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CONTENTS

Page

ON THE NEW MASS VANGUARD AS AN ADEQUATE INSTRUMENT: THEORETICAL ROOTS OF AN ERRONEOUS CONCEPT , by Tim Craine, Detroit Branch	3
WHY THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY SHOULD ADVOCATE THE FORMATION OF A MASS POLITICAL PARTY OF PUERTO RICANS IN THE UNITED STATES , by Richard Garza, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local	7
LETTER TO SWP NATIONAL OFFICE , by Vinnie Longo, Jo Della-Giustina, Kim Allen, Mike Priddy, Lori Adolewski, and Salm Kolis, San Diego Branch	10
THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND THE STRATEGY OF PARTY BUILDING , by Vinnie Longo, Jo Della-Giustina, Kim Allen, Mike Priddy, Lori Adolewski, and Salm Kolis, San Diego Branch	10
ON THE QUESTION OF THE "SECTORAL" METHOD: A Reply to the Internationalist Tendency , by Bob Frantz, Seattle Branch	13
APPENDIX: The Healyites and the "Sectoral" Method	15
IN DEFENSE OF THE DOCUMENT "BUILDING REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES IN CAPITALIST EUROPE," by Guy Miller (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Branch	15
ON THE OAKLAND-BERKELEY BRANCH'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE SEALE-BROWN ELECTION CAMPAIGN , by Rick Congress, Oakland-Berkeley Branch	25
ON IMPLEMENTING OUR TASKS IN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT , by Victoria Jones, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local	28

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ON THE NEW MASS VANGUARD AS AN ADEQUATE INSTRUMENT:
THEORETICAL ROOTS OF AN ERRONEOUS CONCEPT

by Tim Craine, Detroit Branch

One of the key ideas to emerge from the European document of the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency ("The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," *International Information Bulletin* No. 5, Nov., 1972) is that the task of the revolutionary party is to win hegemony over a new mass vanguard and transform it into an "adequate instrument" to lead the masses. The implications of this concept and the effect it has had on the work of some sections during the past period has been discussed elsewhere. (See Waters, "A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution," *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 3, pp. 5-31, especially pp. 6-12; also contributions in *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 31, Nos. 5 and 11, by Comrades Saunders and Einhorn.)

The purpose of this article is to begin to explore the theoretical origins of this concept. First let us review what the European document means when it speaks of "the new mass vanguard."

The "new mass vanguard" is characterized in Sections 5 and 6 of "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" (*op. cit.*, pp. 13-14). It first arose among radicalizing youth attracted to revolutionary politics on the basis of identification with the colonial revolution. Since May 1968, a growing layer of workers has joined the youth radicalization and is "progressively bringing about a change in its composition," although this process has only started on a "modest scale" in some European countries. (*Ibid.*, Sec. 5, p. 13.)

The new mass vanguard has grown up outside of the control and influence of Stalinist and Social-Democratic organizations. Yet because of its predominantly student origins it "harbors within it numerous elements with a petty-bourgeois consciousness and ideology" thus leaving many participants in the vanguard "prisoners of spontaneism, sectarianism, ultraleft infantilism, apolitical work-erism, or primitive syndicalism," unless and until "the revolutionary Marxist organization acquires a decisive political weight within the vanguard." (*Ibid.*, Sec. 5, p. 13.)

Thus, according to the document, the "central task for revolutionary Marxists . . . is to win hegemony within the new mass vanguard." (*Ibid.*, Sec. 6, p. 13.) The analysis upon which this key conclusion is reached is spelled out as follows:

"a) Unless the revolutionary left wins such hegemony, there is danger that the strength of the mass vanguard will be dissipated.

"b) Unless this mass vanguard is *crystallized out into a serious and powerful Marxist organization*, its potential for influencing broader masses is in danger of being neutralized and lost [emphasis added].

"c) Unless this potential of the vanguard to influence greater masses makes itself felt with increasing forcefulness, the upsurge in the workers struggles will arrive at a dead-end, which in the long run will facilitate a decisive counter-offensive by the bourgeoisie." (*Ibid.*, Sec. 6, p. 14.)

"Achieving this goal [hegemony within the new mass vanguard] requires a *constant political struggle* [emphasis in the original] within this vanguard to transform it, making it an *adequate instrument* [emphasis added] for regenerating the organized workers movement." (*Ibid.*, Sec. 6, p. 14.)

To summarize, it is the task of the revolutionary party to win hegemony over the new mass vanguard so that it, in turn, becomes the "adequate instrument" for leading the masses in struggle.

Waters, in her critique of this document (*op. cit.*, *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 3) points out that the formulation "winning hegemony in the new mass vanguard to transform it into an adequate instrument" is vague. If this means that "we must recruit the most conscious elements and build sections of the Fourth International, there is no dispute." (*Ibid.*, p. 14.) But, on the other hand, when the document speaks of the new mass vanguard "crystallizing out into a serious Marxist organization," it is not immediately clear whether this means a section of the Fourth International or merely an "adequate instrument." (*Ibid.*, p. 15.)

She questions whether the comrades of the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency are now reexamining our traditional position that "only a mass revolutionary Marxist party, *like the Bolshevik Party* [emphasis in original] is adequate to the task of leading the masses." (*Ibid.*, p. 15.) And she correctly points out that "we do not proceed according to a two stage theory—today we win the vanguard; tomorrow the working class." (*Ibid.*, p. 7.) I would contend that in spite of ambiguities, it is precisely the schema of such a two-stage approach with the new mass vanguard serving as an independent, intermediate agent between the revolutionary party and the entire working class that is presented in "Building Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," especially in points a), b) and c) quoted above. (*Op. cit.*, p. 14.)

The New Mass Vanguard and Mandel's "Leninist Theory of Organization"

Although this is the first time, to my knowledge, that this new mass vanguard concept has appeared in a perspectives document in the International, it is not a new concept. Its theoretical roots may be traced back at least as far as *The Leninist Theory of Organization: Its Relevance for Today* by Ernest Mandel. This article appeared in English translation in 1970. (See Dec. 1970, *ISR* or pamphlet published by the IMG, April 1971; page references are to the IMG pamphlet.)

Whereas Mandel's article is at its strongest when explaining the sociology of class consciousness, in the sections which attempt to delineate the political role of the revolutionary vanguard party in the proletarian revolution, there is considerable confusion and vagueness. For instance phrases such as "merging of consciousness" (*op. cit.*, p. 5), "fusing" of program (*ibid.*, p. 10), and "organic union" (*ibid.*, p. 7) tend to obscure rather than

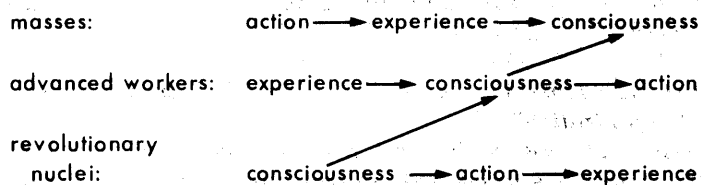
clarify, at least in the context in which they appear. The confusion is compounded by the use as interchangeable of the terms "revolutionary nuclei," "revolutionary party," "revolutionary vanguard organization," and "organized revolutionary cadre," in much the same way that, as Waters points out, the European document confuses the terms "revolutionary left," "revolutionary Marxist left," and "revolutionary party." (Waters, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.)

In spite of this confusing terminology, which leaves certain statements in the article open to more than one interpretation, the thrust of Mandel's presentation is clear: he conceives of the revolutionary party making the revolution through an intermediate layer, the "advanced workers," who, in turn, lead the masses in struggle. Throughout his analysis there is absent any direct relationship between the party and the masses.

The parallel between this schema and the European document's "two-stage" approach toward winning hegemony within the new mass vanguard is striking—so striking that it is reasonable to conclude that the latter flows from the former.

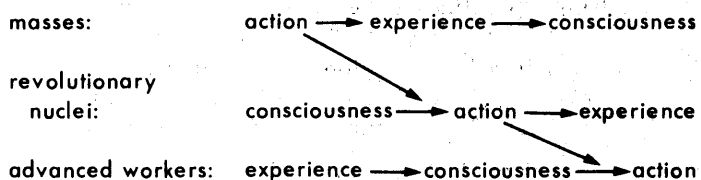
Mandel's Three Layers

Mandel starts by describing three distinct layers of the working class: (1) the masses, (2) the advanced workers, and (3) the revolutionary nuclei (Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 4). This differentiation arises fundamentally from the uneven development of the working class as a whole and the fact that Marxism is a science which can be completely assimilated only on an individual basis. Consciousness arises for each layer in a different manner. For the masses "it is a general law of history that only through action" are they able to "elevate their consciousness" (*ibid.*, p. 4). For the second category, the "advanced workers" or "workers vanguard," empirical and pragmatic consciousness arises out of the practical experience of struggle (*ibid.*, p. 5). "The revolutionary vanguard organization can consolidate and enrich" its higher level of consciousness ("theoretical understanding") by verifying its theory in practice (*ibid.*, p. 5). Mandel summarizes the entire process with the following diagram: (*ibid.*, p. 5)



The arrows flowing from the consciousness of the revolutionary nuclei to that of the advanced workers to that of the masses are never explained in this section. Clearly implied, however, are two separate processes: it is the revolutionary nuclei who influence the advanced workers; it is the advanced workers who influence the masses.

Mandel then proceeds to rearrange his diagram "so that certain conclusions can be drawn from it":



Again he never explains this diagram except to say that "the struggle experience of the advanced workers makes them more cautious before they undertake action on a broad scale" (*ibid.*, p. 5). What he does not say, but is implicit in his diagram, is that the role of the revolutionary party is to lead the advanced workers, not the masses, in action. (Of course this particular diagram gives us no clue as to who is to lead the masses at all, unless their action inevitably has a spontaneous character.)

Then in the very next paragraph he summarizes: "the building of the revolutionary party is the merging of the consciousness of the revolutionary nuclei with that of the advanced workers." A requirement for a mass struggle to ripen into a revolutionary situation is "the existence of sufficiently advanced workers within the masses or the mass movement who, on the basis of the stage of consciousness they have reached, are capable of sweeping broader masses into action around objectives that challenge the continued existence of bourgeois society and the capitalist mode of production" (*ibid.*, p. 5). Aside from the ambiguity inherent in the phrase, "merging consciousness," the two-stage approach is clearly spelled out.

Thus the second category, "advanced workers," has, in Mandel's schema, a specific role to play in the revolutionary process as the only link between the revolutionary party and the masses of workers. At a later point I shall take up the fundamental error in this concept: that is, Mandel's view of this category as a stable, homogeneous layer capable of playing an independent role.

Merging or Recruitment?

In the meantime we should deal with an objection that might be raised by someone defending the "Leninist orthodoxy" of Mandel's article. It might be charged that we have been so hasty in arriving at our conclusion that we overlooked Mandel's reference to "the building of the revolutionary party" in the quotation cited above. When Mandel speaks of "the merging of the consciousness of the revolutionary nuclei with that of the advanced workers," certainly he must refer to the recruitment of advanced workers to the party. Thus the role of category (2) is to provide the party with recruitment so that it will grow to the point where it is able to intervene effectively in mass struggles.

The problem with this interpretation is that nowhere does Mandel specifically discuss recruiting advanced workers to the party. At another point Mandel speaks of the "schooling and testing of a proletarian vanguard in the working out and agitational application of the revolutionary program in struggle" and states that "the objective of Lenin's strategic plan is to create such a vanguard through an *organic union* of individual *revolutionary nuclei with the vanguard of the proletariat*" (*ibid.*, p. 7, emphasis added). Does this organic union mean recruitment of advanced workers to the revolutionary party? Perhaps, but probably not. For if it did, we would assume from the above statement that the entire "vanguard of the proletariat" (evidently another term for category (2)) would become organically united with the revolutionary nuclei into a party of what we might call "organized revolutionary cadre." But at a later point in the article, Mandel restates his three categories as "the mass of workers, advanced workers and organized revolutionary cadre" (*ibid.*,

p. 16). Whether the switch from "revolutionary nuclei" to "organized revolutionary cadre" is merely a literary device to add variety or whether it is supposed to indicate subtly the dialectical transformation of quantity into quality through massive recruitment, in either case the second category "advanced workers" remains—it has neither been "fused" nor "merged" into the revolutionary party. Rather the "schooling and testing of a proletarian vanguard" is more likely a reference to the transformation of category (2) into an "adequate instrument," distinct from the party itself.

"Needs of the Advanced Workers"

Another passage further clarifies Mandel's conception of the way in which the revolutionary party relates to the advanced workers. The experience of the advanced workers, he says, leads them to the threshold of understanding the inadequacy of reformism. "The activity of the revolutionary vanguard can make it possible for the class consciousness of the advanced workers to cross over the threshold" (*ibid.*, p. 17). Presumably it is sufficient for the revolutionary vanguard (i.e., the party, category (3)) to bring advanced workers across the threshold of consciousness *without recruiting them to the party*. And how is this to be done? The party must ensure that "the content of its theoretical, propagandistic, and literary activity corresponds to the *needs of the advanced workers*" (*ibid.*, p. 17, emphasis added).

Exactly what are the "needs" of the advanced workers? Objectively, they are the same as the needs of the working class as a whole, to which the party should indeed tailor its propagandistic and agitational activity. (Its theoretical activity is, however, another matter!) But Mandel doesn't say "needs of the workers"; he says "needs of the advanced workers." So he must mean the *subjective* needs of the workers in category (2), or as the European document puts it, "the concerns of the vanguard." ("Building Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," *op. cit.*, Sec. 17, p. 24.)

Waters takes up the formulation, "concerns of the vanguard," in her critique of the European document (*op. cit.*, pp. 7-8), and her arguments apply with equal force to Mandel's orientation toward the "needs of the advanced workers." Precisely because they are only at the threshold of revolutionary consciousness and have not assimilated the theoretical and historical legacy of the revolutionary party, this layer of "advanced" workers remains politically backward. This backwardness Waters finds expressed in the new mass vanguard's desire for ultraleft actions around maximalist demands (*ibid.*, p. 8). Mandel himself points out (in a passage already cited) that the layer of advanced workers can also be extremely careful and cautious, leading to "the greatest 'temptation' of economism" (*op. cit.*, p. 5). In either case, to orient toward the subjective needs of this layer is to adapt to its backwardness and lead the party away from mobilizing the masses using the method of the Transitional Program. This is the logical outcome of Mandel's schema whereby the revolutionary party attempts to lead an intermediate layer rather than the mass movement.

The Transitional Program

If the revolutionary party is to orient its activity toward

meeting the "needs of the advanced workers," what, we may ask, is to become of the Transitional Program. True, Mandel does speak of "the central importance of transitional demands," but in so doing he refers to the "strategic position of *advanced workers already trained* in propagating transitional demands." (*ibid.*, p. 5, emphasis added). These advanced workers are to be trained by the party to "consciously" intervene and "inject transitional demands into workers struggles" (*ibid.*, p. 18), without themselves being recruited to the party.

What appears to be a formally correct approach with regard to the role transitional demands play in advancing the consciousness of the masses is, in practice, incorrect. For the party is to win hegemony over the workers vanguard by orienting toward its needs or concerns, a process which leads away from work with the masses. The party specifically does not recruit this vanguard to its full program. In this process the party "spreads" transitional demands among the advanced workers. (*ibid.*, p. 18). Are these advanced workers now in a "strategic position" to *lead* the masses of workers in struggle around transitional demands? Hardly, for the process described above does not give "training" to these advanced workers adequate to the task.

The application of the transitional approach—the tactical decisions as to which parts of the Transitional Program to raise under certain circumstances—provides a continual test for even the best organized and most experienced of revolutionary parties. Yet in Mandel's schema the tactical application of the Transitional Program falls to unrecruited, unorganized "advanced" workers, who have, if anything, been *miseducated* by the party through the example it sets in adapting to the concerns of the vanguard. Thus the logic of relying on an intermediate layer leads to a rejection of the Transitional Program.

The Advanced Workers: An Unstable Layer

As we have seen, the notion that the central task of the Fourth International is to win hegemony in the "new mass vanguard" finds its theoretical rationale in Mandel's *Leninist Theory of Organization*. This poses the question: what is theoretically wrong with Mandel's schema?

The key weakness of Mandel's article lies in his treatment of category (2): "the advanced workers" or "workers vanguard." Mandel is entirely correct to observe the existence of a layer of workers who through their experience in the day-to-day struggle become radicalized in advance of the masses. His characterization of this layer as one capable of playing an independent role in the revolutionary process is, however, incorrect.

Mandel seems to imply that this is a relatively homogeneous, stable layer, when in fact by its very nature it is highly unstable and heterogeneous. With the ebb and flow of the class struggle, individual workers become radicalized and join this layer depending upon their own experiences. In a period of mass upsurge or a prerevolutionary situation, the ranks of the "advanced workers" may swell with healthy, newly radicalized youth, who take their place alongside the more experienced and often more cynical members of the vanguard. Members of this layer vary considerably as to the degree to which they are influenced by the reformist Social-Democratic and Stalinist bureaucracies or are subject to ultraleft and

economist tendencies. Many members of this layer can be recruited to the revolutionary party, but as Waters points out, "to the extent that we are unable to lead them and educate them, sectors can go off in a wrong direction, becoming at best unreliable allies and at worst obstacles to the hegemony of the Leninist forces" (*op. cit.*, p. 7).

Another characteristic of this layer is that it is unorganized. Individual members of the workers vanguard belong to a multiplicity of mass organizations and a variety of political tendencies. But when considered as a whole, this layer lacks the cohesion that would enable it to act in an independent role. The concepts of transforming this layer into an "adequate instrument" to lead the masses and of training this layer to organize struggles around transitional demands presuppose that this layer is capable of acting in a coordinated manner, but there is no organizational form through which this can happen.

Mandel overestimates the role that this intermediate layer can play and consequently underestimates the importance of recruiting from this layer to the revolutionary party. Since the advanced workers as a group are inherently heterogeneous and unorganized, sections of this layer can be organized effectively to lead the masses only by joining the party. Mandel, on the other hand, seems to feel that the advanced workers of category (2), if influenced to a sufficient degree by revolutionary nuclei, can substitute for the party in its traditionally Leninist role of leading the masses.

This is not to say that the revolutionary party should ignore the advanced workers of category (2); on the contrary it is precisely this layer that provides the best recruiting ground for the party. Particularly when a "new mass vanguard" such as the one described in the European document emerges, the Fourth International must make every effort to win the broadest possible sections of this vanguard to its banners. But this requires a consistent orientation not to the concerns of the vanguard but toward the masses and the application of the Transitional Program to their struggles, which the revolutionary party alone is capable of leading.

Mandel versus Lenin

I have demonstrated why I believe Mandel's schema of masses, advanced workers, revolutionary nuclei, is incorrect. Furthermore this approach runs counter to the traditions of Leninism. Mandel, however, claims that his analysis is based upon Lenin's thinking on the organizational question at its maturity, following the betrayals of the Second International in 1914.

Mandel states, "Now [after 1914] instead of saying that the purpose of the party is to develop the political class consciousness of the working class, the formula becomes much more precise: The function of the revolutionary vanguard consists in developing *revolutionary consciousness* in the vanguard of the working class. The building of the revolutionary class party is the process whereby the program of the socialist revolution is fused with the experience the majority of the advanced workers have acquired in struggle" (*op. cit.*, p.10, emphasis in original).

The last sentence is footnoted with a reference to the entire work, *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, written in 1920. Nowhere in *Left-Wing Communism*, however, do we find the function of the revolutionary vanguard is to develop revolutionary consciousness in the vanguard of the working class as opposed to revolutionary consciousness in the class as a whole.

In fact, Lenin says precisely the opposite. *Left-Wing Communism* was written at a time when the parties of the Third International were in the process of formation and had recruited large layers of radicalized but inexperienced "advanced workers" in the wake of the October revolution. A major problem was the strong tendency within these parties toward a vanguardism which ignored the concrete problem of leading the masses to revolutionary consciousness. In his polemic against the "lefts" Lenin writes, "The immediate objective of the class conscious vanguard of the international working-class movement, i.e., the Communist parties, groups and trends, is to be able to *lead* the broad masses . . . to their new position or rather to be able to lead *not only* their own party but also these masses in their advance." (*Left Wing Communism*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, p. 76, emphasis in the original.) Lenin clearly sees the party itself leading the masses directly, not through some intermediate layer, and Mandel's attempts to base his approach on Lenin are without justification.

Behind the theoretical conceptions of Mandel's *Leninist Theory of Organization*, we find the same impulse to take shortcuts to the task of building the revolutionary party that characterizes the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency on both the European and Latin American questions and against which Lenin polemicized in *Left-Wing Communism*. The search for a breakthrough strategy, the substitution of an "adequate instrument" for the party, and the fatalistic idea that time is running out with the decisive confrontation looming in four or five years—all these lead to an abandonment of the Leninist strategy of party building.

July 6, 1973

WHY THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY SHOULD ADVOCATE THE FORMATION OF A MASS POLITICAL PARTY OF PUERTO RICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

by Richard Garza, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

It is becoming clearer that the ruling class of the United States is not going to give concessions to the oppressed but on the contrary is pursuing a policy of taking away concessions made in the past. The reasons for this policy and its growing intensity are pointed out in the Draft Political Resolution. The resolution also points out that it is the government which is being used against the real wages, rights, and working conditions of the American working class.

For years we have advanced the notion that the working class would have to break out of the straitjacket of the capitalist parties in order to defend itself against the attacks of the ruling class. We broadened the idea of a working-class party of the masses (a labor party based on the unions) to support and advocate the formation of a party of the Black people; and most recently have supported the formation of La Raza Unida Party.

Each one of these steps was taken by considering very concretely whether advocacy and support for independent political formations was justified and correct. We avoided extending the slogan of independent political action on the basis of precedent. By this means we have developed a very impressive body of thinking and writing which should make it easier to see why the slogan of a mass independent party of Puerto Ricans is also correct and necessary.

There can be no question that Puerto Ricans in the United States are an oppressed minority. In most parts of this country their standard of living is lower, their dropout rate from school higher, and their unemployment rate higher than that of the majority of the population. This has been the case during the period when U. S. imperialism was the dominant force in the imperialist world and experiencing one of its longest periods of prosperity. The decline of U. S. imperialism has led to withdrawing many of the paltry concessions granted to Puerto Ricans.

At the same time there has been a growing militancy among Puerto Ricans in the U. S., particularly in New York, which reached its highpoint in the take-over of schools during the 1968 teachers strike. The issue at that time was over community control of the schools. The bureaucracy of the United Federation of Teachers opposed community control and, with the help of the government, emerged triumphant in that struggle. However, it was unable to route the pro-community control forces. One example of the ongoing struggle, which the resolution points out, is the fight in School District No. 1 on New York's Lower East Side. Although the UFT forces won a majority in the recent elections for the school board in District No. 1, the community slate people remain organized and an examination of the elections throughout the city reveals that UFT-supported slates suffered defeats in predominantly Puerto Rican areas.

The struggle over control of community school boards

is one reflection of rising Puerto Rican militancy. Another example is the formation of Puerto Rican student groups on many northeastern campuses and on campuses further west where there are any significant number of Puerto Rican students. These groups have engaged in fights for Puerto Rican studies departments and for concessions from the university officials, especially economic subsidies for third world and Puerto Rican students. Other struggles have taken place over the conditions of Puerto Rican migrant workers, and for the defense of victims of political persecution. As yet none of these struggles has mobilized the mass of Puerto Ricans in the United States or in any one city. What they do indicate is a growing willingness to struggle, especially among young Puerto Ricans.

A weakness in these struggles has been their isolated character. The Puerto Rican community is dispersed throughout the U. S. (an appendix will give the figures), with about half of the Puerto Rican people in the U. S. concentrated in New York City. There is no mass organization of Puerto Ricans like the NAACP either in New York City or throughout the country. The lack of a mass national organization has not only resulted in isolated struggles but has also inhibited the growth of consciousness and the sharing of experiences. There have been no national conferences like the ones organized by the Crusade for Justice in Denver in 1969 and 1970 or subsequent La Raza Unida conferences; no conference as broadly representative of the community like the Black Political Convention held in Gary, Indiana, has been held by Puerto Ricans.

What has appeared in the Puerto Rican movement, especially after the Maoist turn of the Young Lords, are small radical groups. The Puerto Rican Socialist Party, with roots in Puerto Rico, is the largest of these groups and is growing in size and influence. However, this group has no substantial support in the community. This was reflected in the massive Puerto Rican Day parade in which the radical contingent was substantially smaller than it was in 1972. The radicals had no slogans capable of appealing to or winning any appreciable support from the hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans present.

The parade was used by the Democratic Party supporters of Herman Badillo to boost his candidacy in the party primary for mayor of the city. The fact that a not insignificant sector of the Democratic Party in New York City and bourgeois organs like the *New York Times* endorsed Badillo underlines the fact that they recognize the growing political weight of the Puerto Rican community and want it channelled into the Democratic Party.

The most conscious forces behind Badillo recognize that the demands of the Puerto Ricans are bound to grow. They also recognize that there is a great alienation of Puerto Ricans, as well as of Blacks and youth, from

the electoral process. This alienation poses a great danger to the capitalist system in the U. S., which rests in great part on the electoralist illusions of the masses. Although abstention from elections manifests one side of alienation from capitalist politics, at this stage it poses no solutions or avenues of struggle for the masses of the oppressed. As the 1967 resolution of the party pointed out, "Even the possession of some measure of political power means that the group has a voice in deciding the terms of its existence."

The SWP as yet doesn't represent a viable political alternative to the bourgeois parties in the eyes of the masses. Although we are running our own campaign in NYC, we have no illusions that the campaign will attract the masses of Puerto Ricans. We understand the propagandistic nature of the campaign and the fact that it must be used to politically educate those we reach and attract people to us who agree with the program we put forth. Among the demands that I think we should put forth is for the organization of a mass political party of Puerto Ricans. We call for mass independent Black and Puerto Rican political action—"For an independent Black political party"—but put forward no such demand for Puerto Ricans. I think it appears ridiculous for us to call for one and not to call for the other.

Although Puerto Ricans do not represent a majority in New York City or in any other major city in the U. S., they do represent a substantial minority and are capable of winning seats on city councils, state assemblies, and even in Congress. The problems they face in education, housing, employment, welfare, etc., are problems that are directly connected to government action. The most obvious example is education. A victory in District No. 1 would not have enabled the community control forces to radically alter the school system. The state legislature has written the community control law to sabotage local control, initiative, and to keep financial control firmly in centralized hands. Only political action along with mass community support and action can begin to shake up the educational bureaucracy. This means a direct confrontation with the capitalist state and its apparatus. Without a political arm, the Puerto Rican community is hamstrung and crippled in its fight.

The argument that because Puerto Ricans are a minority (about 2,000,000, or less than 1 percent of the population in the U. S.) does not mean that political action is meaningless or futile. In Denver, the Chicano community is a minority, and it is a minority in the state of Colorado; nevertheless, one of the strongest units of La Raza Unida Party has grown up there. Its leaders have understood that political action can serve as an organizing tool for the Chicano community and a unifying power.

Puerto Ricans are predominantly proletarian in composition, which would give the formation of a Puerto Rican political party an additional dynamic. Where Puerto Ricans are the majority, a Puerto Rican political party could champion the entire Hispano community. For example, in New York City a Puerto Rican political party candidate would defend the rights of noncitizen hispanos and would appeal to Dominicans, Colombians, Argentines, etc., who number in the hundreds of thousands according to the last census. In some areas, like Chi-

cago, Puerto Ricans would form part of a larger Hispano formation. In this respect I think Tony De Leon's report on the Raza Unida campaign in that city is very instructive.

All the arguments that we have put forward for the progressive nature of a La Raza Unida Party and a Black political party hold true for Puerto Ricans. This does not mean that Puerto Ricans and Chicanos are the same. Support for LRUP formations did not imply that Chicanos and Blacks were the same. It did mean that organizational tools used by one group could be used by another. A Puerto Rican political party will not have the power that a Black political party would have or that an LRUP party would have. Because its base would be smaller, it would be much more subject to outside pressure. However, the fact that in many cases Puerto Ricans live in areas contiguous to Blacks and in many cases work in the same industries would give the party influence beyond the national group upon which it rests.

I don't see what objections can be raised against the use of the slogan for a Puerto Rican political party. In 1968 we raised it in our Spanish-language brochure. The brochure was distributed at the *Movimiento Pro Independencia* asamblea (convention) and drew favorable response. However, it has not been worked out fully and presented to the party so that comrades could make use of this proposal on a much more consistent basis. If we understand that the slogan is a propaganda slogan to be used to raise the political consciousness of Puerto Ricans, it would force more serious discussion within the Puerto Rican political movement and certainly gain a more serious hearing for our party among non-affiliated Puerto Rican radicals. A mass party of Puerto Ricans is not an alternative to the building of a multinational revolutionary party. On the electoral arena the only party that has any Puerto Rican support of significant weight is the Democratic Party. It therefore seems to me that one of our tasks is to begin to establish the basis for a breakaway from that party. Since we don't present a viable alternative and neither do any of the Puerto Rican radical organizations, then the only realistic proposal would be for a party of the Puerto Rican masses themselves.

The argument that a Puerto Rican party could be taken over by procapitalist elements is very weak in my opinion. The danger of bourgeois deviations exist in LRUP, would exist in a Black political party and in a labor party. We conceive of entering those parties with a revolutionary program. We intend to compete with the reformists and right-wing elements that would also probably form part of these organizations. We also envisage independent political parties of the oppressed coming about through struggles which will test their present leaders and probably throw up new leaders. The fact that these organizations will not have a revolutionary program cannot act as a bar to our participation. Once established these parties will become arenas in which we will enter with our program and compete for leadership on the basis of our program.

The objection that the demand for independent political action does not arise from the movement leaves out of consideration whether the demand is good for the movement. If it is good and progressive and will lead to raising

the level of understanding of the Puerto Ricans, then as the revolutionary organization it is our obligation to raise it and to present it as best we can.

The fact that the American trade-union movement has not established its own party has forced more oppressed sections of the working class (composed of sections made up of oppressed minorities) to seek their own political solutions. They confront the capitalist state in their struggles and must forge adequate instruments with which to fight. Although it is hard to conceive of Puerto Ricans leading an assault on the state nationally, Puerto Rican political action independent of the capitalist parties would prove salutary and act as an impetus to independent political action on better organized and more powerful sections of the working class and of the oppressed na-

tional minorities. History has not yet determined which section of the oppressed will lead the others.

Puerto Rican activists need a program which will organize the Puerto Rican masses. The Socialist Workers Party can provide essential parts of that program and by advancing it win to its ranks the most conscious and revolutionary elements within the Puerto Rican community. I think that the demand for a Puerto Rican political party is one the SWP should raise wherever applicable. I think the party must grapple with this slogan and come to a conclusion on it soon. The 1973 convention should instruct the incoming National Committee to discuss the question of raising the slogan of a mass Puerto Rican party and to discuss our analysis of the role of Puerto Ricans in the coming American revolution.

July 10, 1973

APPENDIX

PUERTO RICAN POPULATION IN THE U. S.

Taken from PSP appendix Table IV

<i>New York State</i>		Waterbury	6,000
New York City	1,125,000	Bridgeport	30,000
Long Island	30,000	Norwalk	7,000
Rochester	10,000	Stamford	4,000
Yonkers	8,500	Danbury	2,500
Buffalo	8,500	Willimantic	2,500
Newburgh, Middletown, Rockland		New London	2,500
rest of state	17,500	New Haven	14,000
Total New York State	1,200,000	rest-of-state	500
		Total Connecticut	110,000
<i>New Jersey</i>		<i>Massachusetts and Rhode Island</i>	
Hoboken	25,000	Boston	43,000
Camden	15,000	Springfield	11,000
Jersey City	40,000	Lawrence	8,000
Newark	40,000	Holyoke	6,000
Paterson	25,000	Lowell	6,000
Perth Amboy	16,000	Worcester	5,000
Trenton	10,000	Cambridge	4,500
New Brunswick	5,000	New Bedford	4,000
Vineland	10,000	Waltham	3,000
Dover Shore, Asbury Park, rest-of-state	45,000	Lynn	3,000
Total New Jersey	240,000	Chelsea	2,500
		Wareham	2,000
<i>Pennsylvania</i>		Farmingdham	1,500
Philadelphia	100,000	Lauton	1,500
Bethlehem, Reading, rest-of-state	20,000	Woburn	1,200
Total Pennsylvania	120,000	Westfield	1,000
		Brockton	1,000
<i>Mid-West</i>		rest-of-state	800
Chicago	125,000	Providence (Rhode Island)	5,000
Gary (Indiana)	7,500	Total Massachusetts and Rhode Island	110,000
Milwaukee (Wisconsin)	7,500		
Cleveland	15,000	<i>Rest- f- U. S.</i>	
Lorain (Ohio)	5,500	California	30,000
rest-of-midwest	10,000	Florida	20,000
		Hawaii	15,000
<i>Connecticut</i>		South and Southwest	15,000
Hartford	25,000	Total Rest-of-U. S.	80,000
New Britain	7,000	Total Puerto Rican Population in U. S.	2,030,000
Meriden	6,000		

LETTER TO SWP NATIONAL OFFICE

July 8, 1973

Socialist Workers Party
National Office

Enclosed is a resolution, "The Gay Liberation Movement and the Strategy of Party Building." This resolution reaffirms the political resolution "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization" and report adopted by the SWP at its 1971 convention which analyzed the current radicalization and projected constructing our party through intervening in the component movements with our program, propaganda, and cadre.

We are proposing that the gay movement no longer be excepted from this perspective, that our 1971 line be extended to our work in the gay liberation movement.

We are submitting this resolution because we feel the

memorandum adopted by the National Committee is vague and is inadequate to lead or inspire the SWP's work in the gay liberation movement. We would like a response from the Political Committee as to whether our resolution represents a counter line to the National Committee memorandum or not.

Please print this letter along with the resolution.

Vinnie Longo
Jo Della-Giustina
Kim Allen
Mike Priddy
Lori Adolewski
Salm Kolis

San Diego

THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT
AND
THE STRATEGY OF PARTY BUILDING

by Vinnie Longo, Jo Della-Giustina, Kim Allen, Mike
Priddy, Lori Adolewski, and Salm Kolis, San Diego
Branch

The Purpose of this Resolution

From the first stirrings of the Montgomery bus boycott to the recent meat boycott, the SWP has attempted to come to grips with the present radicalization. In 1969 and again in 1971 we codified our analysis of this radicalization. We alone on the left recognized the new movements as part of the class struggle. We alone welcomed these anticapitalist movements as they developed. We alone intervened in them to champion their demands as our own and fight for program within them. We alone projected this intervention as central to our strategy of party building, central to our task of recruiting and training a Leninist vanguard party. A few quotes from our 1971 political resolution, "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization," will point this out.

"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 the 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.

"In view of the decisiveness of the construction of the revolutionary party, our most important objective in involving ourselves deeply in those mass movements and absorbing their lessons is to recruit the best militants and help them to assimilate the program and traditions of Trotskyism, and gain the political experience necessary to become integrated in the expanding Trotskyist cadre." ("Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization," p. 16.)

"4. There's 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 into 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 oppression of capitalism, against the inequities and inequalities of capitalism, that we embrace the progressive demands of these 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 and 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." (Jack Barnes' report to the National Committee Plenum on the Draft Political Resolution. Approved at the 1971 SWP convention. Emphasis in the original.)

The SWP's analysis of and intervention into the gay liberation movement has been as an exception to our correct general line in the other movements. Interventions into these movements were carried out as part of our strategy of party building.

The purpose of our present resolution is two-fold.

1. To integrate our analysis of the gay liberation movement into our analysis of the radicalization as a whole.

2. To integrate our intervention into the gay liberation movement into our overall strategy of building our party, that is through intervening in the component movements of the present radicalization.

Characteristics of the Gay Movement

Many discussion bulletins have been written on the character of the gay community, gay oppression, and the gay liberation movement. This discussion has brought

out many points which will only be summarized here.

The Gay Community

1. It is large. Estimates range from one-tenth to one-quarter of the population. In any case it is larger than the college population or the Chicano community.

2. It is concentrated in the major cities. In some cities it is concentrated in gay ghettos.

3. It represents a cross section of society as a whole: women, men, Chicanos, Blacks, Asians, workers, whites, students, etc.

4. It has been oppressed throughout the history of class society and has had to deal with and struggle against this oppression.

The Development of the Gay Liberation Movement

6. It has developed as part of this current radicalization; it was inspired by and has given inspiration to the other movements—particularly the women's liberation movement, which questions the same institutions of capitalist oppression.

7. Like the other movements, it is composed predominantly of young people, most of its activists coming from the high schools and college campuses.

8. It developed apart from and in opposition to the traditional working-class organizations: the trade unions and the parties of the Second and Third Internationals.

9. The gay liberation movement has produced its own independent organizations to meet its needs.

10. Like the antiwar movement it is composed of a cross section of society. It has drawn representatives of this cross section into its mass demonstrations and conferences and has had to address itself to the struggles of all these sectors.

11. Like the women's liberation movement it raises issues that strike directly at the family, traditional roles, the church, bourgeois morality, and capitalist law.

12. It has consistently participated in conferences and demonstrations of the antiwar and women's liberation movements, often providing the most sizable contingents, often fighting for the SWP's perspective of mass single-issue demonstrations, etc.

The Gay Liberation Movement Today

13. In the last year while other movements have ebbed, the gay movement has held impressive national, regional, and local conferences and actions. In April a West Coast Lesbian Conference drew over 1250 women to Los Angeles. New York's Christopher Street demonstration drew 12,000-15,000 this year. Smaller but significant actions ranging from gay-ins to marches were held in at least ten other cities across the country. These events far outdistance the actions of any of the other movements, with the exception of the meat boycott, in the last year, in both their size and national scope.

14. The gay movement continues to put out a large number of periodicals, some with a national circulation. It continues to operate gay centers in major cities. It continues to fight discrimination and anti-gay laws on a local basis across the country.

15. It continues to raise demands of a democratic and civil liberties nature and demands which go beyond the bounds of capitalist society. It continues to raise issues which challenge the family and the teachings of bourgeois morality. It continues to demand to be written into

history, to be treated by society as equal, etc.

The Question of Leadership in the Gay Liberation Movement

16. There is a crisis of leadership in the gay movement. The movement is new, has had little experience, little continuity of leadership, and has no authoritative national organizations.

17. Opponents from reformists to counter-culturalists to ultralefts all have support in the gay movement.

18. The Democratic Party has recognized the discontent of the gay community and has attempted to hustle votes there.

19. The continued existence of the gay movement is a testimony to the harshness of the oppression and the tenacity of the struggle against it, not a credit to the leadership.

20. This continued existence and growth stand out even more when we consider that the SWP has not attempted to project demands for the gay movement, not attempted to develop a transitional program for it, not projected a national action campaign, and not intervened into it in a way commensurate with either the size of the movement or the opportunities to build the party through it.

The Black, Chicano, and women's movements, not to mention the antiwar and abortion law repeal movements, would all have suffered drastically without our intervention.

What We Are Proposing

Our proposal is that the SWP approach the gay liberation movement in the same manner that we approach the other component movements in the present radicalization; in the same way we approach the other oppressed sectors of this society that are asserting their humanity, developing pride in themselves and their movement, and rising to struggle against their oppressors. We are proposing that the gay movement no longer be considered on an exceptional basis. We are proposing that no artificial barriers be erected to block our participation in the actions of the gay movement. We are proposing that our intervention into the gay movement be determined on the same basis as our intervention into any other movement.

We should welcome the gay movement, champion its struggle as our own, incorporate its demands into our program, combat the prejudices fostered by this patriarchal, heterosexual society, and educate all by the example of the revolutionary party of the working class leading the struggle against all forms of oppression, leading the struggles of all the oppressed.

This proposal is clear and it is familiar. It was spelled out by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done*. It was reaffirmed in our Transitional Program. It was adopted by our 1971 convention. It is the line of the SWP and should be applied to the gay movement.

What Does This Mean Concretely?

Should the national office assign someone to doing gay work only? Should each branch have a gay work director? Or a gay work fraction? Should *The Militant*

devote a certain number of column inches each week to coverage of activities in the gay movement? Should the *ISR* run articles probing the history of gay oppression? Should we initiate a national campaign of teach-ins on gay oppression? Or a national campaign for a gay ERA? How much of *Pathfinder's* printing schedule should be devoted to literature on the gay question?

None of these questions could or should be answered by this resolution, although they are valid questions. They should be discussed and decided by the national leadership. We feel that if our approach to the radicalization in general were applied to the gay movement in particular, more work would be done than is done now. But it is up to the national leadership and the leadership of each branch to determine its own allocation of forces according to its own strength, the character of the different movements, the needs of building an international revolutionary party, and the resolutions adopted at our conventions.

We allocate our forces according to our overall strategy of constructing the cadre of an international revolutionary party. For example, although Native Americans are not central to the industrial proletariat, are not concentrated in the major cities, and are a small sector of the population, we recognize the importance their struggle plays in the present radicalization and in building the party. If the party had more Native American comrades, if the Native American movement were moving more toward a national perspective, and if it had a history of yearly mass actions, we would have a more sizeable intervention into it than we do.

We allocate our forces so as best to build the party. This is the meaning of the Transitional Program. This was reaffirmed at the 1971 SWP convention with the rejection of the proposals of the "For A Proletarian Orientation" tendency.

It is not the purpose of this document to hamstring the activities of the party branches or national leadership with tactical prescriptions, but rather to reaffirm our general line that entering the movements and acting as revolutionists within them is the best way to recruit and build the party. This general line should include the gay liberation movement.

The Question of a National Intervention

On a national level the party should be and is aware of all the developments of the present anticapitalist struggles. For example, although we don't have a line of national intervention into any of the existing Black organizations, we are able to respond to such developments as the Gary Conference, the congresses of the Congress of African People, and the current debate on Pan-Africanism. The necessary responses were organized by our national leadership, and flow from our general line. We were able to respond to the developments at Wounded Knee on a national level, covering it in our press, etc. Our intervention into the meat boycott was exceptional. At the consumer conference in Washington, D. C., our nationally organized fraction intervened and succeeded in producing a national call for actions on May 5.

These are all positive examples of the role of our na-

tional leadership mobilizing and inspiring the party to build the component parts of the present radicalization in whatever way they are best built, and through our actions recruiting, educating, and training a cadre, as well as adding to the level of anticapitalist action.

Our national leadership should approach the activities of the gay movement in the same way. Christopher Street, national, local, and regional conferences, Gay Pride demonstrations, local fights against anti-gay laws, all of these represent an opportunity for our party to implement its line, to propose a program for and lead the anticapitalist struggles, to test our cadre, and to recruit. We should take advantage of whatever openings we can in the gay movement the way we have so profitably done in all the other movements. The national leadership should do whatever is required for the party to make the best use of these openings.

Summary

The SWP is in the process of constructing a mass revolutionary party: recruiting activists and leaders, educat-

ing and training them in classes and in action, and selecting a leadership. This is a continuous process that began long before the current radicalization. As this radicalization developed, as McCarthyism subsided, the SWP threw itself into the action. Through our intervention we have recruited hundreds to our party, renewed our ranks and leadership, and taken an important step toward the construction of a mass revolutionary party. These successes have confirmed our approach.

This approach should be applied to the gay liberation movement. That too would result in the growth of our party.

The gay movement is large and growing. It's growth is an inspiration to every other sector of society struggling for a decent existence. It offers our party an opportunity to train our cadre, test our line, further develop our program, sell our press and pamphlets, carry out our election campaigns, and recruit, recruit, recruit.

We should take full advantage of these opportunities in accordance with our projections of constructing a mass revolutionary party through intervening in the component movements of the present radicalization.

July 8, 1973

ON THE QUESTION OF THE "SECTORAL" METHOD A Reply to the Internationalist Tendency

by Bob Frantz, Seattle Branch

How many times have we in the SWP heard the charge that we use a "sectoral" method, that we are parochial because we organize struggles which are not "socialist" in form, that because we do not directly inject the question of socialism vs. capitalism into all our agitation and propaganda within and in behalf of these movements, we are perpetuating bourgeois ideology and are trying to "keep people where they are" instead of raising their consciousness concerning the class nature of our society. The Workers League, Spartacist, Labor Committee and a handful of other sects echo this accusation in varied forms. To the American Healyites it is proof of our capitulation to Pabloite revisionism and embracing of empiricism. To the Labor Committee (before they discovered that political power came through the head of a hammer) it was an example of fascistic mentality, of the SWP not only perpetuating, but actually creating racial, national and sexual animosities. Other sectarians inveigh against the SWP's intervention in objectively anticapitalist mass struggles by calling us a "single-issue movement." We know these criticisms all too well from contact with their proponents in the antiwar, women's and trade-union movements. In light of this, it is unfortunate that we must hear these ludicrous charges raised from within our own party, from the authors of the initial statement of the

Internationalist Tendency. Their all too brief statement of January 19 had a good deal to say about the SWP's method, a paragraph of which declares: "Intermeshed with these theoretical deviations, the SWP has generated a 'sectoral' analysis of social struggle. Replacing the program of the class with a series of 'programs' for each sector, it seeks to mobilize these multi-class constituencies independently of each other and without relation to the class. This confuses the whole outlook of the Transitional Program" (from "Letter to the Political Committee on the Formation of a Political Tendency," SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 4).

One wonders when was the last time that Comrades Massey, Shaffer and Smith gazed beyond the cover page of the Transitional Program. They might be appalled by some of its sections entitled "The Struggle Against Imperialism and War," "Backward Countries and the Program of Transitional Demands," "The Program of Transitional Demands in Fascist Countries," and "The USSR and Problems of the Transitional Epoch." Isn't this also sectoralism? Do Comrades Massey, Shaffer and Smith not recognize that we are dealing not only with nations and groups of nations that have differentials, but also with differentials within the working class itself? Is it wrong to exploit the contradictions amongst our enemies? Is

it wrong to recognize that because capitalism creates, perpetuates and exacerbates economic, racial, national and sexual antagonisms amongst workers, and that we, who seek to unify the working class around a revolutionary socialist program, must orient to those layers who are pursuing a path of struggle objectively (but not yet subjectively) aimed at the undermining of capitalist rule? On this point I am sure Comrades Massey, Shaffer and Smith would agree. But how are we to raise the subjective level? How are we going to make the masses of workers and youth aware of the need for social revolution, of the need to organize for that task, of the need for a Leninist type party? Not by standing on the sidelines and barking about the "impure" nature of these struggles. No, we instead organize mass independent actions which can materially advance the position of the oppressed in the class struggle, and in the course of this, attempt to link up our full program with these mass struggles. But the masses will not be won to socialism through our propaganda alone, but, for the most part, through their experience in the class struggle, which will encompass seeing the role that the various tendencies within the movement play in attempting to lead (or mislead) it. We cannot approach different sectors, which have their own set of grievances and needs, with a single pill to swallow. We cannot, like the idealists of American Healyism, demand that every objectively anticapitalist movement drop all other matters and hoist up the "Labor Party Now" banner. In orienting to these mass movements, be they the Black, Chicano, women's or antiwar, we must relate not only to the necessity of linking up separate struggles (combining), but also to their own peculiarity, their individual importance. The universal lives through the particular and vice-versa. Combining depends not solely on subjective desires of revolutionists, but also upon material factors such as the level of the radicalization process, the relative strength of various tendencies, etc. Socialists will not raise the level of the masses by downplaying the importance of relevant individual (or separate) struggles, such as the fight against the US intervention in Indochina, but by stressing the need to maintain and even accelerate the development of these movements, attempting to reach out for broad support and striving to maintain independence from capitalist political parties. Though it can't be denied that democratic demands can be a "noose" around the movement at an advanced stage, it is equally true that artificial attempts to "combine" the unevenness of the class struggle, in earlier phases, by abstract sloganeering will not only fall upon "deaf" ears, but also will incorrectly

deemphasize the importance of those movements which have broadened the arena for socialist activity and are helping to prepare the conditions in which mass leaps in consciousness can and will be made. To deny that the lessons of the youth radicalization of the 1960s and '70s will have an effect in aiding the future upsurge of organized workers is sheer idealism. It is to the SWP's credit that it has not only taken cognizance of the importance of the new radicalization, but has formulated programs for relatively new movements. These programs encompass a wide range of democratic and transitional demands, and make connections between the individual movements and the working class struggle as a whole. Mssrs. Massey, Shaffer and Smith, aren't you aware that in the resolution on the women's movement passed at the 1971 SWP convention ("Towards a Mass Feminist Movement") there are separate paragraph headings entitled "Women of Oppressed Nationalities," "Imperialist War," "Women Prisoners," "Equal Education Opportunities," "Economic Freedom" (concerning women workers)? Comrades Massey, Shaffer and Smith, please look through our 1969 resolution on the Black liberation struggle ("Transitional Program for Black Liberation") or the 1971 resolution on the Chicano movement ("The Struggle for Chicano Liberation"). Do these, as you say, "mobilize multiclass constituencies independently of each other"? And how about demands like "Land to those who work it" or "Nationalize the 'factory farms' under farmworkers control"? ("The Struggle for Chicano Liberation," Nov. 1971 *ISR*, p. 36.) Are they "without relation to class"? Come now! Before ending, I implore you, our self-styled enemies of "sectoralism," please take this pointer from Lenin:

"The distinction between subjectivism (skepticism, sophistry, etc.) and dialectics, incidentally, is that in (objective) dialectics the difference between the relative and the absolute is itself relative. For objective dialectics there is an absolute *within* the relative. For subjectivism and sophistry the relative is only relative and excludes the absolute." (Lenin, from *On the Question of Dialectics*, Collected Works, Vol. 38, p. 360, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1963, emphasis in original.)

Lastly, in order to carry on a serious battle for the allegiance of SWP members, the Internationalist Tendency should concentrate on proving concretely, without hearsay and unjustifiable assertions, that the SWP has made "theoretical accommodations to reformism." In this regard the opening letter of the Internationalist Tendency was sorely lacking.

July 7, 1973

THE HEALYITES AND THE "SECTORAL METHOD"

Though similar sentiments are common to all sectarians, the present notoriety of "sectoralism" is most probably due to the energetic work of the Healyites. And though the Internationalist Tendency may not be aware of it, they too would be found guilty (by the SLL and WL) of employing "sectoralism." Classifying the world class struggle into three main sectors, as the Internationalist Tendency did in its opening letter, is a no-no for them. Dennis O'Casey explains: "In elaborating this theory [D. O. calls it the "new world reality"—B. F.] Pablo then divided the world in the manner of the Stalinists into three epicenters—the advanced countries, the colonial countries and the workers states. This division obliterated the real conflict between capital and labor internationally. It laid the basis for a completely false world perspective, based upon impressionistic and empirical conclusions drawn from developments in each sector." (D. O'Casey, "Ernest Mandel: The Fraud of Neo-Capitalism," p. 65, Bulletin Pamphlet Series 7.)

To the Healyites it's all so simple. Just class vs. class. This is the totality of Marxism. Any classification of similar phenomena smacks of "formalism." Dialectics, they tell us, recognizes that "A is not A." Everything flows, everything changes, everything transforms. Any recognition of form itself is reactionary according to sage Healyite philosopher Alex Steiner. In a polemic against G. Novack he states:

"The law of identity, along with other axioms of formal logic, is negated by dialectics, not 'incorporated within it as a constituent element.' Dialectics replaces the law of identity with the *unity of opposites*. *Identity is seen to be nothing but a moment in the eternal conflict of Being*" (my emphasis). (A. Steiner, "The Liberal Philosophy of George Novack," p. 19, Bulletin Pamphlet Series 11.)

But one should ask Mr. Steiner, if the law of identity is negated (what does he mean by this? Stamped out?—B. F.) what basis have we to say that there is any unity (expressed in form) within which the struggle of opposites takes place. How can content be in conflict with form, when form (unity) is regarded as a fleeting glance, a "moment," unworthy of serious examination. When we know that the conflict between capital and labor constitutes the essential content of capitalist society, what basis do we have to call it capitalist society? If this unity of opposites is simply a "moment," how can it have such form, how can it have lasted so long? But the Healy-Wohlforth group, which use Lenin's "Philosophical Notebooks" (Collected Works, Vol. 38) as a beginners text, have not absorbed its basic lessons. When Lenin says "The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative" (Lenin, Vol. 38, Collected Works, p. 360) it is a far cry from meaning that it is a fleeting "moment." With such a skeptical outlook is it any wonder that the Healyites have refused to accept the fact of a workers state in Cuba? As has happened with the Healyites, such method only leads to ossification in the field of theory, because of resistance towards recognizing and analyzing conjunctural changes, ebbs and flows, secondary and tertiary contradictions and transformations within the general crisis of capitalism. Further, in the realm of practice, it leads to oscillation between ultraleft and reformist positions because of the impossibility of correctly applying such schemas to the living situation, to the "moment" which is regarded as unworthy of serious examination. And so it is not difficult to understand how the Healyites discovered that the Indian bourgeoisie could play a "progressive" role in its excursion into Bangladesh. After all, everything flows, everything changes, everything transforms. Even the theory of permanent revolution.

IN DEFENSE OF THE DOCUMENT "BUILDING REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES IN CAPITALIST EUROPE"

by Guy Miller (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Branch

Introduction

Thirty-five years ago Leon Trotsky drafted "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International." This historic document, more commonly called the Transitional Program, characterized the epoch we are in as one of "Wars and Revolutions." The choice of the words, "death agony," provide a very apt and vivid description of late 20th century capitalism. Today on the

continent of Europe, the birthplace of capitalism, this death agony has begun to resemble the patient in a modern hospital whose brain waves have stopped, but who is kept alive by a series of machines. The patient continues to breathe, his heart goes on beating and his pulse still gives off a feeble throb. But only a plug need be pulled to bring a speedy and merciful death to a body that has lived way beyond its time.

Events in today's world are characterized by an ever accelerating tempo. Changes that once took decades or even centuries are now telescoped into a few short years. Even the most audacious of forecasters is left far behind the pace of real events. In August 1971, when President Nixon declared the "new economic policy" and the virtual junking of the Bretton Woods Agreement, Ernest Mandel commented, "The Bretton Woods system lasted twenty-five years, the last five in death agony. The system born in Washington will not survive a decade." Indeed, the new Smithsonian Agreements did not survive a decade; they did not survive fourteen months.

Any attempt to analyze capitalist Europe, to project the proper strategies, to choose which areas of the Transitional Program to emphasize and which to hold in abeyance, and how best to allocate our limited Trotskyist resources must begin with an assessment of the period. It is from an economic and political assessment that our program must flow. Of course, a general line, a general perspective does not guarantee that one will always find the right answers to the derivative questions, the secondary issues. But without a general orientation, without the broad overall ruling conception, it is quite hopeless to expect to find one's way in tactical and strategical questions.

Marxists often point out that politics is concentrated economics. Side by side with economics there exists other factors all of which together provide the basis for the conscious maneuvering of the ruling class. It is our job to analyze all these factors, appraising all the breaking points and zigzags, and translating them into the language of revolutionary strategy and tactics.

In order to understand the nature of the current crisis of capitalism it will be necessary to seek out its roots. For the most part these roots are to be found in post-world war Europe and the political and economic conditions of that time.

PART II: The Roots of the Crisis

At the end of the Second World War all the industries of Europe had either been completely destroyed or made obsolescent by the leaps in American technology during the war. Through such agreements as the Marshall Plan, the industrial capacity of Western Europe was reconstructed along the most modern lines of the time. This was especially true in branches of industry which underwent a very rapid expansion. This same process also occurred in the important iron and steel industries, where today the average age of machinery is now less than that of its American counterparts.

This reconstructed economy was not the result of American benevolence but rather a result of two concrete needs of the post-war American capitalist class. First of all, there were the immediate needs of the so-called "cold war," which began almost as soon as the Second World War had ended. Secondly, there were the economic necessities inherent in U. S. capitalism.

With the end of the war the U. S. economy was characterized by an ever increasing surplus productive capacity and by a growing surplus of capital. It became impossible to invest this surplus under "normal" conditions. Certainly, the Third World could not provide an adequate safety valve for this capital. The markets in these areas were too limited. And, more importantly, chronic

political and social unrest spread through the former colonial empires. As a result big U. S. corporations looked to Western Europe, Canada and Japan for the export of huge amounts of capital.

Closely linked to this process was the question of direct debt owed the United States by the countries of Europe. With the onslaught of the war, European powers were forced into massive liquidation of their long-term foreign assets in order to finance the military adventure they were then engaged in. For example, Great Britain, at the time the foremost financial power of Europe, incurred over 11 billion dollars of debt during the war, almost all of which was owed to the United States.

This relationship of forces on an international scale led directly to the one-sided Bretton Woods Agreement. It was in effect agreed at Bretton Woods that every country except the United States would devalue the collective book value of their national wealth, and then allow this wealth to be sold for dollars.

The reality of post-war Europe was one of American domination. This dominance rested on the absolute American superiority both militarily and economically. West Germany, totally devastated, was occupied by the 7th Army. GIs were stationed in France, Great Britain and Italy, submarine bases equipped for nuclear attack sprang up in Scotland and southern Spain. The 6th Fleet roamed the Mediterranean. NATO placed the rebuilt armies of Europe under de-facto American command.

In the meantime, the period of approximately 1950 to 1961 was one of relative working-class quiescence on the continent. Nonetheless, class consciousness and the traditional working-class parties, that is the mass CPs and Social-Democratic formations, did not experience the same kind of deep freeze that occurred in the United States. There was not the same break in continuity in the class struggle. There were not the excesses of McCarthyism, with its witch hunts and red scares. As a rule the European working class continued to look, albeit with an increasingly skeptical eye, to the mass Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties for leadership.

At this point it is important for us to step back and look just beneath the surface of this seemingly tranquil Europe of the 1950s, for there were profound changes and gestating contradictions to be observed.

The 1950s saw the once great colonial powers dismantle their empires. This process was due to three factors: (1) the changing needs of post-war capitalism; (2) the rising tide of the colonial revolution; and (3) the high cost of stemming that tide. From Dien-Bien-Phu to Algeria, the French bourgeoisie found itself embroiled in one long, unpopular and losing military expedition after another. By the time Charles deGaulle returned to power in the late 1950s, Algeria had torn and divided France, much as Vietnam has torn and divided this country.

Great Britain, reluctantly, preferred to dismantle its empire by stages, using the sterling community as a half-way house between political independence and economic dependence.

Meanwhile, on the eastern half of the continent the rumble of political revolution could be heard. First in East Germany and Poland and then the major Hungarian uprising shaking the Stalinist monolith to its core. The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

and the subsequent Khrushchev revelations were colossal blows against the absolute authority of the Kremlin, blows from which it has not recovered to this day. Defiance began in parties long subservient to the every whim of Moscow. In Italy, the party of Togliatti developed the position of "polycentrism," a justification for easing out from under the oppressive thumb of the Soviet bureaucracy. In France and other European countries fissures and splits appeared inside the various CPs.

To sum up this whole period beginning with the end of the Second World War and ending with the Belgian general strike of 1961, we must analyze the so-called Korean war inspired boom. This boom was generated by accelerated technological renovation and spurred on by an extraordinary high level of arms spending over a period of two decades. This resulted in a deep-going industrialization of most of the countries of Western Europe. Causing, in turn, a complete upheaval in the social structure of countries like France, Italy and Spain. In the years since the war there has been a very rapid decline in the importance of the peasantry in both the population and, even more significantly, in the economy as well.

During this period of expansion, the crisis of overproduction was like a wolf at the door, constantly threatening to bring about a disaster on the order of 1929. (And we are referring here to an overproduction of exchange values, not use values. Due to an inadequacy not of production or physical capacity to consume, but monetarily effective demand. A relative abundance of commodities finding no equivalent on the market cannot realize its exchange value, remains unsaleable, and drags its owners down to disaster.)

Only at the high price of permanent credit and an ever growing monetary inflation could this wolf of overproduction be held at bay. Still, overproduction could not be eliminated, but again like the wolf disguised as grandmother, was merely concealed. It was concealed on the one hand by buying power artificially generated through inflation and on the other hand, it was "frozen" by the greater and greater excess capacity in a number of industries.

PART III: The Growth of the Common Market

The International Minority Tendency contends that there is no need for a document to project a continental strategy. That the attempt is both wrong and unrealistic. We contend that such a strategy for the continent of Europe is not only realistic, but also a necessity.

Two major differences can be cited between the Europe of 1950s and the Europe of the 1960s: the rise of the class struggle and the growth of the Common Market. I would like to consider the first of these two phenomena first.

Capitalists, like all thieves, are subject to two contradictory instincts. One, the instinct to cut each others' throats and the other instinct to band together for mutual protection. Both of these instincts were at work when the capitalist bandits decided to form the European Coal and Steel Community, the parent of the Common Market. This formation originated with the Allied occupation of the Ruhr steel complex. At that time it was the aim of the French bourgeoisie to take advantage of the great disparity between Germany's economic potential and its

military and political prostration.

This plan of the French ruling class to take advantage of defeated Germany, coupled with the United States desire to strengthen West European unity against the Soviet bloc were the two political motor forces serving to bring the Common Market into existence.

John F. Kennedy expressed the American interest in the early Common Market thusly:

"The success of our foreign policy depends in large measure upon the success of our foreign trade. And our maintenance of Western political unity depends in equally large measure upon the degree of Western economic unity."

In the early '60s the Common Market was still an integral part of American domination of Europe. Over time, however, U. S. political support of the European Economic Community was to erode, while its opposition to the economic policies coming out of Europe increased.

From its very inception the Common Market has been a plan for the economic integration of all West Europe along strictly capitalist lines. The founding document of the Common Market, the *Treaty of Rome*, calls for "the absolute freedom of establishment and the right to engage in and carry out non-wage earning activities," that is from Article 52. Article 67 of that same treaty calls for the "abolition of restrictions on the movement of capital."

Here we clearly see modern capitalism, bursting at the seams, under the pressure of the fundamental contradiction of the nation-state. The boundaries between nations are becoming an increasing fetter on capitalism.

Marx observed this phenomenon in his life time, from the *Manifesto*:

"The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of reactionaries it has drawn from under the feet of industry, the national ground on which it stood. All old fashioned national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed."

True already by 1848, this trend is now a hundred-fold the case for capitalism in its death agony. We need only mention the rise of the multinationals. This trend is one of the reasons it becomes more and more imperative for us to draft a perspective, not only for the individual nation-states of Europe, but an orientation to the increasingly homogeneous continent as well.

Throughout the 1960s a subtle shift in the relationship of forces inside the imperialist camp began to occur. The U. S. began to find itself instead of being the absolute hegemonic imperialist power, merely the first among many rivals. Between 1947 and 1965, the U. S. and Canada's share of world trade dropped from 27 percent to 18 percent, while that of Western Europe rose from 33 percent to 40 percent.

But even while this steady change in relative positions was occurring the United States continued making heavy investments into the European economies.

So that now, more than 80 percent of the big American companies have branches in Europe. Standard Oil of New Jersey, called Esso in Europe, sells more oil in Europe than it does in the U. S. and its sales are expanding three times faster there. More than one-half of all automobiles made in Europe are manufactured by American companies. 65 percent of all French telecommunications are controlled by American firms; the U. S. now con-

trols 80 percent of Europe's computer business, 90 percent of the micro circuit industry and most of the rest of the electronics as well.

However, now this process has begun to work in reverse. European products are invading the U.S. and making a serious challenge in certain key sectors of the market.

This "relative" challenge and interpenetration of capitals are two aggravating features in the process Mandel calls "Europe vs. America."

From the time the *Treaty of Rome* was signed in 1960, the fundamental division of Europe has been between those countries inside the European Economic Community and those making up its periphery.

Great Britain tried for a long time to swim against the stream of European integration. First it clung to its former possessions by means of a Commonwealth Trade Association. Then, for a period, it pleaded for a "special relationship" with the United States (in fact the only special feature of the relationship was that both countries allegedly shared the same language). Then, as a final escape, Great Britain tried to organize a loosely knit trade alliance with the remaining non-Common Market countries of Europe. Every one of these attempts proved a dismal failure. Britain was forced to join or resign itself to irrelevance.

The original six—West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg—were an obstacle to the non-member countries for two reasons. Obviously, first because they made up a sizeable bloc of capital and a large domestic market. But the second reason was not so readily apparent, and that is the community's relations with the Third World.

When the capitalist nations of Europe dissolved their former empires, they almost always managed to maintain a "most favored nation" status with their ex-colonies. A proliferation of treaties between the Common Market countries and the Third World began when 18 former colonial countries of Africa, mostly former French possessions signed the Yanoundé Convention with the Common Market countries in July of 1963.

The Yanoundé Convention did not set up a customs union but rather a free trade area, designed for the plunder of Africa by the six. This convention was quickly followed by the Arusha Agreement and the Mediterranean Association Agreement and a number of other agreements.

This process infuriates the U.S. capitalists because it includes preferences to European capital investment. Also, it extends beyond the "traditional" spheres of influence assigned the European countries. Or, stated in simpler terms, the robbers of Europe are beginning to poach on the robbers of North America.

To conclude this section on the Common Market, I would like to quote from a *L'Humanité* article, which captures the spirit of European capitalist collaboration:

"The integration of Western Europe is monopoly capital's attempt to reconcile the private national boundaries. The authorities of the imperialist powers are seeking to transform integration into a Holy Alliance of reaction, for the struggle against socialism, against the working class movement . . . and for the strengthening of the economic base of the aggressive NATO bloc in Europe."

PART IV: The Rise of Class Contradictions in Europe

As we have just seen the trend in Europe has been toward the Europeanization of the continent's capitalist class. Of course this trend has not reached the point of "supranationalism" and there is no given that the trend will continue in that direction. While the Common Market represents the most visible example of this trend, further evidence includes the number of important mergers between the European giants in the last several years. Some of the most striking examples include: the two rubber tire trusts of Pirelli and Dunlop, the two photographic corporations of Gaevaert of Belgium and Afga of West Germany and the extremely significant merger between Fiat and Citroen.

Alongside this trend there has been, for revolutionaries, an equally important trend toward the Europeanization of the working class of Europe. The Second World War must again be cited as the starting point for this process. During and after the war, millions of individual refugees and immigrants spread out across the entire continent. In addition whole peoples were often uprooted and transported far from their traditional homelands.

Today we find a situation in which over a million Yugoslavs work in Western Europe, 20 percent of the work force of Switzerland is imported from Eastern and Southern Europe. The same is true of West Germany. In Italy the non-resident Italian workers are such an important aspect of that country's political life, that the Italian Communist Party was forced to hire trains to transport them back home for the Italian elections. In France special legislation has recently been passed. This legislation, the Fontanet-Marcellin regulations, replace work permits with labor contracts for foreign workers. The purpose was to make foreign workers more insecure, and hence less likely to engage in militant actions. The foreign workers answered with some of the most militant strikes since the May-June uprising.

The importance of this fact, the rise in the number of foreign workers has not gone unnoticed by the capitalist class. The Council of European Industrial Federation, a European equivalent of the American National Association of Manufacturers, last November made the following observation at their conference:

"We must improve the mobility of labor in the Common Market because it is the best solution to inflation and monetary problems."

In other words a fluid, Europeanwide labor pool that can be used to drive down wages wherever necessary and act as a threat to job security of indigenous militants.

This is the reality of the "New Europe."

PART V: The Social Crisis in Contemporary Europe

With all this as necessary background, we come to what most concerns us today: the assessment of the current crisis of capitalism and the state of the class struggle in present-day Europe.

The events of May-June 1968 represented a qualitative leap in a process that began quantitatively with the Belgian general strike of 1961.

Let us reexamine the May-June events of 1968.

After 20 years of capitalism, functioning under near classical conditions, with a state planning board which

was often cited as a model for all imperialist countries, with a state television network that was said to have perfected a system of mass manipulation that would uphold the status quo and the Gaullist party, with a foreign policy that all public opinion polls showed to be accepted by a large majority of the population, with all this mitigating in favor of domestic tranquility, with all this, in May of 1968 in France: *all hell broke loose*.

In May of 1968 in France: there were twice as many strikers as ever before in the history of that country's working class; they used more militant forms of struggle than in 1936 or 1946 or in 1955; they not only raised the slogans of workers' control, workers' management and workers' power, but they started to put it into practice in a dozen major factories and several large towns.

In the face of the experience of May-June it is impossible to deny the revolutionary potential of the working class, not only in an epoch-long sense, but in an immediate and conjunctural sense as well.

Since that momentous action of just five short years ago a number of developments have occurred, none of which are any good from the ruling class's point of view. I would like to talk about two closely related developments: inflation and the monetary crisis.

The upward spiral of inflation, particularly in Europe, has become a way of life throughout the capitalist world. In country after country, every effort to curb inflation, to reverse the tide has proven ineffective, but what is more they serve to stimulate the popular discontent and to spur on demands for even more radical measures.

Everyone here is aware of the deep anger, frustration and resentment the soaring rate of inflation has caused in this country. Well, for openers, consider this: the inflation rate in Europe is more than *double* that of the U. S. The annual rate of consumer price increase in the U. S. is around 3.5 percent, while the European average is well over 7 percent.

In the *Manifesto of the Second World Congress* Trotsky states, "The rising cost of living is the mightiest factor of revolutionary ferment in all countries." With this in mind we will take a closer look at inflation in Europe. Since it is charged that the International Majority fails to distinguish between countries as diverse as Switzerland and Spain, we will go country by country.

In Switzerland, a small country that has long prided itself on its price stability and the fact that it is the banker for the world's dictators, the annual rate of consumer price increase is 7.3 percent.

In Spain the annual rate of inflation came to nearly 18 percent last year. The pinch is felt so severely that housewives began to organize street demonstrations against the high prices. This in Franco's Spain!

In the Netherlands the rate is in excess of 7.5 percent and in the words of one central planning official is "still rising."

In Belgium the consumer price index is rising at a rate of 7.3 percent.

In Ireland, one of the recent countries to join the Common Market, a report by the Irish Central Bank warns, "the level of inflation in Ireland is still more serious than anywhere else throughout Western Europe." The cost of entry into the Common Market will prove to be an even

higher rate of inflation. The annual rate there is around 9.2 percent.

And in France, prices have been mushrooming for the last several years. Early last December the Pompidou government announced a new anti-inflation campaign. This campaign includes cutting back government supplied social services, much like the cutbacks in Nixon's budget. Funds normally earmarked for business expansion were diverted and used to set up a debt issue soaking up almost one billion dollars from the economy.

In short, everything but a wage freeze has been tried. The result? Inflation continues to rise, the economy continues to stagnate . . . again and again every effort to stem the tide merely increases the contradictions.

Phase III becomes a worldwide phenomenon.

This situation of chronic and unstoppable inflation comes in the midst of an international monetary crisis. All agreements between the currencies of the world amount to no more than temporary truces in a war to the death.

The dollar crisis of last March saw for the first time the threat of a joint European float against the dollar, thus upping the ante in that crisis.

Every move on the part of the international capitalist class amounts to jockeying for the best possible position. Everyone wanting a head-start when the impending worldwide trade begins in earnest.

In the 19th century competition between the capitalist countries took place in the context of an expanding world market. In contrast competition in the death agony of capitalism takes place in an economic arena that is narrowing down. Today, nothing remains except for the imperialists to tear pieces of the world market away from each other.

August 15, 1971, on that day the American capitalist class threw down the gauntlet. Saying to Europe and Japan: "The ship is sinking, every man for himself." The time has come when the capitalist class must turn on the world's working class, extracting every ounce of energy, every last drop of productivity. Production must become more and more rationalized and intensified.

PART VI: The Basis for the European Perspectives Document

The basic starting point in the *Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe* is the change in the objective and subjective conditions in Western Europe since the last world congress. The word "crisis" has been so overworked as to be almost robbed of meaning. It has an almost "hackneyed" or "cliche-ridden" ring to it, still no other word can sum up the state of capitalism in Western Europe today, except crisis. For the first time there has been a confluence of crises in three areas: economic, political and social.

We start with the realization that the post-war boom has come to a screeching halt. The reality of the last few years is for one recession to follow rapidly on the heels of another. This is coupled with a stagnation of economic growth that has affected all capitalist countries to some degree.

And how has the European working class responded to all this? Has it sat cowed, defeated, passive? Hardly. The events in Europe since the May-June days are char-

acterized by an ever deeper and deeper class struggle: we will point to a few of the highlights.

In Italy, throughout the "creeping May" of 1969 a series of mass strikes brought paralysis to that country. More recently, the metal workers have engaged in an unprecedented wave of mass struggles to gain a new contract, culminating in a mass demonstration of over 250,000 people in Turin. In the Italian Fiat plant the workers are engaged in one of the most developed workers control struggles in history.

In Spain, tens of thousands of workers in Barcelona recently downed their tools to protest against the shooting of a worker by the police.

In Britain, three times in the space of 1972 crippling strikes erupted bringing that country to a standstill. First the coalminers, then the railway workers, and finally the dramatic dockworkers strike that began the largest general strike in Great Britain in more than 44 years. The shop stewards movement has kept constant pressure on the bureaucrats of the TUC, forcing them to call a 24-hour general strike this past May Day.

In France, there was the mass outpouring of hundreds of thousands after the assassination of Pierre Overney, a young Maoist worker last summer. And recently, after the occupation of many smaller factories, the revolt of the low paid, predominantly foreign, conveyor belt workers of Renault, which coincided with the occupation of the Peugeot car factory.

In Belgium a whole series of militant strikes have followed one after another since last autumn.

Denmark and Holland have just experienced their biggest strike waves since the Second World War.

I could go on, but I don't want to belabor the obvious. Let me sum up by saying, and I will challenge anybody in this room to prove otherwise, that never before has there been such a quantitative labor upsurge on the continent of Europe. Never before has the working class engaged in so many militant actions, in so many different nation-states of Europe at approximately the same time. Not in 1848, or 1871, not in 1919, not in 1936 or '37 and certainly not in the entire post-war period.

And this comes at the same time that Europe is threatened by an impending trade war with the United States and Japan, the world monetary system is in a shambles, inflation is skyrocketing in every country of Europe. And this upsurge is worldwide as well, we need only point to the strike last year in Quebec. That strike was the largest general strike in North America's history.

I read the Mary-Alice Waters document very closely to see what she had to say about all this. Here is the most forceful quote I could find on the upsurge I have just outlined. She writes, and I quote, "the class struggle is unmistakably on the rise in Europe." Truly, comrades, this is the famous elephant that gave birth to a mouse.

All she has to say about the most important political fact in today's world is, "the class struggle is unmistakably on the rise in Europe."

Is this how the International Minority analyzes the situation in Western Europe today? I wasn't expecting cartwheels, but this kind of an understatement is an absurdity. Mary-Alice Waters is on the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party; in writing this document she served as a spokesperson for the entire International Mi-

nority Tendency.

She is also, I am told, a regular commuter to Europe. The next time she flies over to Brussels or Paris, I personally will gladly pay her subway fare if she will only promise to visit the working-class suburbs of those cities. Maybe then she will get a better feel for what is going on in Europe.

Not once in her document does she even attempt an economic analysis of what is occurring on the continent of Europe. We are forced to ask; does she or does she not agree with the economic analysis in the European Perspectives Document? If she doesn't, it is her duty to explain how her analysis of the economic situation in capitalist Europe differs. She must inform the world, *in writing*. However if she does agree, we have a new first in the Marxist movement. Because it would be an anomaly for two such different documents as hers and the document of the International Majority, two such diametrically different methods to have the same economic analysis of capitalist Europe.

PART VII: A Critique of the Waters Document

This glaring deficiency should be enough to reject the Waters' document out of hand, as just plain unserious. But we will answer some of her major criticisms. Criticisms, I might add, put forth in a laundry list, mechanical fashion.

The first argument Comrade Waters raises against the European document is that it "tries to develop a single, continental orientation to cover 15 countries as diverse as Spain and Sweden." In other words the document does not adequately cover all the fine points, it is not complete enough.

Now Comrade Joseph Hansen has a different criticism of how the leadership of the International Majority writes documents.

Hansen writes:

"Perhaps I should mention that I got the impression that a different concept may be involved as to what should be aimed for in a resolution. Our convention documents are worked out to indicate a line to follow; then we write articles to provide the supporting materials and to explain in detail all the developments. But in a resolution *we prefer leanness, just the main indications.*"

This is an old game comrades, commonly it is called "heads I win, tails you lose."

Comrade Waters criticizes the document for covering 15 countries as diverse as Spain and Sweden as being "wrong and unrealistic." Perhaps Trotsky and Lenin were wrong and unrealistic when they wrote reports like "A Report on the World Economic Crisis and the New Tasks of the Communist International." In this report covering not just Europe, but the entire world, Trotsky only mentions eight or nine countries. Indeed, he spends the great bulk of his time discussing the situation in Great Britain, the U.S., France and Germany.

Obviously, it is the key advanced industrial countries of Europe that are central. As if the economies and politics of the Benelux countries, or perhaps of Lichtenstein or Monaco were not intricately tied and in the last analysis determined by what occurs in Germany, Italy or France.

Perhaps she does not read the newspapers and fails to

realize that the Common Market has begun to integrate the economies of Western Europe to an extent never before dreamt of. Or that the working class on the continent is undergoing a process of Europeanization.

But many will say, "She is right, the document is too vague, it fails to raise enough concrete slogans or spend enough time on the component parts of the radicalization."

From time to time, when new situations warrant it, it becomes necessary for revolutionary Marxists to step back and take an overall view of what is going on, the long view it has been called. This is what the European document does. Such a time in our party's history was the post-war period, the period of the *American Theses Document*.

Here is what James P. Cannon had to say about that document:

"The theses have been criticized already by people who deal in the 'small coin of concrete events'! We have been criticized because 'we do not mention concrete tasks' and we do not 'pose the concrete problems.'

"That is true. But what is wrong with this procedure?"

Cannon continues:

"Those who preoccupy themselves primarily with tactics reproach us for our procedure, and allege that it reveals the difference between their political method and ours. That is quite correct. We proceed from the fundamental to the secondary; they proceed by nibbling away at the secondary questions in order to undermine the fundamental concepts. There is indeed a difference in method."

Undeniably, there exists a need to analyze and make projections for each individual country in Europe. But the need for a continentalwide strategy for Europe in no way precludes this. Why this artificial dichotomy? It remains, however, absolutely imperative to recognize the reality of an increasingly homogeneous continent of Europe and to proceed from that reality.

We must be done with this mechanical pigeon-holing of categories that Comrade Waters uses in her document. We must take the theory of combined and uneven development off the shelves and begin to apply it on a continental and on a worldwide scale as well.

So much for the first criticism.

Mary-Alice's second major argument is that the Perspectives Document advances a dogmatic timetable of 4 to 5 years. That this constitutes "catastrophe mongering."

First of all, we should not look upon the prospect of decisive battles as being catastrophic, unless, of course we have no faith in the working class or ourselves.

But yes, I will grant that the use of the 4 to 5 year timetable is mechanical. Just like saying that the YSA will double in size in one year is mechanical. I personally would not have included that formulation in the document. However, I do think the prospect entirely realizable.

Still, even granting that the use of the timetable is too mechanical, we must remember that this prediction flows directly from a political evaluation of the class struggle, and an economic analysis of the crisis of capitalism. And we will again remind comrades, that Mary-Alice never once challenges these theoretical underpinnings of the European document.

For Marxists it is not dogmatic to make predictions. Provided that these predictions are not based on impressionism, but stem directly from a scientific understanding

of the economic and political period.

If comrades will buy and read a book called *Toward the American Socialist Revolution* they will find an example of just such an impressionistic and dogmatic prediction. In that collection of speeches from the 1970 Socialist Activists and Educational Conference it is repeated over and over again that we are in the midst of the "biggest, broadest and deepest radicalization in American history" and that "This radicalization *will not be reversed* until the question of who is posed in the United States."

But never once are we given the reasons. What is it about the dilemma of American capitalism that will necessitate the question of state power being posed *during this radicalization*? What makes *this stage* of the class struggle so unique that it is irreversible short of a revolutionary situation? What are the economic and political reasons?

Despite the 4-to-5 year projection the document makes several provisions for long-term work. Do these quotes from the document sound like "catastrophe mongering"? "We must therefore prepare ourselves for years of intense social struggles, in which there will be ups and downs, and for the enduring possibilities of revolutionary upsurge," or that we should, "prepare for regular persistent, long-term intervention in the plants and in the unions"???

Another argument Comrade Waters raises is that "The document even fails to sketch out a concrete program for the construction of class-struggle left wings in the unions."

Let us first look to the work the Ligue Communiste is carrying out in the trade unions of France. The comrades of the Ligue have been part of the leadership in several important strikes, including the major Brest gas workers' strike of last autumn. These comrades organized a successful conference this past June 9-11. This conference was attended by over 600 worker comrades and sympathizers of the Ligue and did not include the many comrades in the teachers' union. In the Renault plant the Ligue's intervention has been a model for all sections to imitate; there they put out a factory bulletin called "Renault Rouge."

Now what is the SWP's record on the trade-union question? Last year at the Socialist Activists and Educational Conference we were told by a top party leader that trade-union work would remain, and this is the phrase he used, "at ground zero." Two years ago we were told over and over again that trade unions were not a major area of our work at this time.

Or more concretely, what has the SWP leadership in Chicago done to orient our 10 or so IUSSE (Illinois Union of Social Service Employees) members toward building a "class-struggle left wing" in *that* union? These comrades are told not to run for shop steward, not to get involved in "union issues" and not to take responsibility for the union.

The document does not go into elaborate technical details, this is done elsewhere. As Comrade Barnes reminds us, "Ultimately, of course the Transitional Program itself is our full program for the union movement because the decisive question as the struggle progresses will be the fight to transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle." What the document does do is point toward a proletarian orientation for our European sections. The necessary first step in building any kind of left wing in the trade unions *is to be there*.

It will be difficult to answer all Comrade Waters has to

say on the question of the "mass vanguards." The two pages of her document dealing with the subject are so riddled with confusion, it is impossible to deal with all her errors in method in one hour-long presentation.

Comrade Waters herself describes who is meant by the "mass vanguard." "There are today, in some countries of Western Europe tens of thousands of anticapitalist, revolutionary minded young people who want to be part of the struggle for a socialist world."

At the present juncture an orientation to the working class is an orientation to the vanguard. By an "orientation to the vanguard," we understand a simultaneous orientation to both militant young workers and to the tactical vanguards that have arisen outside of the working class in the student milieu and other sectors peripheral to the class struggle.

It is precisely the generalized phenomenon of a new worldwide radicalization of youth that has made it possible to transform the Fourth International into an organization with some flesh on its bones.

Comrade Waters sees an orientation toward opponent left groups as an orientation toward "enemies," a phrase she uses several times. Perhaps she would have us disband, for instance, the Swedish section. That section resulted primarily from our work with the Maoist "enemies." By orienting to those "ultralefts" and winning them over to Trotskyism, *politically*, we coalesced a strong, healthy and growing section.

By orienting to the "far-left" politicians of Europe we rebuilt the Spanish section, the British section and the Swiss section to name the most striking examples.

Comrade Waters states, "We start with the objective needs of the masses." That is true. The objective needs of the masses, the working class, is to resolve the historic crisis of leadership. Sometimes the best way to resolve that crisis is by orienting to the masses directly, at other times it is done by orienting to the vanguard.

She writes further: "We never start with the vanguard and then try to make its interests and concerns compatible with the needs of the masses."

When the revolutionary party consists of a small nucleus, the stage we are in now, our relationship to the class is mediated through the advanced workers. Tiny revolutionary organizations who ignore this advanced layer of the class and presume to call the masses to action in their own name engage themselves in a *sectarian and fruitless adventure*.

There is a complex set of interrelationships between the working class as a whole and its most advanced elements. Many historic examples attempting to deal with just this interrelationship can be cited from the *Communist Manifesto* to Lenin's theory of transmission belts to the rationale behind the "French turn." In the debate between the SWP leadership and Trotsky, found in the 1939-40 *Writings*, the whole discussion revolved around which section of the advanced workers to orient toward — the Rooseveltian Progressives or the Communist Party Stalinists.

Comrade Trotsky favored orienting toward the Stalinists. It was Trotsky's position that the best way to reach the Stalinists was to give critical support to the Browder campaign. He placed a priority on winning over the

advanced Stalinist workers *before* (are you listening Comrade Waters?) orienting to the masses as a whole.

Here are Trotsky's own words on the question:

"How reach a compromise? I ask for 200 or 300 Stalinist workers. That is the minimum I require. We can get them by holding their leaders to a class struggle policy. Are you ready to impose this class struggle line, on your leadership, we ask? Then we find common grounds.

"It is not just a manifesto, but to turn our political face to the Stalinist workers. What is bad about that? We began an action against the Stalinists; what is wrong with that?"

"I propose a compromise. I will evaluate Browder 50% lower than I estimate him now in return for 50% more interest from you (SWP) in the Stalinist party."

When Comrade Waters writes, "We never start with the needs of the vanguard," she should be warned that "never" is a very long time in the Marxist movement.

Another objection Comrade Mary-Alice raises is that the "document opens the door to adventurism by proposing to start right now to teach the ruling class (note: to teach the ruling class) in practice we will use arms." (We meaning the vanguard party.) The document does not say that. This is a projection on Comrade Waters part.

Here is the quote I think she is referring to, and listen closely to the wording:

"the spirit in which our sections will have to educate the entire mass vanguard (note: teach the vanguard not the ruling class!) is this: to show the bourgeoisie, in practice, that the price it will have to pay for any attempt to establish an open dictatorship will be a civil war in which both camps will use arms."

There is a subtle, but immense difference, between the wording Mary-Alice uses and the wording of the European document.

Another major criticism she raises is that the question of work in the armed forces is missing from the document. In most sections it is assumed you do work in the armed forces. An elementary regard for security, however, tells you it is not the kind of thing you get too specific about in documents that are circulated around the world.

We must again look to practice as the final arbiter, and review the SWP's own record in this important arena of work. After a promising start and some of the most commendable work done by SWPers in the last two decades, almost all of our GI work ceased by 1970.

The norm became to send the so-called "Joe Miles" letters which in effect excluded our comrades from the draft.

For the past several years our GI work has consisted of an occasional passing reference in *The Militant*. Also it should be noted that in the entire book *Toward the American Socialist Revolution*, with speeches by the top party leadership at the 1970 Socialist Activists and Educational Conference, there are no projections for GI work. Or, for that matter, in the collection of 1971 documents published as a book, *Revolutionary Strategy for the '70s*, not one projection is made about what comrades should be doing in the armed forces.

On page 19 of her document Mary-Alice takes the European Perspectives Document to task for its analysis of

the student movement. She writes:

"The grounds for postulating some irreversible turn in the consciousness of radicalized students on a world scale are not provided for in the document. The reason for their oversight is probably that the hypothesis represents nothing but an impression drawn from a passing phase of the youth radicalization."

This is an interesting criticism coming from Comrade Waters, that the European leadership is impressionistic and "draws from a passing phase of the youth radicalization." Here is an example of her own "theorizing," and I will leave it to you to judge, if it is impressionistic and if it drew "from a passing phase of the youth radicalization."

Again from 1970:

"These two concepts, the concept of winning the university and the concept of organizing, first to win control and then to run the university are now *permanent acquisitions* of a generation just entering a period of political struggle."

Just how permanent was *that* acquisition? How irreversible was *that* turn in the consciousness of the radicalized students? If you've been on campus recently, you know the answers.

Comrade Waters objects to the emphasis placed on demands around workers' control, saying that "Any tendency to dissolve the richness of the Transitional Program into propaganda for workers control alone would be seriously disorienting." A straw man. Do the European sections limit themselves to propaganda for workers control alone? No! Read the recent May Day Manifesto of the Fourth International. Read the press of the European sections and you'll see more than "propaganda for workers control" raised.

However, placing emphasis on one central demand from the Transitional Program is perfectly in keeping with Trotsky's concept of that program. From, *Discussions on the Transitional Program*, Trotsky said:

"Then we have the question of how to present the program to the workers? It is naturally important. We must combine politics with mass psychology and pedagogy, build the bridge to their minds. For sometime to come we must try to concentrate the attention of the workers on one slogan, the 'sliding scale of wages and hours.'"

"I believe we can concentrate the attention of the workers on this point. Naturally this is only one point. In the beginning it is totally adequate for the situation."

Trotsky had no fears of "dissolving the richness of the Transitional Program" into propaganda around the sliding scale. He understood that the slogan gained pre-eminence due to the concrete needs of the period, the depression of the 1930s.

Presently in Europe there is a debate raging on workers' control, the question of workers participation. The capitalist class is trying dozens of schemes to co-opt this concept. Many of their gimmicks, for example "flexi-shifts" and "group assembly teams" have been transported to this country to combat the so-called "blue-collar blues."

Speed-ups and productivity drives will increase the workers interest in workers control.

The demand for workers control and its implementation came to the fore in the May-June events and in the

Quebec strike.

Trotsky said, "we must combine politics with mass psychology" and we must "build a bridge to the workers minds," by emphasizing the demand for workers control we are doing exactly that. Not to mention educating on the nature of property and the class nature of the state.

The real essence of the error in Comrade Waters' method is captured on page 13 of her document. There she argues against the concept of decisive battles appearing in the next four to five years. She states:

"Isn't it possible that the next prerevolutionary crisis in France will not resolve the dilemma of French capitalism any more than the last did, especially if the workers are not yet won away from the CP? Isn't it possible there can be new May 1968s that will not result in historic defeats on the order of fascism?"

There it is in a nutshell comrades: *two, three, many May '68s*, with the world capitalist class sitting passively on the sidelines. Maybe, clapping politely when the working class fails to act decisively. She is telling us in effect, that capitalism, with its back up against the wall, will tolerate a prolonged period of chronic instability. It is precisely this kind of instability that the bourgeoisie cannot and *will not* tolerate!

Does Comrade Waters really think, given the present economic and political conjuncture, that the ruling class can afford or allow many new May '68s to occur? That it will not outlaw the vanguard party? That it will not strike with all the power the state can muster, that it will not turn to extralegal, even fascist solutions? It is the ABC of Marxism-Leninism that periods of mass upsurge are of a limited duration. To think that the capitalist class will allow decades of bourgeois democracy is nothing less than Utopianism.

Time will not permit me to answer a number of the other criticisms Comrade Waters raises against the "Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" document. Some are serious questions and will be dealt with in the discussion period. Others, like the critique of entryism *sui generis* are red herrings. We must wonder why, when the SWP has proclaimed for years that Pabloism is no longer an issue in the Fourth International and is echoed in this by Comrade Peng, are we once again treated to the thousand and one crimes of Michel Pablo.

I would like to close this section by underlining that a failure to see the proportions of the class upsurge in Europe constitutes a *serious error*. Moreover, the failure to see the same contradictions at work in the U. S., even though at a different tempo, would have disastrous consequences.

This inability on the part of the International Minority Tendency to see, or perhaps pretending not to see, is analogous to an observation Trotsky made of Kautsky:

"Kautsky resembles the miserable school teacher, who for many years, repeating a description of spring within his stuffy classroom, and when at last, at the sunset of his days as a teacher, he comes out into the fresh air he becomes furious (insofar as it is possible for a school teacher to become furious) and tries to prove spring is not spring at all but only a great disorder, because it is taking place against the laws of nature."

PART VIII: Return to the World Party, for a Democratic Centralist Fourth International

The present offensive of capital against labor is not restricted within national frontiers. It is international in character. The giant "multinational" corporations are propped up international power organs like the Common Market, the worldwide operations of U.S. and Japanese capitalism, NATO, SEATO, international institutions, etc. *Capital is more and more international in organization.* Against it only an international working-class response is adequate.

Marx posed the question in the Communist Manifesto:

"That all efforts aiming at that great end have hitherto failed from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labor in each country, and the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries.

"That the emancipation of labor is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries to which modern society exists and depending for its solution on the concurrence, practical and theoretical, of the most advanced countries."

The reality of modern capitalism makes the construction of a democratic-centralist Fourth International more urgent than ever before.

It is imperative to strive toward that goal along the lines set in the European Perspectives Document and in the document "Again, and Always, the Question of the International."

We must return to the position of Trotsky in the founding statutes of the Fourth International, in which Article 4 states:

"The internal regime of the International on the local, national and world scale is determined by the principles of democratic centralism."

There were no provisions in these statutes about strength or weakness. Indeed, the International is stronger now than ever before. There are no clauses that say, "These statutes will be nullified in the event of Trotsky's death."

The SWP has what can only be called a cavalier attitude toward the International. This is codified in Milt Alvin's document which recognizes all the privileges of participation and none of the responsibilities.

Even more crude, Comrade Hansen had the following to say about the SWP's role:

"One of the things we have always held to—*very consciously*—was not to try to assume leadership of the International. We viewed our position, and our role, and our function, even though we were the most powerful sector of the movement for many years, as that of offering support—helping and supporting the key leaders but not substituting for them and *not trying to assume the leadership.*"

Given the starting premise that leadership is the key question before the world proletariat these words have an ominous ring. What kind of a party organizes an international tendency, declares factional and financial warfare on the world party, then, despite being, "the most powerful sector of the movement for many years" does not want to assume its share of the leadership?

The World Party of Socialist Revolution is more than the arithmetical sum of national workers parties. By join-

ing its ranks an organization of a given country becomes subordinate to the common leadership and it acquires the right to actively participate in the leadership of all other sections of the International. This is paraphrased from Trotsky in "On the Coming Congress of the Comintern."

It is imperative to start our international work with a major campaign against the reactionary Voorhis Act which prevents us from being a member of the Fourth International.

Any program for capitalist Europe must include:

The building of a network of factory delegates, shop stewards and factory committees of all plants owned or controlled by the same multinational corporations.

We must organize armed workers militias to defend the rights of the working class. We must mobilize against the fascists, wherever they rear their ugly heads.

We must organize Europeanwide strikes against the Europeanwide operations of the capitalists. Looking for inspiration to the simultaneous occupation of the AKZO Chemical trust's plants in both Holland and West Germany. These actions were victorious in restoring 6,500 jobs.

The Fourth International must help in the preparations for a great European Congress of Labor, uniting all unions, workers' parties and working-class movements in all Western European countries. That congress must plan a strategy for the 50 million workers on the continent. A strategy that will beat back the offensive of capitalism.

Of course, solidarity must not stop at the level of common actions against a common enemy. It must especially protect the weak, the less organized, and the specially oppressed; the immigrant workers, the unemployed, the lower paid, the sick, the old. It must express the central aim of guaranteeing a decent standard of living for all members of society, regardless of the ups and downs of capitalism.

In struggling for these goals through the immediate introduction of a 36-hour work week throughout Europe, through workers' control over hiring and firing, over the establishment of the cost-of-living index, over production costs and selling prices by opening the books of all the corporations and revealing their banking secrets, over the rhythm of the conveyor belts and the whole organization of production; the working class will learn that these things can only be ensured by wrenching from the capitalists the ownership of the means of production and the banks, and by taking into their own hands the power of the state, and by establishing workers' power and bringing about a socialist revolution.

On the road to that revolution, the building of a democratic-centralist mass party, based upon the program and cadre of the Fourth International will appear to the working class as the *only way to victory.*

Therefore it is our duty to go:
FORWARD TO A DEMOCRATIC CENTRALIST
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!!
and

FORWARD TO THE SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF
EUROPE!!

June 25, 1973

ON THE OAKLAND-BERKELEY BRANCH'S
EXPERIENCE WITH THE SEALE-BROWN
ELECTION CAMPAIGN

by Rick Congress, Oakland-Berkeley Branch

The 1969 convention of the SWP drew a balance sheet on the Black Panther Party in which it was noted that, to say the least, it had failed the test of leadership. The BPP's ultraleftism, isolation from the Black community, and its consequent vulnerability to police attacks, along with its arbitrary undemocratic internal regime led to its political degeneration and decline as a potential mass Black political party. Since that time, as comrades are well aware, the BPP has veered toward a reformist course combining social work "survival programs" (breakfast for children, free stores and clinics, etc.) with rapprochement with the Black clergy, businessmen and Black Democrats.

Between the "pick up the gun" period of unalloyed ultraleftism, and the recent experience of the Seale and Brown campaign in Oakland, the BPP had still been regarded as a radical tendency by the left. It still was viewed by the media and the public at large (including the Black community) as a "Black militant radical" group. *The Militant* has noted the reformist course of the BPP in coverage of events such as the 1969 United Front Against Fascism convention in Oakland, Newton's articles in the Black Panther newspaper on the progressive nature of the Black church, the support of Chisholm in '72 etc. However, the image of the Panthers was that of revolutionary militants in the eyes of the public at large and among many radical minded people and the "underground" press. The recently completed campaign for city office in Oakland by Seale and Brown should go a long way toward dropping such illusions dead in their tracks. It is now exceedingly difficult to view the BPP as something independent and distinct from liberal capitalist reform politics. The news media heralded the campaign as representing "the taming of the Panther" and Seale's reconciliation with the system. And correctly so. At the conclusion of the Seale-Brown campaign the old "revolutionary residue" had been washed completely away. The BPP has gone beyond being a formerly revolutionary organization that has taken a reformist path, and made a political adaptation to capitalist politics. It has eliminated the middleperson and is going into the business of bourgeois politics itself.

By the end of the first leg of the Oakland election on April 17, Seale was totally wrapped on the flag of the Democratic Party. The election itself took in the appearance of a primary to see which Democrat (Seale, white liberal city councilman John Sutter, or Black Democrat Otho Green) would place in the runoff against the incumbent Republican mayor. After April 17 and the stunning upset Seale handed to the regular Democratic organization by beating their candidates and placing in the runoff, all commentators were extolling Seale as a "hard campaigner" who had a bright future in politics. He was someone who could carry the precincts and had built an electoral apparatus to be reckoned with. He was praised for being a statesman who had rejected his erroneous revolutionary

past. These comments came from Democratic Party leaders, and the Republican mayor Reading, who hinted that there could be a place for the "new Bobby Seale" in his administration.

On June 21, the logical follow-up to the Seale/Brown campaign was made. On that date the campaign committee was formally dissolved, and the "New Oakland Democratic Organizing Committee" was launched. Its announced purpose is to "run people's candidates" in city elections. What this represents is the formal building of a faction of the Democratic Party in Oakland by Seale and his followers. The continued existence of the BPP itself is problematical. Newton and Seale have talked of going beyond the Panther Party. Newton in an interview with *Playboy* magazine spoke of making the Democratic Party a truly "socialist" party and projected the same strategy that has been articulated by Black Democrat Ron Dellums of California 7th C.D. Whether or not the Panther Party is formally dissolved, it is clear that it has been, for all practical purposes, liquidated into first the "survival programs" then the Seale/Brown for mayor and city council campaign, and now the New Oakland Democratic Organizing Committee. (Elaine Brown and Seale's campaign manager, Herman Smith, are the top officers of the NODOC.)

It is important to understand that the BPP is not a party, but a clique, in which the superstars (given \$600-a-month penthouses, personal servants, and chauffeured cars) are Seale and Newton. The old "revolutionary" days are behind them. Their organization has suffered a great decline in membership and influence. They have been looking for an avenue forward for their personal and political future. The maintenance of the mystique of hero worship of the "Prime Servant Of The People" and the bloodied but undaunted community organizer, and the existence of a core of disciplined personal followers is important in carrying out whatever they do. The situation in the BPP is such that Seale and Newton could lead it anywhere into anything. The thick atmosphere of hero worship and the organizational sectarianism of the BPP can put limits on its ability to make progress in the "big time" arena of bourgeois reformism.

But the existence of the cultist atmosphere is cut across by the big splash of the election results and now with the establishment of the New Oak. Demo. Org. Committee.

In general the Seale campaign has enabled the BPP leadership clique to become a credible pole of attraction for reform minded young Blacks. The campaign was a gamble that paid off. Hundreds of BPP members were brought into Oakland from around the country. The media and especially the Black media focused in on the campaign as a test of whether the "new Seale" could make it in the system. Their showing in the election gives Seale and the BPP tops a base of operation to rebuild local influence in Oakland, the birthplace of the party. They have an electoral apparatus that they

will try to link up with Ron Dellums and possibly other Black politicians such as Willie Brown (Black state assemblyman from San Francisco who is becoming a power in state politics). They have made contacts with businessmen (there are many local rumors and signs that the Panther leaders themselves are getting into establishing businesses) and local clergy as well. The base in Oakland can enable them to renew influence on a national level too.

But the kernel of the political future of the BPP is the success of Seale in building an apparatus in Oakland. The national activity of the BPP, for all practical purposes is compressed into the Bay Area; as the BPP is essentially a vehicle for a small group of stars living in the Bay Area.

The Course of the Seale and Brown campaign

The launching of the campaign by Bobby Seale for mayor and Elaine Brown for city council in the fall of '72 was vague as to political character. It was generally seen as a Black Panther Party campaign by the public and the press. Black students and radicals looked upon it favorably as a Black campaign. Seale used demagogic Black and radical language in the preparatory stages of the campaign. He even indulged in anticapitalist raps. Comrades should see for example the *Black Scholar* interview in the Sept. '72 issue.

The fact that the Oakland city elections are nonpartisan (i.e., candidates do not run on a party label ballot designation although the Democratic and Republican parties do field or endorse candidates) and that he would be running against two leading liberal Democrats (putting him at odds with the Democratic regulars), and the Republican incumbent, gave his campaign a Black militant independent tone in the early stages.

The campaign was based upon the Black community (nearly half of Oakland is Black, Asian and Chicano) and was carried through with BPP members as the core of workers. The political character of the campaign changed, as we know. Of course the political character of the BPP and Seale did not change at all. It started out rotten opportunist and ended up that way. What is important to keep in mind is that the *campaign* they projected initially had an independent Black militant image. This is attributable to: (a) the standard syndrome of moving from left to right, that we saw in the McGovern campaign, for example. Radical slogans are needed to fire up the troops and win support from Black youth and students (who played an important role in the campaign). This stance is later toned down and dropped in the quest for more votes. (b) The campaign was organized independently of the bourgeois parties because they and their political representatives would have nothing to do with the Seale/Brown campaign. There was an effort made by the Black Caucus of the local Democratic Party to work out a deal whereby Elaine Brown would be supported for city council if Seale would withdraw in favor of Otho Green, a Black Democratic business consultant. Seale would not accept this deal. He wanted to try to get the Oakland Democratic Club's support for mayor at the scheduled endorsing meeting. This meeting was cancelled because the Democrats were divided between two candidates (Green and white liberal city council mem-

ber John Sutter) and were afraid of Seale marching in hundreds of supporters to register at the meeting.

The Seale and Brown campaign's independence from Democratic Party politics organizationally was not for want of trying on their part. Instead he was forced to run against them, to prove that he no longer was a radical and that he could pull the votes. He did both. As the campaign went on, Seale could not win the endorsement of any important Democratic figure or group. He did everything to run away from and deny association with radicalism, the Panther Party, Black nationalism, etc. He addressed his campaign to low level reformist tax and revenue raising schemes.

But he still was viewed with suspicion by Democratic politicians. Partly because of his radical past, partly because he was an unknown political factor. He had enough strength to influence the election and represented a force that might be able to alter the factional alignment in the Oakland Democratic Party.

Given the internal life of capitalist parties as aggregates of cliques, the Seale candidacy threatened the introduction of a new clique into the scene, to lay claim to some of the spoils of office and party posts. Even Ron Dellums sat on the fence during the election of April 17. Only when Seale placed in the runoff against the incumbent mayor did Dellums endorse him. Even then no other Democrat of consequence endorsed Seale.

The Seale campaign represents a new stage in the degeneration of the BPP. It no longer can be viewed as a left wing or Black radical political tendency as it has been in the past. During the period between its ultraleft stage and the Seale/Brown campaign the BPP drifted. It of course came up with reformist nostrums and ideas but, essentially was without direction or a clear way forward. It is now on a clear course of integration into capitalist politics in the style of Congressman Ron Dellums.

There are still, around the country, illusions and lack of information about the real nature of the BPP and its central leaders. Only the SWP is able to adequately explain the nature of the BPP. The Seale/Brown campaign gives us ample ammunition in that task.

On the Oakland-Berkeley Branch's Intervention

A few remarks remain to be made concerning the Oakland-Berkeley branch's intervention into the Seale/Brown campaign. We voted to extend critical support to that campaign. We also ran a Black comrade for Oakland Board of Education, and a comrade for Junior College Board of Trustees to carry the party's program into the election, and to carry out the critical support tactic in relation to the Seale/Brown campaign. The party has to weigh seriously the extending of support to any campaign other than our own, since matters of principle are involved. It was a decision of the Oakland-Berkeley branch, but also of the party as a whole. The Political Committee must give concurrence to such a decision.

The fact of the organizational and political independence of the Seale/Brown campaign from capitalist parties and its organizational base in the Black community which was the character of the campaign in its beginning stages and the early part of the campaigning, was the decisive criterion in deciding if it was within the bounds

of principled revolutionary politics to extend critical support. Everyone in the branch agreed that it was not unprincipled to do so. Even those who wanted the party to run a candidate against Seale for mayor (this included Comrades Massey and Clark) agreed that this was a tactical question not a principled one. Points of contention in the discussion were: is calling for a vote for Seale/Brown as an alternative to the Democratic and Republican candidates the best tactic to use in getting a hearing for the party's ideas in the Black community and in making contacts among the many young Black supporters of Seale and Brown? And, if the support is given—how critical does "critical" support mean? That is, how much will we publicly attack Seale for his lack of program, any concessions to Democratic politics, etc?

The overwhelming majority of the branch voted for the critical support tactic as the best way in practice for the party to campaign for the need for an independent Black political party, to elaborate upon the example of the Raza Unida Party, and to point to the need for working people to form their own party. It also would enable us to get a hearing from Seale supporters with whom we would be able, in discussions, to get into our whole political perspective and the problems with the BPP. The SWP identity and line would be clearly established through our two Oakland candidates and our press interventions.

What was important to grasp is that we were extending support to the Seale/Brown campaign for Oakland city office in the elections to be held April 17, 1973, period. We were not giving support to the Black Panther Party, the survival programs, or Seale personally.

We used the public formulation of "the SWP calls for a vote for Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown, two leaders of the Black Panther Party, because they are running a campaign based upon the Black community against the candidates of the Democratic and Republican parties. We think that this is a progressive move and sets a positive example."

We soon found out that Seale and Brown did not see this as an acceptable form of support. Our main intervention was participation in a series of "meet-the-candidates" nights in the Black community. Often our candidates were on the platform at the same time as Seale and Brown. Seale and Brown and their campaign organizers were visibly upset with what we had to say. They saw it as something that attempted to divide them from white and Democratic Party voters. After the first few candidates meetings it became clear that Seale and Brown were veering sharply toward an open identification with the Democratic Party. The precipitating cause for this was the initiation by the two regular Democratic Party candidates of attacks upon Seale as a Black Panther radical, and that they were the real Democrats. "A Democrat" and "the endorsed Democrat" appeared on the literature of the two Democrats running against Seale. Seale replied in kind by launching a campaign to out Democrat them. Previous general formulations like "people's candidates" were dropped in favor of putting "a Democrat" on Seale posters. New brochures and radio ads were made up with the label "vote for Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown, two effective Democrats."

With this development, the Oakland-Berkeley SWP voted to withdraw support from Seale and Brown. Their campaign was still organizationally run by the BPP and no one else, and it still drew its energy from the Black community, but in no way could you say it was politically independent from the Democratic Party. In fact, in order to justify the turn in the campaign (in reply directly to our attacks), Seale systematically defended the record of the Democratic Party, and being in the Democratic Party, in a manner much less "leftist" and sophisticated than that of Ron Dellums or other left-liberals. Most comrades in the Oakland-Berkeley branch expected a rightward drift in the Seale campaign and the attendant need to escalate criticism as this happened. The rapid tempo of this move to the right was not expected. But, such is life; and you can predict the outline of such a development, but can't expect to hit it on the nose every time.

As it worked out, the party's extending support in the early stages, and then withdrawing it with the Democratic Party turn of the Seale campaign gave our intervention an impact much greater than we could have hoped.

The announcement of the withdrawal of support was broadcast several times on the Black soul station in Oakland. It had an immediate effect upon the Seale campaign workers and followers. Seale workers came into Granma bookstore, the YSA office at UC Berkeley, and approached comrades at Merritt College in Oakland to find out why we did it and to argue with us.

We had a chance to engage in innumerable discussions with young Black supporters of Seale about the BPP, the SWP, our full line and our full understanding of the BPP and the needed strategy for Black liberation. Most of the heavy campaigning came after the withdrawal of support. Our interventions altered the character of the candidate meetings. Seale constantly was forced to defend the Democratic Party in reply to our candidates and questions from the floor (questions such as "how can you say that the party that murdered Fred Hampton is a tool for liberation?" had a very disquieting effect upon the ranks of Seale workers. Top Seale workers began a slander campaign against our Black candidate and attempted to stop Seale workers from talking to us.)

We found a consistent layer of people who responded positively to what we had to say at the candidate meetings. This was in spite of growing hostility of the Seale campaign leaders and in one instance organized heckling of our Board of Education candidate.

The gains we realized out of this experience were: (a) a clearer understanding of the functioning and direction of the BPP; (b) the party's name, and identification with the ideas of Black control of the Black community and undying hostility to Democratic and Republican politics became much more widespread in the Black community of Oakland than before; (c) we made valuable contacts; (d) our work at Merritt College (a junior college with a very large Black and Chicano enrollment) was especially enhanced. The Merritt Raza Student Union endorsed our candidate for school board.

The intent of this contribution is to relate to the party as a whole the real experience we had with the Seale/Brown campaign; to advance some of my own thoughts on the meaning of the campaign; and to explain how

we applied the critical support tactic under unusual circumstances. I'm also sure that this article will play a role in undercutting some of the horror stories that the

"internationalist nee FAPO" tendency(s) must assuredly be telling about the Oakland-Berkeley branch's intervention in the Oakland elections.

July 10, 1973

ON IMPLEMENTING OUR TASKS IN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

by Victoria Jones, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

The Draft Political Resolution before the coming SWP convention contains the following section on the activity of the party in the women's movement for the immediate future:

"At present there is no issue raised by the women's movement that has the same immediate potential for the organization of a national campaign as the abortion question had. Important struggles in which we should participate will continue. Some of these are the fight to pass the Equal Rights Amendment; actions demanding childcare facilities which can involve working-class and Black women; all kinds of local struggles for equal pay and opportunities on the job; and continuation of the fight for the right of abortion against reactionaries attempting to maintain or reintroduce various restrictions on abortion.

"Some of these struggles will have significant support from working women, especially the childcare fight. At the present time, however, it is likely that the campus women's liberation groups will be the most consistent base for organizing participation in and support for a wide range of women's liberation activities." (Draft Political Resolution, SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 31, No.13, pp. 19-20.)

Since the Draft Political Resolution does not present a detailed analysis of the women's movement and our strategy for it, we can conclude that it advocates a continuation of the line laid down in the resolution adopted at the 1971 convention, *Towards A Mass Feminist Movement*, insofar as it still applies.

It is to this document, and the way in which it has been applied by the party over the two years since the last convention, that I wish to turn. The major task for the party set out in that document was to work for the repeal of abortion laws through the construction of a women's national coalition with a mass action perspective.

Our part in winning the victory embodied in the Supreme Court ruling of January 21, 1973, on abortion is commented on in the Draft Political Resolution:

"The role of the SWP in helping build WONAAC was an important element in winning this victory which advanced the struggle for women's liberation and creates a more favorable context for the mobilization of masses of women in revolutionary struggle. The SWP can be

proud of the role we played" (p. 10).

The abortion campaign was not the only task projected for the party in the women's movement in the 1971 resolution. In fact, a number of other areas of work were decided upon, as we can see from the following:

"In addition to the fight around the abortion issue there are a number of other specific tasks which are of importance in the coming months.

"One is to concentrate our activity to build the feminist organizations and activities of Black women, Chicanas, Puerto Rican women, and other oppressed nationalities. As the debate on feminism continues to deepen within the nationalist movements we want to continue to be the champions of the position that nationalism and feminism are complementary not contradictory struggles, that they will strengthen and advance each other. Through our publications, forums, election campaigns, speaking tours and other activities we want to take an active part in this debate.

"We also want to continue and deepen our work in building campus-based women's liberation groups, high-school organizations and city-wide organizations. Building campus women's liberation groups is a key task, since the campus groups are the largest and fastest growing sector of the movement."

The document continued by outlining further tasks: "to educate within the movement on the importance of the war as an issue of vital concern to women"; "building the 1971 and 1972 socialist election campaigns"; "sales of all our literature"; "subscriptions to and sales of *The Militant*"; educating the "significant numbers of activists in the women's liberation [that] have begun to join the SWP and YSA"; and it also mentioned the following area of work, which I wish to quote in full.

"There is an entire range of educational activities we engage in which are of particular importance. In addition to forums and branch educationals on specific questions as they arise, members should be encouraged to read the women's liberation press and consciousness-raising literature. Both external and internal classes on women's liberation should be organized regularly." (All these tasks are outlined on page 18 of SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 29, No. 4, *Towards A Mass Feminist Movement*.)

The Draft Political Resolution does not comment on our performance in these other areas of work. It seems to me that we were not as successful in carrying out these other tasks as we were in building the abortion campaign. Of course our cadre is limited and, up to January 1973 we had to concentrate our forces on our primary task, the abortion campaign. However, it appears to me that when we implemented the decision to help launch WONAAC, we also made a turn away from most other work in the women's movement.

I shall give some examples of this turn from New York:

1) We made a tactical decision to leave the Women's Strike Coalition (a citywide coalition in which we were very active, organized around the three demands of Free Abortion on Demand, Free 24-Hour Community Controlled Childcare, and Equal Job and Educational Opportunities) if the coalition did not agree to dissolve itself into the yet-to-be-formed abortion coalition. This decision was carried out in June 1971. Since that time we have not been involved in any citywide women's organizations (except for a recent minimal intervention into NOW NY) and New York City has been without an action-oriented coalition except for WONAAC.

2) The decision to leave the Women's Strike Coalition involved giving up participation in the newspaper *Majority Report* which we had played a large part in launching in May 1971. Since then *Majority Report* has developed into the largest feminist publication in the city, with distribution extending all the way to the West Coast. Its large circulation has been partly due to an arrangement with NOW NY whereby all members received a subscription to the paper which contained a special NOW Newsletter. (I understand that this policy has recently been discontinued by NOW NY.) It is undeniable that *Majority Report* has not played the role that we would like to see for a citywide feminist paper with such a large circulation, but then, since its first issue it has not had any revolutionary socialists on its staff. Furthermore, our precipitous leaving of the Women's Strike Coalition created such hard feelings among many of the independents in the coalition that a strong anti-SWP and anti-WONAAC line was one of the main features of the paper after its second issue.

3) Consciousness-raising groups: The position adopted by the SWP at the 1971 convention on consciousness-raising groups was as follows:

"Consciousness-raising groups, and the general consciousness raising that comes from being part of a broad movement, can help give women confidence to get out of the isolation of their homes, and courage to lead independent lives and gain independent identity and strength. Small-group consciousness raising is not an end in itself, but can be a vital part of laying the basis for taking action against female oppression." (*Towards A Mass Feminist Movement*, p. 12.)

Many women recruited to the SWP from the women's movement owe a great deal to consciousness-raising groups where they developed the understanding and will to fight that led them to the decision to join a revolutionary socialist organization. In 1970 and 1971 many women in the SWP recruited from other areas of struggle saw the importance of consciousness-raising groups in giving

them the specific understanding of their oppression as women and the confidence to fight that oppression, even though beforehand they had already taken the step of joining a revolutionary socialist party. We understand that there is no such thing as being too feminist, and that joining with other women to look closely at our experiences and attitudes, and developing the rage needed to fight our oppression can only help strengthen our feminism, and this is what consciousness-raising groups can do. However, since mid-1971 there has been a trend away from encouraging SWP women to participate in consciousness-raising groups, and very few of our women have done so.

1973

It is now over six months since the Supreme Court ruling on abortion, and we have yet to see any major reassignment of our women comrades into other areas of the women's movement. Obviously we want to remain in a state of readiness to respond to attacks on the right to abortion. But we certainly have a lot more women comrades to assign elsewhere than when we were trying to build a mass campaign on abortion.

We have already lost some opportunities in these last months by not having our women in different women's organizations. Some of these opportunities have been:

1) The consumer movement—had our comrades been involved in NOW and other women's organizations we could have fought for them to take a clear stand in support of the meat boycott and the May 5 actions. We would have been in a far better position to fight the anti-labor tendencies in that movement.

2) Childcare struggles—Nixon's drastic cuts in social services earlier this year were widely opposed, but we did not play a large part in trying to channel this opposition into an independent mass-action direction. Had we been involved in the women's organizations we could have fought for them to link up with the struggles waged by women directly involved in the childcare centers who were protesting the cutbacks. To my knowledge only in San Francisco have we made any appreciable headway in this fight.

Why Were These Tasks Not Carried Out?

Perhaps one reason for our lack of participation in all but the abortion campaign lies back in the document *Toward A Mass Feminist Movement*. It is my conjecture that at least part of that document is ambiguous, and that one particular interpretation has led to some unfortunate errors.

In the section "Opponents of A Mass Action Perspective" the document states that the "anti-mass-action tendencies" can be roughly divided into four groups—ultra-lefts, utopian idealists, traditional-type reformists and liberals, and several "socialist" tendencies including the Communist Party. It goes into the utopian idealists with the following words:

"A second major group has been quite aptly designated as 'livingroom feminists.' The main characteristic of this tendency is that they want to make the movement a substitute for the inability of capitalist society to create an unalienated personal life. . . ."

"Common among livingroom feminists is a hostility to materialist explanations of female oppression. Most of them believe that the oppression of women has grown up in society, not as a result of class oppression, but because men took advantage of the fact that women had children in order to make slaves of them, and because men personally benefit from the subjugation of women. Many see the oppression of women as being the basis for all the different types of oppression in capitalist society.

"Because many livingroom feminists think that female oppression stems from the way individual men and women think, they tend to concentrate on small-group consciousness-raising as the chief method for changing society. They believe that liberation can come from changing people's minds, as opposed to changing social institutions. . . .

"Related to the livingroom feminist approach is the perspective of changing society by building counterinstitutions, that is trying to create islands of a perfect new society within the context of the old society. The counterinstitutionists oppose making demands on the government or on existing institutions of society. Instead, they say, women should use their own resources to set up childcare centers, abortion counselling, private women's liberation health clinics, clothing exchanges, food co-ops and loan societies. There have been some benefits to a few women from such activities. But the building of counterinstitutions is no alternative to—and is often a retreat from—building a mass women's movement to win liberation." (*Toward A Mass Feminist Movement*, pp. 14-15.)

The statement that there are opponents of mass action among women in consciousness-raising groups and counterinstitutions does not logically mean that all women so involved are opposed to mass action and fall into the category of "utopian feminists." In many instances it has been consciousness-raising groups as such that have organized actions, and many women are involved in counterinstitutions, especially childcare groups, because this is the only way they can organize their lives to live an independent existence, not because they believe they will change society that way. However, the document did not state this half of the argument, and I believe that this ambiguity has led to the interpretation that all such wom-

en are our opponents. I think that this explains some of the reluctance of the SWP to become involved with these women in any way.

How Can We Carry Out Our Tasks in the Women's Movement?

In order to carry out our tasks in the women's movement we will need to think seriously about our priorities and assignments of our women cadre. The relative lull in the mass movements and the absence of a national campaign in the women's movement affords us the opportunity to play a more active role on a local basis in the diverse struggles and directions of the women's movement. This point is brought out in the document *The Abortion Struggle: What Have We Accomplished, Where Should We Go From Here?* (SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 31, No. 19, p. 13):

"While the nature of our participation in women's liberation struggles will be determined by political developments on a national and local scale, political decisions about how to intervene and around what issues, will take a greater degree of branch leadership than when we had a central national campaign."

We can take advantage of the present situation by probing all kinds of women's organizations, and by developing the education of our comrades. This education can take many forms—from internal and external classes for all to participation by our woman comrades in conferences, festivals and other activities in the women's movement, and to participation in consciousness-raising groups as an important part of that education.

The struggle for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment will clearly be one of the most important areas of our work, particularly in those states where it has not been passed by the legislature. It may well need a large mobilization of women to win this basic struggle.

Some other struggles that appear to be in the forefront at the moment are: defense of the right to abortion; the childcare fight; attempts to build women's caucuses in the trade unions and to unionize the mass of unorganized women workers; the struggle against forced sterilization; campus struggles for women's studies, to name a few. Of course the issues around which women are struggling go beyond these, and it is our task to seek them out and throw our support behind them wherever we can.

July 13, 1973