the comrades available to work on issues we support.

The outlines of the kind of intervention that we should conduct fall into line with our general politics in the other mass movements:

1) for mass action, with an acknowledgement of the importance of consciousness-raising groups for the development of the movement;

2) for all-gay organizations, explicit exclusion of straights;

3) for democratic decision-making in the gay organizations;

4) special recognition of the rights of gay feminists as part of the gay liberation movement and the women's movement, and their right to form organizations in the manner they choose, whether this is as a caucus of a group or a completely separate organization;

5) non-exclusion of all gays within the gay liberation movement;

6) complete independence of all gay organizations from the government and all ruling class parties.

We have already stated what we feel are the most important issues in this country, but this should be spelled out to clarify the priorities we feel are pressing on the gay movement. The most important struggles are gay participation in the antiwar movement, in the women's

abortion action coalition, around fights for legal reform of the sex laws, self-education of the gay organizations, and struggles for democratic rights and campus recognition.

At this stage in our developing a position on gay liberation, I feel that we should participate in these struggles as they develop and work to build them as mass independent militant struggles. We do not have to codify a transitional program for gay liberation before we participate in struggles we support and begin education within our movement on the history of the gay movement and gay oppression.

July 31, 1971

AN ANSWER TO THE OAKLAND-BERKELEY CRITICS
by Evelyn Reed, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local

In their document, "Toward a Marxist Approach to the Women's Liberation Movement," Comrades Margaret Charous, Sandy Hall, Beth Semmer, and Celia Stodola ask where I stand today on certain views I expressed in 1954. I hereby reaffirm the basic positions I took seventeen years ago on what was then called the "Woman Question." I held that the problems it posed could only be ultimately resolved through the class struggle.

This reaffirmation will probably bring small comfort to the critics since I also stand foursquare behind the propositions set forth by the party today, which they severely castigate. I agree with her that "sisterhood is a real and powerful thing" in the women's liberation movement and that, because of their common oppression as a sex, women can be mobilized from various sectors and classes to join together in mass actions around specific demands.

The critics who disagree with this suffer from a rigid, one-sided, and undialectical approach to the women's liberation struggle. They oversimplify a complex and contradictory situation. On the one hand, women are united in their condition as an oppressed sex and share a common need to get rid of the disabilities inflicted upon them by male-dominated capitalist society. On the other hand, women are divided according to their socioeconomic status, which gives them divergent and conflicting interests. Both aspects must be taken into account today in the second wave of the women's liberation struggle.

The first wave of women's struggle for equality was predominantly a crusade which aimed at reforms within the capitalist framework. It ended with the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment which, as I said, "achieved its limited aims."

Fifty years later, the second stage emerges in a period of intense radicalization and ever deeper disillusionment with the capitalist system and its institutions. In the antiwar movement, the Black and Chicano struggles, the

campus youth revolt, and now the women's struggles, we can see a far more radical challenge to the powers-that-be and an anticapitalist dynamic whether or not the participants are all aware of it. In this atmosphere of great and growing ferment, democratic demands can be linked up with transitional demands, but only if the party cadres are an integral part of the movement in all stages of its development, giving it both theoretical and practical guidance.

As Trotskyists we are well aware of the theory of the permanent revolution which teaches that under monopoly capitalism even democratic demands raised by the oppressed have a revolutionary dynamic. Most cannot be fulfilled except through the intervention of the working masses and under the leadership of its revolutionary vanguard party. But we reject the methods of the sectarians, such as the Wohlforthites, PL, and the ultralefts in the feminist movement who, in their imaginations, want to skip over the arduous, preparatory stages of a developing movement to reach the final goal in one full sweep.

The Oakland-Berkeley comrades are falling into the same kind of trap when they deny, disregard, or downgrade the democratic side of the women's liberation struggle aspiring to throw off the most glaring inequalities and oppressions. Such a demand as the repeal of all antiabortion laws can mobilize not only thousands but millions of women from all strata, vastly increasing the number of women in the feminist movement. The critics, however, want to restrict the ranks of women's liberation to working class women who are in industry or who belong to oppressed nationalities. They have little interest in or concern with other categories of working women, office personnel, and public employees, or in campus women, professional women and housewives, all of whom are oppressed even if in differing degrees. This is nothing other than a sectarian posture hiding behind a super-

proletarian mask.

This, it seems to me, is behind their implied accusation that in 1971 I have abandoned the genuinely proletarian outlook I had in 1954. At that time, in a strictly internal party discussion I emphasized the class character of the "Woman Question." There was a reason for this emphasis in a different period of time under very different circumstances. There was then no women's liberation movement nor even the faintest hint that such a movement would surface some fifteen years later. It was the period of the McCarthyite witch-hunt with reaction triumphant all along the line. The labor movement was quiescent and the youth were called the "silent generation."

Women, far from moving into social struggle, were retreating en masse back to the family circle under the heightened propaganda that woman's place was in the home. Not surprisingly, this period of deep conservatism gave rise to frustration among certain women party comrades. But, despite our wishes or will, we could not substitute ourselves for a renewal of the feminist movement any more than we could for a resurgence of mass labor struggles.

Thus the dialogue on the "Woman Question" which took place prior to the 1954 convention was exclusively an internal one. Since it was not connected with any immediate or prospective external mass activity, it was not a high level discussion but had an introverted or subjective character. It centered largely on cosmetics, fashions, and similar secondary issues surrounding the exploitation and oppression of women. This is the reason for the emphasis at that time on the class character of women's oppression; it was a reminder of the social roots of the acrimony and alienation between the sexes.

This is not to say that in the living reality of the liberation struggle today women should not articulate their revulsion against the oppressor sex, which is not only their right but a progressive part of the struggle. There is hardly a woman who has not at one time or another experienced such revulsion, whether she has articulated it or not. Under these circumstances, for the critics to pick out a sentence here, a paragraph there, without placing them in their concrete context is a shoddy way of assessing the situation.

Today, seventeen years later, the situation with regard to women is drastically changed. From its inception, the second wave of the liberation struggle has been on a far higher level than its predecessor. Among the many things thrown open by women for review, even the sacrosanct family institution is under scrutiny. The demands for repeal of abortion laws, for 24-hour child-care centers, for equal jobs at equal pay are hitting hard at the capitalist structure. It would be folly to stand aside from this struggle because it is not pure enough in its industrial working-class composition.

Finally, with regard to the deletion made in my pamphlet. In connection with our party's initial intervention into the women's liberation movement I was asked to put together some articles and lectures from previous years which were published as *Problems of Women's Liberation: A Marxist Approach*. Among them was a portion of my remarks on the cosmetics discussion from the 1954 Internal Bulletin. The critics complain that a section of this was deleted in the fifth enlarged edition, and they interpret this as a repudiation of my former position.

The cut was made for other reasons. Space considerations required that I make a cut of some kind. I selected this one because the new expanded edition included my speech at the 1970 Socialist Scholars Conference, which dealt with essentially the same subject, and which also avoided any possibility of being misunderstood by women in the liberation struggle. This speech is titled: "Women: Class, Caste or Oppressed Sex?" It seemed to me that this speech, which was worked out in response to living problems raised in a large and growing movement, was superior to a few paragraphs culled from an old internal discussion whose focus was cosmetics and fashions.

However, it is not my personal opinions but the position of the party that is at issue in the present discussion. Our line proceeds from a recognition of the dual character of the women's liberation struggle. The critics on the other hand adopt the sectarian standpoint that it pertains exclusively to "proletarian" women construed in the narrowest manner. That is the essence of the theoretical and tactical differences between us.

July 30, 1971

IN REPLY TO "TOWARD A MARXIST APPROACH TO THE
WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT"

by Caroline Lund, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local

Since the counterresolution "Toward a Marxist Approach to the Women's Liberation Movement" was submitted so late in the discussion, there is not time to fully answer all the questions raised in it. I would like to just deal briefly with the method used in this resolution and then with some of the conclusions that Comrades Charous, Hall, Semmer, and Stodola come to regarding our rela-

tionship to the women's movement.

The method used in the counterresolution is to raise "warning signs" that the party is drifting away from Marxism. Some of these "warning signs" are simply distortions of the party's actual position. Others of their "warning signs" are isolated incidents, mainly quotes dug up from *The Militant*, which they blow up and present as the party's

position. Another aspect of their method is that they raise extremely serious charges that the party is deviating from Marxism, and yet do not present a clear alternative line.

In the opinion of Charous et al., the party is in very bad shape. They say: "both the PC Draft Resolution and the plenum report by Betsey Stone are not written from a Marxist class perspective but rather from an impressionist point of view." Later they refer to "the party leadership's conscious adaptation to the most backward elements in the women's liberation movement." They also say that the party "has succumbed to the alien class pressures exerted by groups with essentially a reformist conception of social change." And finally they say: "The adaptation to bourgeois methodology that is beginning to discard our class analysis, not only goes contrary to the fundamentals of Marxism, but to the traditions of our party as well."

Now let's look at the proofs they present for this view of the party.

Their method of distortion begins on the first page, when they discuss Betsey Stone's statement that, "It [sisterhood] doesn't mean an end to political differences between women of different backgrounds and classes. It doesn't mean, for example, that someone who works as a maid has any great love for the woman who employs her. What it does mean is that, whether they are conscious of it or not, these women do have certain political objectives in common, because of the fact that they are both oppressed as women."

The counterresolution goes on to describe this as "the party's view that a common bond of sisterhood links the maid and her employer." And later, they refer to "Comrade Stone's appeal for unity between upper class white housewives (members of NOW, perhaps) and their hired Black maids." These two statements have an entirely different sense and tone from what Comrade Stone said. In addition to making these distortions of what she said, Comrades Charous et al. leave out the context of Betsey Stone's remark—which was an argument *against* those who tend to see sisterhood as a type of affection between all women which transcends class and political differences.

From this quote by Betsey Stone, Charous et al. conclude that the party has accepted two wrong concepts as the basis for its women's liberation work: 1) that all women are oppressed as women and this common oppression forms the basis of sisterhood, which "transcends classes," and 2) this sisterhood justifies "our attempts to build a multi-class unity" in the struggle for women's liberation.

These are again distortions of the party's position. First of all, the oppression of women does not "transcend" classes, but cuts across classes. That is, sexual oppression is not more basic than class oppression; it does not supersede classes; it does not negate the existence of classes among women. But sexual oppression does affect women of all classes, to differing extents.

The party's view of how women are divided and united is explained very clearly in the Political Committee Draft Resolution. Here is what it says:

"There are some women who say that the class and racial divisions among women are unimportant. . . . At the other extreme are some women who say that the divisions among women are insurmountable and that there is no basis for uniting women in struggle except

around solely working class demands. . . . The truth is that women are at the same time both united by sexist oppression and divided by class society. There is an objective basis for a unified struggle of women of different nationalities and classes because all women are oppressed as women by capitalism. . . . Women of different social classes suffer to very different degrees from lack of child care and abortion facilities, unequal pay, job discrimination, warped education and social conditioning. But these are all aspects of the very real oppression of women and all women have a stake in struggling around these issues. . . . Because women suffer different forms and degrees of oppression, different groupings will organize separately, as well as together. . . . Any attempt to disregard either those factors which divide women or those which unite them will lead to misunderstandings and roadblocks in the attempt to mobilize the full power of women."

Why didn't Comrades Charous et al. state their view of the party's actual position? Apparently they do agree that all women are oppressed as women, since they write: "While it is true that capitalism oppresses all women as a sex, the very fact that this movement is taking place outside of the camp of the decisive historic class—the working class—necessitates that the razor edge of our Marxist tools be made all the more sharp." (emphasis added) So it is very unclear exactly where they disagree with the party's position, although they ask us to conclude that the party is abandoning a Marxist perspective in the women's movement.

Secondly, to characterize the party's approach in the women's movement as promoting "multi-class unity" is another distortion. We are not for multi-class unity. We are for unity of women—including individuals from different classes—in independent mass action *against* the ruling class around specific demands relating to the oppression women face. Do Comrades Charous et al believe that the women's movement should exclude women from the capitalist class who agree with the movement and are willing to join its struggles? They give lip service to this view, although later they contradict themselves, saying we must "help fight to keep the women's liberation movement non-exclusionary, democratically-run, and open to all women who support and wish to participate in action." It is completely unclear what they mean, therefore, when they say that the party supports "multi-class unity" in the women's movement and therefore "moves away from a Marxist class analysis."

The second big "warning sign" they point to is that the party supposedly has a "lack of theoretical clarity" regarding women's liberation. They can point to only one concrete sign of this lack of theory, namely, that at a panel on abortion in New York more than one year ago, Ruthann Miller called for the right of women to self-determination. This isolated formulation in a speech by an individual is blown up to represent the party's position. If a very few individual comrades have used this formulation in the past, it is something that has for the most part been corrected, and was certainly never the position of the party as a whole.

The term "self-determination" relates to state forms. It means the right to decide whether or not to form a separate state. We do not call for the right of women to form a separate state. Rather, we call for the right of women,

an oppressed sex, to control their own lives and bodies.

In attempting to substantiate their contention that the party lacks a theoretical Marxist understanding of the oppression of women, Comrades Charous et al write: "In the PC draft resolution/ Little or no consideration is given to a Marxist analysis of the roots and history of the status of women and their relationship to class society." This charge demonstrates a misunderstanding of the purpose of a line resolution. A line resolution is to lay out what the party should do in the coming period — a political perspective for the party members to discuss and vote on. A resolution is not the place for an explanation of history, except insofar as it relates to political perspective.

The resolution does contain, however, an analysis of the roots of the oppression of women, in a purposefully condensed form. It states that the origins of the oppression of women were in the rise of private property and class society, and points out that the liberation of women will be part of the socialist revolution, which will eliminate private property and lay the basis for the elimination of classes. The reason we don't put a detailed analysis of history into resolutions is that it is not necessary or desirable to have party members vote on this. The purpose of a resolution is to get the clearest possible exposition of *political line* for the party. This premium we place on clear politics is what enables the party to arrive at the most accurate positions and analyses. To put historical descriptive materials into a resolution and demand that comrades vote on it would cut across the function of conventions to achieve clarity and agreement on political line.

Because we do not include historical analyses in resolutions does not, however, mean we consider it unimportant. The contention of Comrades Charous et al that the party has demonstrated a "lack of concern with theory" is totally false. Considering the newness of this movement, we have done a tremendous amount of thinking, writing and educating on the history and theory of women's oppression. We have published the writings of Evelyn Reed. We had a seminar series in New York on the origins of women's oppression and the history of the family in each of the stages of class society (which are available on tape from the SWP National Education Department). We have had education on this subject in summer schools, as well as in the numerous articles in *The Militant*, the *International Socialist Review* and Pathfinder pamphlets.

So Comrades Charous et al go through a long explanation of the roots of women's oppression, much of which simply elaborates upon the basic line presented in the PC draft resolution: that the oppression of women originated in private property and class society and can only be eliminated through eliminating private property and class society. A number of statements in this section are wrong. But apart from some wrong formulations, this section simply repeats analysis made by Engels, and does not at all explain how the basic positions the party has put forward differ from this analysis.

The Charous et al document then goes into an analysis of the family under capitalism, which is much more fully explained in the section "The Function of the Family" in the PC draft resolution. They then have a section of statistics on women workers. This part reads much more like a campus term paper than a political resolution.

The PC draft resolution, on the other hand, selects out several of the most important statistics which relate to the development of the women's liberation movement: the growing number of women who work, the growing gap between men's and women's wages, and the increasing education available to women.

So much for the party's supposed "lack of theoretical clarity." On this point also, it is completely unclear what sort of alternative "theoretical analysis" Charous et al are proposing, or where they disagree with the theoretical analysis presented in condensed form in the PC draft resolution.

The next "warning sign" they see is a *Militant* article by Debby Woodrooffe on another New York forum. The bulk of this article concerns a discussion by panelists at this forum on the value of mass action by women for social change. But Charous et al select out a section dealing only with how panelists answered a question from the floor concerning how feminist consciousness affects personal relationships with men. Ruthann Miller replied, "when women find their energy being drained from the women's liberation movement into holding a relationship with a man together, then there is an obvious contradiction," and a member of the Feminists answered that her group had a policy of encouraging women to leave men as a step toward liberation. From this, Charous et al accuse the party of "tacitly endorsing the idea that the first step towards women's liberation is to leave one's husband, companion, etc." They say we should have used the opportunity to "expose the moralistic conceptions of social change" expressed at this forum.

In a news story we cannot always answer all views we disagree with. Yet the views of the various currents within the women's movement must be reported for the information of the party members and other readers. To take a news report like this one and put it forward as proof that the party is not proceeding from a Marxist class perspective reveals again that this grouping is not seriously interested in coming to grips with the actual positions of the party in the women's movement.

I'll skip over several more "warning signs" and come to their quotations from the previous writings of Evelyn Reed. First of all, the sections quoted from Evelyn Reed are taken from a discussion bulletin written in 1954. They are not from any resolution passed by the party. They are not, as Comrades Charous et al assert, "the past position of the SWP on the Woman Question." The party did not write a resolution on women's liberation back in the fifties because there was no movement.

Secondly, this method of picking out quotes from the past history of the party is the same sterile method used in the Gregorich-Passen-Massey-McCann document. These comrades ask "We said this in 1954, so why don't we say it today?" Because a whole new women's movement has arisen since then, and we have learned from it.

Although our basic class struggle standpoint has not changed, we have learned how to explain this perspective so that it can be most easily understood by women in the movement today. In the context of the rising independent women's movement, the general formula "class against class or sex against sex" could be misunderstood to be a counterposition of the class struggle to the struggle against sexual oppression. Since the 1960s, with the

rise of the Black nationalist movement and then the rise of the women's liberation movement, we have learned a great deal about the revolutionary significance of the independence of both nationalist movements of oppressed peoples, and the feminist movement. We have come to a greater appreciation of the fact that the struggles against national oppression and sexual oppression are parts of the class struggle, not antithetical to the class struggle.

Comrades Charous et al say they consider the quotes they present from Evelyn Reed in 1954 as "basically correct" for today also. Perhaps the fact that the formulations in these quotes can be totally misunderstood in the context of the movement today can be most clearly seen if one substitutes the word "race" for the word "sex" in some of the quotes. Here is how they would read:

"The race question cannot be divorced from the class question. Any confusion on this score can only lead to erroneous conclusions and setbacks. It will divert the class struggle into a race struggle of all Blacks against all whites." And later: "The race question can only be resolved through the lineup of working men and women against the ruling men and women. This means that the interests of the workers as a class are identical; and not the interests of all Blacks as a race." "Ruling class Blacks have exactly the same interest in upholding and perpetuating capitalist society as their white counterparts have. . . . Thus the emancipation of working class Blacks will not be achieved in alliance with the Blacks of the enemy class, but just the opposite; in a struggle against them as part and parcel of the whole class struggle."

The counterposition of "class against class or sex against sex"—or "class against class or Blacks against whites"—does not pose the only two alternatives. The other alternative is women against their oppression as a sex, and Black people against their oppression as a nationality. To sound like we are demanding, as a condition for our support, that the women's movement be based on a consciousness of the class struggle is just as sectarian as to demand that the Black nationalist movement be based on class consciousness. As Trotsky explained in *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*: "The argument that the slogan for 'self-determination' leads away from the class basis is an adaptation to the ideology of the white workers. The Negro can be developed to a class standpoint only when the white worker is educated."

If Comrades Charous et al consider the phrase "Sisterhood is powerful" as "classless," what do they think about the slogan "Black power"? Is that classless too, and therefore unworthy of the support of Marxists? The question raised by all the tortured arguments of Comrades Charous et al is: Do these comrades think that the oppression of women is real? Do they think all women are oppressed to some extent under capitalism and therefore there is a basis for a women's liberation movement? Is there a basis for a movement for the liberation of all women, not only working women? If they agree to these statements, then all their arguments point nowhere. All their true statements that the oppression of women is rooted in class society, that the function of the family is to serve class society, and that the class struggle is the most basic driving force in history—none of these true statements negate the reality of the oppression of women. So, again,

it is completely unclear what they see as the "traditional Marxist class analysis of the oppression of women under capitalism" and how it differs from the party's present position or the PC draft resolution.

Many of the other "warning signs" raised in this document, concerning our positions in the abortion struggle, have already been dealt with in Comrade Betsey Stone's discussion contribution. But I would also like to note the contradictory nature of their document in this area. Sometimes this document says that transitional demands are the only demands worth struggling for. For instance, they write: "The party's role in the women's liberation movement must be to extend its perspective of mass action around demands of a transitional nature." Later they write: "it is only mobilizations around transitional demands or demands with a transitional nature that can raise serious political challenges to the ruling class." But later in the document, Comrades Charous et al say that, "the task of the women's liberation movement is to mobilize all women in struggle around demands of a democratic and transitional nature." If these comrades do agree that democratic demands are also worth fighting for, and that Marxists must be in the forefront of the fight for democratic rights, then why don't they support the struggle for the elementary democratic right to legal abortion? The broad, successful national abortion repeal conference, which was organized in only a matter of weeks, is the best possible answer to Comrades Charous et al regarding their position on the abortion struggle. The significant number of working women, trade union women, welfare women and Third World women who participated in that conference makes this counterresolution look ridiculous when it tries to say that repeal of abortion laws is meaningless to working women and Third World women.

What comes through the counterresolution of Comrades Charous et al is not a clear alternative line for the party, except in its opposition to the abortion repeal campaign. The whole thrust and essence of this document is to warn the party about what Comrades Charous et al consider the ominous and dangerous nature of the "petty-bourgeois" women's liberation movement. To warn us that this movement is exerting "alien class pressures" on our movement. To warn us to gird ourselves to combat these dangers lurking at every step. To warn us not to get too deeply involved in this movement. They berate the party for its "desire to 'get involved,' 'to embrace,' and 'to lead' the movement."

Nowhere in their document do they note the revolutionary significance of the women's liberation movement—its militancy, its unprecedented grasp of the depth of the oppression of women, its challenge to the very bases of class society, its great potential—as demonstrated on August 26 and in the national abortion conference—to involve masses of women in struggle. Rather, the essence of this document is a fear of getting involved and relating to the living women's movement. Comrades Charous et al try to back up this basically sectarian approach to the women's movement with attempts at "theory" that suggest that sexual oppression is not as real as class or national oppression, that sexual oppression only affects working class women, and that the struggle against sexual oppression is not a part of the class struggle. July 31, 1971

A CRITICISM OF THE PARTY'S TRADE UNION WORK
WITH RESPECT TO APRIL 24-SAN FRANCISCO
by Jack Burton, Los Angeles Branch

The party's work in the massive antiwar demonstrations on April 24 was without any question, one of the Trotskyists' most outstanding achievements in their history in the US. This criticism is not directed with any intention of trying to minimize or downgrade the victory that our general political approach made possible, as against the views of every other shade of political opinion in the nation.

My criticism has its inception in the labor committee of Out Now. It started initially around the comrades' inability to recognize that they were dealing with an alien political line, i.e., the United Action Caucus view and the ultraleftist approach that its proponents, regardless of the political differences among them, seem to universally support. In this case, the IS and some independent radicals were involved.

The IS wanted to compose a book-size leaflet to be circulated with the UAW leaflet and other NPAC material to the workers at plant gates. They wanted to specifically attack the Democrats and Republicans by name, etc., and follow a multi-issue approach. They quibbled over every word and compounded this time consumption with speculation about what the labor committee was going to do after April 24. They obviously visualized Out Now's labor committee as the nucleus for forming a multi-issue caucus of the United Action variety. Their views were given support by the independents who usually tried to compromise between the United Action line and our single-issue coalition approach.

After delays, to the point where there wasn't going to be any time left to do anything, I suggested a leaflet along the following lines:

The Vietnam War is responsible for inflation. What have the politicians been doing about it? The first thing they did was double their own salaries. Next they raised interest rates and tightened money, causing hundreds of thousands to lose their jobs. But inflation continue and even increased its tempo. Now they are trying to impose so-called controls to hold wages down. Just how this will stop inflation is hard to understand. The government's own statistics show that real wages (the amount a worker can buy) have been declining since 1965. With controls, it will be official policy to deteriorate our wages along with our cities, schools, air, water, etc. The war in Southeast Asia is more and more becoming a war against the American working people. As unionists, we say positive action must be taken. Our unions must join the antiwar movement and give it the leadership and muscle it needs to stop the war now. Then together we can get on with the task of creating a peacetime full-employment economy that will provide jobs and a better way of life for all.

This line reflects ordinary worker's criticism from an independent class point of view of all the capitalist politicians. If the coalition it projects were achieved in reality, it would be the first view of what soviet power will look like on the American continent. The full-employment economy could only be one in which private enterprise had been eliminated. I feel certain this leaflet would have been well received and would have had a tendency of attracting

more advanced workers towards activity in the antiwar movement.

This leaflet was never published because Out Now gave priority to the printing of literature for the peripheral movements. The printer was already swamped and the labor committee's leaflet was on the bottom of the totem pole. There were stacks of excellent propaganda material for every other section of the coalition, but we couldn't get one leaflet for the unions.

The circulation of a leaflet of this type did not mean that the antiwar movement was going to bring out a large number of workers. What was involved was that it would have presented a political line for independent working-class politics in a form consistent with the existing level of consciousness that prevailed in the rank and file. It was a matter of using April 24 for educational work, even in a limited way, as well as trying to build the demonstration.

The antiwar movement did get out one leaflet to the building trades which was written so late that it was only circulated to the union officialdom. It was a weak leaflet that repeated information and arguments that were being printed in the general labor press concerning Davis-Bacon. I accepted this leaflet uncritically because the ultralefts were trying to amend it to include an attack on the racist policies of the building trades, and to warn them their unions would be destroyed if they didn't change their ways. These ultralefts are the kamikaze of the new left. If you circulate leaflets that they prepare, you shouldn't expect to come back alive, let alone get anyone out to an antiwar rally.

At the eleventh hour, we finally received some leaflets from SF which had been printed for the unions. In my opinion, this leaflet was a Democratic Party tract, and the bill for its publication should have been sent to that organization.

It was headed Nixon's War Is Not Our War. This leaflet completely exonerated the Democrats from any responsibility for the war. You would have never guessed that Democrats Kennedy and Johnson were in office while the fighting was going on. Even the wage freeze, which the liberal Democrats have been advocating for years, was placed at Nixon's door. In plain fairness, I think we should recognize that Nixon's a Johnny-come-lately on this issue.

When I raised this with a leading comrade in SF, she said *The Militant* uses the same formulation. But that is different. *The Militant* is a socialist paper and anyone who reads it couldn't possibly believe that we were supporters of Democratic Party politics.

I don't believe the antiwar movement should be reinforcing the illusions that the workers have about the Democratic Party--at least not where it is within our power to prevent it. Naturally this leaflet would go over well with union Democrats.

The Out Now labor committee passed very few leaflets to rank-and-file unionists, but it did make a lot of phone-calls to the offices of the union bureaucrats. Perhaps these calls did some good, but realistically there were few bureaucrats who were about to defy the Meany-oriented

leaders of the LA County Federation by doing anything to support the antiwar movement. Plain common sense would have told anyone that this approach was wrong.

I raise these matters because, for all its success, our work in the antiwar movement with respect to intervention into the unions leaves much to be desired. It was not disturbing to me that younger comrades could make mistakes of this kind. It was disturbing that I have yet to hear of even one of the older comrades who has offered any criticism of these mistakes.

I did not make an issue of this in the LA branch because I was already becoming aware that my differences with the party's trade-union line were much deeper than just these matters. I felt that it would be best for me to try to clarify my own position so that it could be presented for a serious discussion, rather than waste the time of the LA branch with a discussion on this limited level. That has been done. I do feel that this criticism, however, remains of sufficient importance to warrant discussion.

The shaky position of US capitalism will have the same devaluating effect generally that it had upon efforts to short-change the unions in the round of negotiations that are just being completed. It limits their field of action and will cause some of their best-laid plans to go astray or fail completely. There is the very real possibility that their economic brinkmanship, domestically or internationally, will bring the long-awaited crash that is endemic to their system. It would be of tremendous significance because it would mean that the class struggle would begin to erupt at an intensified level not only in the US, but in Europe, Japan, and its other segments as well. But only time can tell if and when this will occur. The possibilities of such a miscalculation will increase in direct proportion to the amount of working-class resistance that their plans encounter here in the US.

Neither do I believe that there is some magic formula such as gold revaluation, SDRs, monetary devaluations or revaluations, wider bands of currency-exchange rates, etc. that will long restrain or eliminate the economic competition that capitalism engenders at every level of its system. All of these measures and others we have not yet encountered may be employed in an attempt to ward off a universal collapse of neocapitalism, but the terms of these measures will reflect the relationship of forces between economic rivals at the time of their consummation.

While I don't want to go into an extensive analysis of the last monetary crisis in Europe, I can say that in general the aspects of economic rivalry were easily discernible. When twelve billion dollars flooded into Germany, causing unwanted currency revaluations there and in several other countries as well, the US government's position "that it was a European problem" was a clear display of economic self-interest at the expense of its rivals.

Nixon's overtures to Russia and now China are a clear indication that the cold war has been shelved, for the time being, in order to get on with the trade war. The new line in numerous articles in the *WSJ*, that economic improvements in China have softened her so-called belligerent attitude in international affairs, is so much poppycock. It is the US that has had to soften its own belligerent attitude in order to begin converting her economy into "a trade-war machine." In my judgment, one of the

myths that the ruling class is hoping to create in order to justify the Vietnam War is that it had the beneficial effect of restraining so-called Red Chinese imperialism.

The differences between US imperialism's conversion to shooting war in 1939 and to trade war in 1971 are numerous and immense. Then its economy had been compressed by years of deflation and was ripe for wartime and post war expansion. Now it is expanded near the breaking point. Then jobs were created at the expense of lives. Now jobs are being wiped out while lives may be saved to add to the relief rolls. Then the people, after Pearl Harbor, believed America's problems were caused by the foreigners. Now many of them believe these problems have been caused by US intervention in the Vietnam war.

The Vietnam war is being dragged out, in my judgment, with less regard for its international consequences, and more for the effect its ending will have at home. What the ruling class needs is a little period of peace and prosperity, in order to prepare the American people for the sacrifices of the trade war. That is why they are now trying to stimulate the economy. That is why Nixon became a convert to Keynesian economics. That is why the Vietnam war is the most important issue in world and domestic policies.

Thanks to the economic conjuncture and the militancy of the workers, the bureaucrats are coming out of the negotiations with a better image than they have enjoyed in years. Fitzsimmons has become president of the Teamsters in his own right. Woodcock has proven his qualifications to replace Reuther. Abel, in my judgment, is well on his way to bolstering his sagging prestige. Meany and his close associates in the building trades appear to be solidly in the saddle and apparently have not encountered much criticism despite their duplicity with respect to the wage freeze. On the surface everything seems to favor their chances for continued leadership. But the bureaucrats are facing the turbulence that the shift to a trade war economy involves and they are politically overextended on the Vietnam war.

These practitioners of class-conciliation try to moderate the plans of the ruling class with a view to protecting the interests of their members by clever personal arguments and deals with management and capitalist politicians. They don't present the information they have about these plans to their members in such a way that they arouse them to action. They support the war, call for quotas on foreign imports, and object to the export of American jobs through company investments in foreign countries. Each of these proposals is made as a separate entity and presented in a disconnected way because they are really appendages to the program of the ruling class.

Sometimes when the ruling class is divided programmatically, the bureaucrats will split and side with one of its disputing sections or the other. This process is discernible with respect to the antiwar movement, where some of the bureaucrats (even Woodcock is nibbling at the fringe of such a move) have given support, while Meany and his closer allies still hang on to their prowar position. It can be seen more clearly when a Woodcock, whose members work for McDonald-Douglas, opposes a loan guarantee for Lockheed, while Meany and IAM officials support the proposal.

We must take advantage of splits within the ranks of

capitalism's labor lieutenants just as much as we do splits within the ruling class itself. That is a matter of practical politics that does not involve any betrayal of principle if it is properly carried out. The economic transition from a shooting war to a trade war, inflation, and Nixon's recession are beginning to play hob with union finances. The *WSJ* (7/8/71) reports that economies and cutbacks in personnel are taking place in many unions. This process is certain to weaken the cohesion and unity of the bureaucracy. It means that propaganda which presents rational criticisms of existing union policies and constructive proposals for change will get a hearing in quarters that were formerly impenetrable. Sometimes it can have positive and even surprising results among the bureaucrats--particularly those in the lower level.

Unlike the bureaucrats, our propaganda must present all of the facts, the party's analysis, and our proposals for constructive programmatic changes and actions to the workers. We present a class-struggle line because all of history proves that this is the one, the only thing, that will alter ruling-class plans in any meaningful way. We don't place an iota of confidence in the proposition that the workers can be protected by the clever arguments, maneuvers, or deals that the bureaucrats use in their secret diplomacy with the ruling-class clerks who handle these matters.

Our propaganda must commence with a criticism of the unions' present program concentrating on those points that are weakest and interconnecting them in such a way that our line is presented or reflected on each point. I am specifically referring to the war, import quotas, and foreign investments. In my county federation, where any mention of opposition to the war is ruled out of order, the bureaucrats have already learned that antiwar propaganda can be disseminated around the issue of import quotas.

Import quotas is a transitional demand that the bureaucrats have introduced to shift the blame for war-induced inflation and joblessness away from the ruling class to the foreign devils abroad--primarily the Japanese. It coincides with US Steel's propaganda both in its periodicals and in the monthly meetings that are now held with the VP in charge of western operations, on company time, who tells us we are fighting a losing battle, but that we have a few more months of work before the plant is permanently closed. This is not accompanied with any get-tough policy for production in the shop.

My counterattack consists of placing the blame for our inability to compete with foreign imports upon the Vietnam war and our militarism in playing world cop for more than thirty years. I present the idea that the American price structure is completely out of line with the rest of the world because it contains a staggering load of taxation to pay for the hundreds of billions of dollars that have been spent on the military since the start of World War II. In contrast, I point out that Japan wiped out its war debts through bankruptcy and has not spent a total of thirty billion dollars on the military from that time to the present. Of course, I have a number of other facts to support this position, but I will not present them here. I can say that workers--even prowar workers--believe me when I present my arguments and I see the heads of many delegates nodding in agreement when I speak in the county federation.

I am only offering this as an example of the change that must be made in the party's propaganda if we are to direct the workers' dissatisfaction to its proper source, that is, the American ruling class. Perhaps the Japanese wages are low, etc. There isn't anything we can do about that. But that doesn't justify the financial follies of our war-obsessed ruling class.

There is one other point that the party has stressed that bears mentioning. The party has always called attention to the fact that the only time America has had full employment was when we were involved in a war. I hope we never mention it again without saying that this economic policy will no longer work. The Kennedy-Johnson-Nixon war policy has, like many other things in America, turned into its opposite. It produced a period of prosperity, but it ended by ushering in unemployment. I don't believe that any military venture short of a major all-out war can stimulate the American economy now or in the foreseeable future. If that occurs, it will not be an end to joblessness that will be paramount, but rather the end of mankind.

The class struggle, as I see it, will take three basic forms in the next period. The first form is going to be a continuation of the struggle to catch up with inflation that will take place in the unionized sector of smaller companies that are not covered by national contracts. I think a good many of these companies are not going to be inclined to follow the pattern established with the corporate giants. This will lead to an increase in strikes. Historically, the unions have not won very many strikes in this sector since the passage of Taft-Hartley. The bureaucrats insist on following a legal strike policy. The employers get an injunction, mass picketing is abandoned, and the strike is lost. Worker radicalization could change this prospect and, given the illiquidity of many

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In the past, we have viewed the relationship between the antiwar movement and the unions as being one of getting the unions to act to force an end to the war. I don't think we should dispense with this concept in its entirety. It still might happen, depending upon how long Nixon drags out the war. But we must add the concept of the antiwar movement becoming the instrument for opening the new stage of the class struggle that is before us. Even as Nixon is temporarily shelving the cold war to open the new trade war, we must begin making out transition. While I have indicated a general line of not letting the ruling class and the capitalist system escape their responsibilities for the disaster they are now seeking to impose on the workers, I will not undertake the task of shaping our transitional program to accomplish our aims. That can best be done by the party as a whole.

What I am projecting, in my opinion, is really a concretization in many ways, of what the majority resolution is saying in general. I think that given the realities of the class struggle that lies before us, we have every right to be optimistic about our ability to win the leadership of the unions. I think the American workers are going to accept our leadership no matter what slanders are hurled against us because their well being and future rests upon the implementation of our program and ideas.

I mentioned earlier in this document that during the war

we carried out propaganda work with very little action. I also indicated we were fighting for the local's leadership almost as soon as the war ended. The two things might appear contradictory.

I went into my plant during the latter half of the war. In the sixteen months that passed from the time I entered the plant until the war's end, I recruited two fellow workers. There had been many wildcats in the plant (none of them led by us although we went out with the workers) over the issue of Form 10 raises. These were raises negotiated by the union and the company which could not be put into effect without approval from the War Labor Board. If they were approved, the workers had about one and a half million dollars coming in retroactive pay. The company had used the no-strike pledge to stall on actually signing the contract, although it lived up to the agreement about as well as most companies with signed ones did in that period. In addition, the workers were not laid off immediately when the war ended. I went to the personnel office and asked when I could expect to be let go. This was in September and I was told, not before the first of the year. I checked with my acquaintance on the government war procurement agency. He had access to government contracts with the companies, and he told me that the company stood to make a few million dollars in terms of settlements with the government by pushing production as fast as it could until the contracts were terminated on December 31. We opened a campaign in the shop demanding that the unsigned contract, which was about to expire, be reopened for further improvements, and that the retroactive pay be given the workers whether or not it was approved by the WLB. Although we were unknowns in union affairs and to the workers generally, we politically ripped the CP and the bureaucrats to pieces. We spent two weeks holding department and shop meetings to explain our ideas. We organized the first regular union meeting that had had any membership attendance in years and beat the District Director in a floor fight. We never called a strike. It just happened and we went along. At this meeting, we had to organize defense guards to keep the members from physically assaulting the Director and the local's CP president. Six hours after the strike, the contract was signed unchanged, but we got every penny of the retroactive pay.

That is how three Trotskyists, who did a little propaganda work, took over the leadership of a steel local, which at that time was considered the most important in the LA area, within six weeks after the war ended. We made a plan. It was rooted in the realities of the class struggle and it worked. It's a good story and it is true. I am glad I am getting a chance to tell it while it still sounds like something because I believe that many comrades are going to have much better ones to tell in the not-so-distant future.

When the reaction began to die down in the local, the militants, primarily, Chicanos, started taking over. Their ranks were so devastated that they had to fill some of the offices with right-wingers who had been leaders at the height of the purges in the local, but who had started shifting to the left. I was under heavy pressure to run for office, but I refused. I felt that it was a time to do political work on the war issue and I did not want to be bogged down with the petty work that union office entails.

In 1968, I was elected a delegate to the county federation, the only post that I hold. When county federa-

tions in Northern California passed antiwar resolutions, another delegate from my local with my support introduced a similar motion. It was ruled out of order. The chair's ruling was appealed and the appeal was lost. It was the first time the official AFL-CIO prowar position had been challenged in this area's highest union body. A couple of months later, the county federation's election for officers was held. My fellow delegate and I ran for office as antiwar candidates. We received about 16% of the votes.

This was all done without any authorization from the local. As I had expected, the county federation's leadership reached into the local through its contacts and asked them to do something about us. The local's executive board did. Most of them personally congratulated us for being candidates in the county federation election and they supported us for reelection to our positions as delegates from our local. I still thought the issue might be raised in the local by the extreme rightists, but it was never brought up in a meeting.

When April 24 came along, we circulated literature to the county federation delegates and introduced a motion calling for support. It was ruled out of order and we lost the appeal. It was clear that our vote was considerably larger than on previous occasions. The CP has four or five delegates to the county federation. Generally they have been totally inept and we have assumed the position of the fed's official antiwar opposition. Not one of their members or sympathizers showed up at the fed meeting when they expected that April 24 would be raised.

We passed April 24 literature at our plant gates. The UAW leaflet, which had a clear line on the workers' level (economism) about lost jobs, went off like a bomb. Its the first time in years, that anything in which I was involved didn't have some kind of a feedback in the form of red-baiting comment that was relayed to me. I told the militants in the local leadership that I was not asking them to make a fight for endorsement of April 24, and that I would settle for having our communication read without action for the purpose of membership information. When April 24 came up in the local exec bd. the motion to endorse was made and seconded by two members who were leaders of the right-wing anticommunist crusades that tore the local to pieces in the early and middle 1960's. One of these men used to write articles in the local's paper, denouncing our comrades by name as Trotskyists. He was instrumental in causing a couple of comrades to lose their jobs in a phony security questionnaire fight. (The company didn't even have the job for which the questionnaires were passed out.) He used to make speeches about Trotskyists, Stalinists, and Castro spies in union meetings. In other words, they simply didn't come any worse than he was then. The motion was introduced at the regular meeting of the local and passed unanimously without discussion, although the most extreme right-wing activists in the local were present and afforded ample time to object before the vote was taken.

When NPAC was baited as being Trotskyist, some of the right-wing board members said that they didn't know they were voting for a Trotskyist conspiracy when they supported April 24. This was said in a kidding way. I told them, "Damn it all, you ought to thank us for this demonstration." They replied, "We do, we do" — and they really meant it. My local was the only one in the mass-

production industries that made up the hard core of the old CIO that supported April 24. Even GM with Schrader's endorsement didn't make it. Chrysler held a meeting where April 24 was given favorable discussion, but I don't think a motion to endorse Out Now and NPAC was made.

Along these same lines, I would like to relate a couple of other incidents which I think are significant. Comrade Walter has been doing solid antiwar work in the social workers union for a long time. A delegate from his local came to the county fed. meeting to help us fight for the April 24 endorsement. When I asked him about how things were going in his local, he said, "Walter is the union." Again, when our LA headquarters was recently vandalized, he passed a note to the chairwoman of the union's state executive board and asked her to speak out against this attack upon us. He describes her as a kind of right-wing bureaucratic type, and he didn't expect her to honor his request. To his surprise, she did speak out. Her reason — because the SWP has done so much to build the antiwar movement.

I think this points the way to the type of position we need to assume in the unions. We need to do our political work on the war question. We need to make a proper assessment of where the class struggle is going, and present our point of view wherever possible in the official bodies of the union movement. And we can do this calmly and pace ourselves so that we don't wear our audience out, because the class struggle is headed in our direction. If we do this correctly, I think we will become known as the alternative leadership that the workers have available as against that which the bureaucrats can provide.

What I don't think we should be doing is getting ourselves overly involved in the petty details of policing union contracts or splitting hairs over our cost-of-living bonus as against the one the bureaucrats have opted for. It may not really be petty or hairsplitting, but that is how most workers view it. If you ask them, they will tell you that is why they don't go to union meetings. Worse yet, it puts us in the position of keeping their attention riveted at the level of economism. Our task is to develop the kind of propaganda that starts at the level of economism and leads them to a broad general view of where the class struggle is going, concretely begins to spell out the big issues that must be decided, and projects our class-struggle program as the source where they will find the answers that will promote their class interests.

Generally I think the party is already well situated to carry out the kind of class struggle I am projecting. This struggle is not only going to be carried out by workers in the shops. It is going to involve the new class of street-people that the ruling class, like their Roman predecessors, is in the process of creating. It is going to be carried out by students, young would-be workers, Blacks, Chicanos, women, young and older workers newly declassed by automation, etc.

I am generally well satisfied with the work in progress in these peripheral movements. Of course if the party agrees with my analysis, we will have to reexamine our approach and sharpen up our line in these arenas. My differences are based upon the failure of the party to date to recognize the turn that American capitalism is making from the cold war to the coming trade war, and to clearly see what this means to the class struggle in the US.

The *LA Citizen* (the county fed's newspaper) carries an excerpt from Meany's speech at the AFL-CIO Conference on Jobs, July 12, 1971, Washington, D.C. George says: "He [Nixon] is making good on his first promise. He has reduced the number of American casualties; he is bringing American boys home. The war is winding down, and we give Mr. Nixon credit for that. But on the second promise he hasn't delivered at all. He has not solved the problem of inflation. He has piled recession on top of inflation; and he has dumped the double burden squarely on the shoulders of the American people."

That is the first indication that I have seen that George thinks we ought to be getting out of Vietnam. Of course, I wouldn't suggest to the NPAC that it ought to extend him an invitation to speak at its next demonstration. George doesn't change positions faster than the ruling class itself. A Woodcock, when he senses the way things are moving inside the ruling class, might speak at an NPAC rally to give the impression that he has something to say about the decision being made and to appear up-to-date. But as anyone can see from his statement, George thinks Nixon is moving about as fast as he should right now. But when George, who always carefully plods after the ruling class, starts to cross to other side of the street on an issue, it means something. It means even more when we remember that he is the noblest cold warrior of them all. Of course, maybe he has been saying things about getting out of Vietnam before, but when it is played up in the *Citizen*, that means something too.

When George starts complaining about the state of the economy, I think we can assume he is not just talking about now, but what lies ahead as well. As I have already pointed out, he has better information than we do. It seems unjust, though, for him to fault Nixon. Dick is bidding pretty hard to become known in the history books as the greatest Keynesian president the US has ever had. He has been splashing red ink around in a way that makes his predecessors look pretty conservative. It's equally wrong to blame Nixon for the inflation because the red ink to finance the war and the 10% growth in the money supply that the FRB has been pumping in, is the cause of the inflation. Meany and his so-called economists have never been ready to face up to this fact. That is why no one has ever taken their economic advice seriously.

But privately, I think Meany knows that inflation is nonpartisan. It will accelerate just as fast, depending on the amount of economic stimulus, for a Democrat as it does for a Republican. The bureaucrats, however, seem to want a Democratic president. Realistically about the most they can expect to gain is possibly a few jobs in some kind of a publicly financed make-work program. They may hope to add a few hundred dollars per year to Nixon's proposed \$2400, or at least keep the Reagans from cutting this dole by a few hundreds. They might obtain friendlier appointees to some of the government agencies that are important to the unions' continued existence.

These are things, which like SUB, can only "help cushion the impact." A Democratic president will not be able to reverse the trend of the economy and they know it. Meanwhile, they work away at shifting their members' dissatisfaction about unemployment from the ruling class and its cold-war expenditures to the new foreign menace,

that is, Japan. Here in LA, they were picketing department stores that carry foreign-made goods last month, and yesterday, the Ironworkers were picketing against Japanese fabricated steel.

The July 23 WSJ carries a lead story about numerous instances where unionists are taking substantial wage cuts to reopen closed plants, keep plants from closing, or get new facilities located in certain areas to provide jobs. There is resistance to this wage-cutting — not from the bureaucrats, of course, but from the workers. At Firestone Local 7, "one political faction . . . has been handing out leaflets labeling the wage cut, and other rubber company proposals to improve productivity, as 'a nationwide conspiracy' and an effort to 'break the chain of union strength.'"

Now these picket lines and wage-cutting situations are places where we should be distributing the kind of propaganda I have suggested to the workers. You don't have to be a union member to join a picket line or do propaganda work in situations of this type. Maybe the bureaucrats will identify our material as Trotskyist. But I think there are workers who will thank us for giving them an honest evaluation of what is going on in America today.

If you examine the program of the bureaucrats on both the political and the trade-union levels, it can be easily seen that in bankrupt America today, their policies in this new situation are the most bankrupt thing in the entire nation. That is the real situation and our propaganda with the trend of the economy should begin to drive this message into the consciousness of the workers.

We also have the task of getting this same message, properly prepared, to those who are involved in the peripheral movements. That is what makes this new class struggle different from those which preceded it. A large section of those who are going to be involved are not in the unions where they can be bought off, pressured, or removed from the scene by the cooperation of the bureaucrats and the companies.

The ruling class is preparing to unload the cost of its militarism upon the workers, but it isn't going to be presented for discussion in that form. It is going to be presented, in the beginning, in the form of temporary wage cuts due to Nixon's recession. Then, as the workers are mentally prepared with ruling class propaganda, the shift to the trade war and the need for the workers to sacrifice will be made. We are going to have a trade war, real or imagined, because it is the best means available for the ruling class to accomplish its end, i.e., unload the cost of its militarism upon the American workers.

America is at the crossroads between the cold war and the trade war. It has taken the American ruling class thirty-one years to do what Hitler's Germany did in five, i.e., run out of time. Hitler chose to go to war. Our ruling class seems to be opting for the trade war instead of

the shooting war. But this ruling class is divided, uncertain, and frightened by what it sees ahead. It is an even increasingly more dangerous animal than it has been in the past. Given the opportunity, there is still the possibility that this dangerous animal may yet strike out in some wild, desperate military adventure. That is why we must continue to build the antiwar movement to bring an end to the Vietnam war. I think the proposals I have suggested will enable us to bring rank-and-file unionists into the antiwar movement. I think what they learn in the antiwar movement should start to prepare them to become the kind of working class fighters that are going to be needed to stop the ruling class assault that is, surely coming, if not already underway.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I am in complete agreement with the majority on its estimation of the United Action Caucus formations. During the last year and a half, I have spent more time discussing the unions with the CP, CL, IS, etc. members than I have my own comrades. My observations, some of which I have already passed on to Comrade Lovell, could only reinforce what the majority is already saying about our radical opponents. I can assure one and all that the views I have expressed in my assessment of the current political, economic and trade-union trends are my own, and that they do not bear any resemblance to any ideas that are emanating from these movements. I have had extensive experience with the steelworkers Chicano movement. While it has much to learn, it is the most promising development that I have seen in the steelworkers union in more than twenty years. What it really needs is a better grasp of our ideas. I think the type of propaganda campaign I am projecting in the unions will accelerate this process.

I hope this document will be given consideration at the convention. It is late in preparation simply because the views I am expressing were only recently formulated. I arrived at my basic position about the middle of June. I believe the very fact, that much of my documentation of facts comes from news which has been printed since that time, is some indication that my position reflects the realities of the transition that is taking place. It lacks the benefits that comradely discussion would provide, but basically I think it will stand the test of further developments.

To those comrades who support the views of the PC Draft or Proletarian Orientation, I would say that if the SWP is having its difficulties trying to find the right answers to the problems we face the state of affairs in other sections of the radical movement is much worse. My continued membership in the party is not contingent upon the acceptance of my proposals. The problem in the party is not petty-bourgeois thinking or bureaucracy. It is simply the problem of trying to understand what is going on outside the party, and of trying to relate to it.