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A PROPOSAL FOR GAY LIBERATION WORK

by Becky Bohan, Minneapolis Branch

It is evident that the national committee memorandum on the gay liberation movement needs clarification. Recent contributions have shown a variety of interpretations, several expressing the impression that the SWP generally will not be doing gay liberation work.

I feel that the memorandum leaves gay work open to branches. Comrades can be assigned to actions around specific issues, as well as to gay organizations, where

comrades not necessarily take on full responsibility for the group, but at least help to build the organization and guide it politically on an on-going basis.

To clarify the scope of our intervention, I am proposing the following amendment to the Political Resolution:

There should be a branch-by-branch assessment of the gay liberation movement and an intervention in consultation with the National Office if an intervention is called for.

VIETNAM: A MAJOR CHALLENGE TO OUR PROGRAM

by Stephen Bloom, Brooklyn Branch

The isolation and subsequent degeneration of the Russian Revolution was one of the most important events in history. The formation of a bureaucratic clique which put its own interests ahead of those of the proletariat and the world revolution resulted in the development of the political ideology of Stalinism.

The International Left Opposition, and later the Fourth International, were formed on the basis of an analysis of the rise of Stalinism and a counterposition of revolutionary Marxism to it. Only our movement understands this development in the history of the world revolution. It is the basis of our entire program and politics, and it is likewise the basis of the political errors of all of our opponents.

But Stalinism, like any other movement that relates to real political developments, does not remain static. We must be able to understand and analyze its twists, turns, and contortions under the pressure of historical events.

An understanding of the essential character of Stalinism is therefore basic for our movement. The ideas concerning the character of the Vietnamese Communist Party which have been raised by a number of comrades of the MMF tendency, most notably by Rousset in his book, but also other comrades through the internal discussion—including the IT in this country—represent a challenge of major proportions to our understanding of Stalinism. This challenge threatens to undermine our ability to analyze and relate correctly to world events.

There are a number of mistakes that these comrades make. Among other problems, they fail to differentiate between revolutionary rhetoric (of which Stalinism is always capable) and revolutionary action. In addition, they downplay the counterrevolutionary role of the VCP, making their errors sound simply like mistakes of a basically sincere revolutionary organization, whose understanding of the correct political line is somewhat lacking as a result of a "Stalinist background" or "Stalinist training." The logic of this position is to characterize the VCP more like the Cuban leadership than like the bureaucracy in the USSR, which would in turn bring into question the whole idea of calling for a political revolution in North Vietnam as

the only method of establishing workers' democracy there. A clarification of this question should certainly be a priority in the international discussion.

Vietnam and China

Vietnam is not the first issue over which differences of this kind have appeared. At the time of the last world congress in 1969, a discussion took place around the question of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in which questions about the character of Stalinism began to be raised, although in a somewhat more obscure form.

At that time a number of European comrades proposed a series of amendments to a resolution on the Cultural Revolution drafted by the SWP. Although not amounting to major changes when taken individually, their proposals substantially altered the tone and line of the document when considered as a whole. Their character was as follows (this is not, of course, an exhaustive analysis):

1. The elimination of the description of the Chinese CP as Stalinist and a characterization of it as "bureaucratic centrist."

2. The softening of criticisms of Mao's foreign policy.

3. The raising of differences concerning why the Cultural revolution was initiated, taking Mao's antibureaucratic rhetoric for good coin to a large extent.

4. The raising of differences concerning the character of the Red Guard movements—were they democratic mass actions or bureaucratically manipulated mobilizations.

5. In general—the taking of a friendlier approach to Maoism, as a more progressive force than the Moscow variety of Stalinism, and as perhaps mistaken on many questions, but certainly not a hardened counterrevolutionary current.

The logic of this position, especially the characterization of the Chinese CP as bureaucratic centrist, also brings into question the call for a political revolution in China, although the portion of the document that made this call was not amended.

It is clear that the same questions are involved in Vietnam as were (and still are) in the case of China. The basic contradiction that the European comrades are at-

tempting to resolve—how a Stalinist party can take state power and create a workers state, is important to deal with. But the solution does not lie in denying the Stalinist character of those parties; rather it is in understanding the specific historical conditions under which these developments took place. I have dealt at length with this in a previous contribution to the discussion.

The Implications of the Dispute

The problem is a failure to understand the basic character of Stalinism. Its political manifestations—the subordination of the world revolution, the suppression of dissent, the theory of stages, the abandonment of a proletarian program for an ultraleft or reformist one, etc.—all stem from the basic need to defend the narrow nationalistic interests of the privileged bureaucratic castes that exist in every workers' state today except Cuba.

The fact that one in power, the various national bureaucracies in different workers' states have conflicts of interest on various levels (just as do the different bourgeoisies in various capitalist states) does not change the Stalinist character of the CPs in these various countries. It merely exacerbates the already contradictory position of Stalinism on a world scale.

How the VCP fits in perfectly with this understanding of Stalinism, both before and after it took power in Vietnam, is thoroughly documented in the article by Johnson and Feldman in the July-August 1973 *ISR*. A similar study of the CCP would reveal the same.

The political dangers of a misunderstanding of the Stalinist character of the VCP are very real. The position taken by Rousset and the other comrades of the MMF tendency would lead us to conclude that a victory by the NLF, and the coming to power of the PRG, would be equivalent to the victory of the socialist revolution in S. Vietnam. Just on the level of Vietnam, disregarding its implications for other questions, such a position would disarm the Fourth International. Even if the PRG takes power in its own right, its program is still a bourgeois program. The program of the VCP is a Stalinist, class-collaborationist program.

Under these circumstances the formation of a workers' state in the South would be decided in struggle and not automatically. If it occurs, as a result of the pressure of the Vietnamese masses and of the dynamic of the permanent revolution, which is certainly a possibility, it will be in spite, and not because, of the program and actions of the Vietnamese Stalinists.

July 16, 1973

THE FIGHT IN THE UNITED SECRETARIAT: REFORMIST APPETITE VERSUS GUERRILLAIST CENTRISM

by Michael Milin, Detroit Branch

In the struggle within the United Secretariat, the minority, centred on the (fraternally related) SWP, represents a *reformist* tendency, approximating the pre-World War I Social Democracy, while the majority, centered on the French Ligue Communiste, is a *centrist* current presently defending insurrectionary nationalist Stalinism of the left Maoist-Guevarist variety. Both tendencies are profoundly opportunist, but with differing views as to the possibilities of realizing their opportunist appetites. In large part, these differences reflect the different political conditions in the U. S. and Western Europe. Overawed by the apparent stability of American society and the authority of its ruling class, the SWP leadership cannot conceive of attaining power except through collaboration with a section of the bourgeoisie. Thus, the dominant activity of the SWP in the past several years has been the creation of a non-electoral *popular front* in opposition to the Vietnam war (with no possibility of generating an electoral extension at present because the SWP has little to offer the powerful capitalist parties). NPAC and its predecessors were deliberately designed with a programmatic invitation to elements of the ruling class, and a few prominent Democratic Party politicians duly accepted the offer. The main reason the SWP has reversed its past enthusiastic (although platonic) advocacy of guer-

rilla war is that association with real guerrilla-terrorists threatens to destroy the SWP's respectability in the face of bourgeois public opinion. Would Senator Hartke or Congresswoman Abzug have joined a "coalition" with a party associated with people kidnapping U. S. business executives? This is the spectre that haunts the SWP leadership: the armed crazies in the United Secretariat will drive away our bourgeois liberal collaborators!

Existing in less stable societies, the international majority sections are more optimistic about the armed seizure of state power than is the SWP leadership, and are contemptuous of its legalistic respectability. However, the international majority is no less opportunist than the SWP leadership.

Thus Comrade Germain endorsed the fundamental line of the SWP's class collaborationist antiwar work: "The role played by the American Trotskyists in stimulating and helping to organize a mass antiwar movement in the USA expresses a similar transformation. This mass antiwar movement . . . became a political factor of great importance in the world relationship of forces helping the struggle of the Vietnamese revolution against the counter-revolutionary war of imperialism." (Ernest Germain, "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*,

By way of criticism, Comrade Germain merely observes that the SWP could also have devoted "more specific propaganda directed to a more limited vanguard, explaining the need to support the Vietnamese revolution till its final victory." (*Ibid.*, page 46.) Ah, but Vance Hartke wouldn't have liked that! It was not an accident that the SWP consistently avoided raising even a figleaf of class politics in the antiwar movement. But the international majority, of course, was hardly in a position to criticize the SWP's class collaboration over the Vietnam war since the Ligue Communiste supported that classic and easily recognizable popular front, the Union of the Left, in the last French election. Expectedly the SWP leadership returned the favor by uncritically publicizing the Ligue's class collaboration on that occasion.

For even in order to establish erstwhile orthodox credentials, the SWP—at least while the elections were under way and illusions were high—did not attack the French section for capitulation to the *Union de la Gauche* popular front. The SWP has made popular frontism the very center of its so-called "mass" work through its major activity, the antiwar movement. The SWP's substantial numerical growth since the early 1960s has been achieved precisely through the party's immersion in the classless antiwar movement, where along with the reformist Communist Party, the SWP bears major responsibility for keeping the struggle within the bounds of the liberal capitalist framework through the "single issue" strategy. The whole purpose of this policy was the deliberate refusal to raise the *class question* of the Vietnamese revolution, and the denial of the interrelationship between struggling to sharpen the domestic class struggle and defending the Vietnamese revolution. Instead, the party prided itself on being the "best builders" of impotent parades and rallies prominently featuring bourgeois politicians.

In an attempt to obscure the fundamentally popular frontist character of its antiwar work, the SWP has published in its *Education for Socialists* series two chapters from "The People's Front: The New Betrayal," written by James Burnham and published by the SWP in 1937 as its principal public declaration against the people's front. But the SWP has not republished the last chapter of Burnham's pamphlet, which describes how the Stalinists applied the people's front to the U. S., where they were not strong enough to bargain away proletarian revolution for governmental posts.

Burnham wrote: "Most significant of all is the application of the People's Front policy to 'anti-war work.' Through a multitude of pacifist organizations, and especially through the directly controlled American League Against War and Fascism, the Stalinists aim at the creation of a 'broad, classless People's Front of all those opposed to war.' The class-collaborationist character of the People's Front policy is strikingly revealed through the Stalinist attitude in these organizations. They rule out in advance the Marxist analysis of war as necessarily resulting from the inner conflicts of capitalism and therefore genuinely opposed only by revolutionary class struggle against the capitalist order and in contrast maintain that all persons, from whatever social class or group, whether or not opposed to capitalism, can 'unite' to stop war."

This Trotskyist condemnation of the popular front policy of the U. S. Stalinists reads as if it had been written specifically to describe the precise practice of the SWP in the antiwar movement—the practice which Comrade Germain finds principled!

Similarly over the question of the SWP's blatant accommodation to petty-bourgeois nationalism. Comrade Germain seeks to establish orthodox Leninist credentials for the international majority by denouncing the Canadian section and counterposing to the LSA/LSO extensive quotations from Lenin on the difference between the right of nations to self-determination on the one hand and nationalism—a pernicious anti-working-class ideology covering overt collaboration with the class enemy—on the other.

But when push comes to shove, Comrade Germain has nothing but fulsome praise for the SWP's abandonment of Leninism over Black and Chicano nationalism: "The analysis and projections made by Comrade George Breitman in that respect were among the most important creative contributions to Marxist thought realized by the world Trotskyist movement since the murder of Leon Trotsky. The conclusion was obvious: Black (and Chicano) nationalism in the United States are objectively progressive forces which revolutionary Marxists had to support, stimulate and help organise independently from the two big American bourgeois parties and from the still non-existent labour party." ("In Defence of Leninism . . .," page 43.)

Not "Armed Struggle," But Proletarian Revolution

The central revision of revolutionary Marxism by the international majority is the separation of the *class organization of an insurrection* from the society emerging from it. A revolutionary workers state, in which the working class democratically governs on the basis of collectivized property, can *only* be established if the *armed forces of the labor movement itself* play the dominant role in overthrowing the capitalist state. The insurgent peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie are necessary allies of the proletariat in socialist revolutions in backward countries. However, as Trotsky insisted again and again in his fight against Stalinism, the decisive question is whether the proletariat leads the petty bourgeoisie or vice versa. The leadership of the proletariat in a social revolution does not have a general or nebulous political or ideological form. Any bourgeois nationalist, petty-bourgeois radical or Stalinist can and often does claim to be fighting for workers power. "Proletarian leadership" is meaningless rhetoric unless extended to military dominance during an insurrection. *The leading role of the proletariat in a social revolution also means the military dominance of proletarian armed forces* (workers militias and proletarian sections of the old armed forces) *during the insurrection*. This is a fundamental principle of revolutionary Marxism. Whoever denies it is not a Trotskyist!

Where capitalism has been overthrown primarily by petty-bourgeois armed forces (Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, Cuba), what has emerged are *deformed workers states*—bureaucratic ruling castes based on collectivized (i.e., working-class) property forms. That the guerrilla road to power *necessarily* leads to a Stalinist regime is shown by the Cuban revolution, where the insurrec-

tionary leadership did not begin as conscious Stalinists. Rather, the 26th of July Movement was a heterogeneous radical nationalist group originating out of the militant adventurist wing of the party of the Cuban liberal bourgeoisie (the Ortodoxo Party). However, in order to overthrow capitalism *and* maintain bonapartist rule of the consolidating bureaucratic caste over the Cuban working class, Castro's movement had to become a Stalinist party, merging with the wretched Cuban CP.

In a generally politically correct document, Comrade Gerald Clark states, "By incorrectly generalizing the unusual experiences of the Cuban revolution and applying them on a continental scale in Latin America, the majority has revealed its petty-bourgeois adaptation to non-revolutionary currents in the workers movement." (Gerald Clark, "The Only Road to Revolution Is Through the Proletariat," *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Volume 31, Number 1, April 1973, page 8.)

This statement indicates that Comrade Clark has not yet entirely transcended the theoretical framework of Pabloism. Revolutionary Marxists oppose the abandonment of "the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions" in favor of "the Cuban road to power" not because "the Cuban road" is unlikely to succeed elsewhere—indeed, the Bolshevik revolution has not yet been repeated elsewhere—but because it necessarily produces a nationalist, anti-working-class regime. Soviet Russia in 1917-24 and Cuba (or China or Russia today) are two different types of societal organizations separated by a *political revolution*. Between Trotskyism on the one hand and Castro, Mao, Ho Chi Minh and their ilk on the other is a line of blood! They know this and so should we.

The Consistency of the Argentine PRT

The debate has centered around the politics and activities of the international majority-supported group in Argentina, the PRT (Combatiente). The international majority has simultaneously defended the PRT against minority accusations of adventurism and criticized it for Guevarist deviations.

Even when Comrade Germain seeks to demonstrate the PRT's close ties to the working class, he demonstrates just the opposite—a thoroughgoing petty-bourgeois elitism: "The ERP detachments penetrated into some 30 factories where special conditions of repression existed and where armed factory guards of the bosses and the army terrorized the workers. They disarmed the guards, convened all the workers into general assemblies and held long discussions with them on the present stage of the class struggle in Argentina." ("In Defence of Leninism . . .," page 17.)

We might remind Comrade Germain that in 1949 Mao's Red Army, on a much broader scale, disarmed the repressive bourgeois army and convened (that is, ordered) the workers to assemble to hold "long discussions" with them. Revolutionary Marxists seek to replace the repressive bourgeois state apparatus with armed forces controlled by the workers movement. By contrast, the PRT seeks to replace the bourgeois state apparatus with armed petty-bourgeois bands which are not controlled by the organized working class.

The PRT's support of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and its belief in the revolutionary character of the Cuban, North Korean and Vietnamese Stalinist parties

is not "inconsistency" or "theoretical eclecticism" as Comrade Germain contends. The PRT is a consistent insurrectionary Stalinist organization. It is opposed to workers democracy in the state which it is seeking to establish and it is pursuing insurrectionary methods designed to ensure military control over the working class should it come to power. It is the PRT's uneasy apologists of the international majority who are inconsistent. The international majority claims to believe that a workers state should be governed through soviet democracy, but advocates insurrectionary methods which deprive the working class of decisive military power. The kindest thing one can say of the international majority position is that it is utopian. Just as pre-Marxist socialism looked to the enlightened members of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie to liberate the working class, so the international majority believes that enlightened and heroic petty-bourgeois guerrilla fighters will overthrow the capitalist state and magnanimously grant the working class soviet power.

The PRT seems to be rapidly moving away from the United Secretariat. This is easily understandable. Not only does it flow inevitably from the actual urban guerrilla struggle the PRT undertakes, but, as Comrade Germain has himself noted, the initiating PRT cadres who had been more "Trotskyist" have been largely exterminated. (This is the usual fate of terrorists practicing terrorism and is a sufficient comment on the international majority's approach to the difficult and lengthy task of building leadership.) Comrade Germain cannot justly disown those who engage in the "strategy" he defends when they go on to embrace the corresponding left-Stalinist ideology. Because they are fundamentally nationalist, regimes which come to power via the guerrilla road repudiate the perspective of socialist revolutions in other nations when these are an obstacle to making diplomatic deals with bourgeois states. Appropriately, Fidel Castro has evolved in a manner parallel to his onetime publicist, Comrade Hansen. Castro too once advocated guerrilla war, but now finds it "ultraleft." The Havana regime has repudiated guerrilla war in order to form an alliance with Latin American bourgeois nationalism (the Peruvian junta, the Chilean popular front, Peronism). In a like manner, Mao has endorsed capitalist counterrevolutionary terrorism in Bangladesh and Ceylon. Some Maoist-Fidelistas are repelled by the present policies of the Havana and Peking regimes. These dissident left Stalinists can only be won to Trotskyism by proving to them that the counterrevolutionary foreign policy of Havana and Peking is the organic and necessary result of the manner in which these regimes came to power: without the dominant role in the revolution being played by the working class under Trotskyist leadership. But all wings of the United Secretariat have adapted to left Maoism-Guevarism by presenting Trotskyism as a form of insurrectionary left Stalinism. This is the crime of the centrist international majority in its policies toward Argentina.

Terrorists, Guerrillas and Stalinist Bureaucrats

Much confusion exists in our movement about what Stalinism is. It is far more than an ideology, a particular political-organizational tradition, and certainly not simply a phase in the history of the USSR. Stalinism is a social phenomenon—bureaucratic rule on the basis of

working-class property forms. In addition to being a reformist working-class current, Stalinism has organic roots in the urban petty bourgeoisie of the backward countries. Petty-bourgeois radical nationalists identify with and take as models the Maoists, Viet Cong and Fidelistas as people like themselves who have made good. In one of its aspects, Stalinism is a form of petty-bourgeois radical nationalism — the politics of aspiring bureaucrats.

No one should be taken in by the international majority's attempt to make a fundamental distinction between classical terrorism and contemporary guerrillism of the ERP-Tupamaros type. Both represent the same basic political class content: the attempt by a section of the petty bourgeoisie to overthrow the bourgeoisie and succeed it as the dominant stratum in society. Guerrillism is nothing more than the current characteristic method of struggle by petty-bourgeois radical nationalists who in particular circumstances smoothly transform themselves into Stalinist bureaucrats.

Decades before the emergence of "Marxist-Leninist guerrillas," Trotsky pointed out the organic connection between left-wing terrorism and Stalinist bureaucratism:

*"Individual terrorism is in its very essence bureaucratism turned inside out. For Marxists this law was not discovered yesterday. Bureaucratism has no confidence in the masses and endeavors to substitute itself for the masses. Terrorism works in the same manner; it seeks to make the masses happy without asking their participation. The Stalinist bureaucracy has created a vile leader-cult, attributing to leaders divine qualities. 'Hero' worship is also the religion of terrorism, only with a minus sign. The Nikolaevs imagine that all that is necessary is to remove a few leaders by means of a revolver in order for history to take another course. Communist terrorists, as an ideological grouping, are of the same flesh and blood as the Stalinist bureaucracy." (Leon Trotsky, "The Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Kirov Assassination," *Writings of Leon Trotsky* 1934-35, Pathfinder Press, page 124.)*

The SWP Leadership: For and Against the Guerrilla Road to Power

For many years, the SWP leadership was not only an ardent advocate of guerrilla war, but engaged in idiot enthusing over the Castro regime and Fidelista movement. The SWP's self-styled orthodox turn against guerrillism is part of its *rightward* motion in adopting a reformist program acceptable to sections of the liberal bourgeoisie. The present arguments over which tendency has a distorted interpretation of the Ninth World Congress decisions are quite beside the point.

For the major document which in 1963 laid the basis for the SWP's unification with the European Pabloists to form the United Secretariat stated: "(13) Along the road of a revolution beginning with simple democratic demands and ending in the rupture of capitalist property relations, guerrilla warfare conducted by landless peasants and semi-proletarian forces, under a leadership that becomes committed to carrying the revolution through to a conclusion, can play a decisive role in undermining and precipitating the downfall of a colonial and semi-colonial power. This is one of the main lessons to be drawn from experience since the second world war. It must be consciously incorporated into the strategy of

building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries." ("For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement," Statement of the Political Committee of the SWP, *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Volume 24, Number 29, April 1963, page 39. Also quoted in "On the Disputed Questions in the Fourth International: A Brief Summary," by C. Howard (IMG), *SWP Internal Information Bulletin*, Number 3 in 1973, June 1973, page 25.)

Interestingly, at that same time the oppositional tendency which later became the Spartacist League produced the following explicit counterposition on guerrilla war: "(15) Experience since the Second World War has demonstrated that peasant-based guerrilla warfare under petit-bourgeois leadership can in itself lead to nothing more than an anti-working-class bureaucratic regime. The creation of such regimes has come about under the conditions of decayed imperialism, the demoralization and disorientation caused by Stalinist betrayals, and the absence of revolutionary Marxist leadership of the working class. Colonial revolution can have an unequivocally progressive revolutionary significance only under such leadership of the revolutionary proletariat. For Trotskyists to incorporate into their strategy revisionism on the *proletarian* leadership in the revolution is a profound negation of Marxism-Leninism no matter what pious wish may be concurrently expressed for 'building revolutionary Marxist parties in the colonial countries.' Marxists must resolutely oppose any adventurist acceptance of the peasant-guerrilla road to socialism — historically akin to the Social Revolutionary program on tactics that Lenin fought. This alternative would be a suicidal course for the socialist goals of the movement, and perhaps physically for the adventurers." ("Towards Rebirth of the Fourth International — Draft Resolution on the World Movement," submitted for the Minority by Shane Mage, James Robertson and Geoffrey White, *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Volume 24, Number 26, June 1963, page 16.)

It might now appear that the SWP majority has capitulated to Spartacism on the guerrilla war question! Such a view however would be inverted. The SWP leadership's present opposition to guerrillism flows directly from its reformist appetites, not simply from opposition to a tactically adventurist policy. The Spartacist tendency, while condemning tactical adventurism, opposed guerrilla war primarily because of its class content and the type of regime which emerges from it if successful.

To the international majority's "strategy of armed struggle," the SWP leadership has counterposed "the strategy of the Leninist method of party building." Taken in an abstract and isolated way, the term "Leninist method of party building" is meaningless and not distinct from the Kautskyan conception of party building by the old German Social Democracy. It is deliberately designed to avoid consideration of the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois state. And the SWP leadership wants to avoid such a discussion because, at bottom, it is opposed to the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist state.

The strongest weapon each side in the international discussion possesses is the obvious departure from Trotskyism by the other side. Thus the international minority can denounce the PRT for Guevarism — but only by glossing over the SWP's years-long panegyrics to Castro and

Che. It can denounce the Bolivian POR (Gonzales) for joining the FRA under a "common bourgeois program" but this is pure hypocrisy for the enthusiasts of the single-issue reformist NPACs and WONAACs. Only those at a great distance from the practice of the SWP can take these cynical protestations of orthodoxy as good coin. Similarly, those who can write approvingly of the European sections for a presumed proletarian orientation are simply naive if they are not willfully blind.

To take one example: "While the SWP leadership interpreted the aborted French revolution as a reaffirmation of their intercontinental-wide student strategy, the European comrades absorbed the true lessons: the importance of being able to challenge the Stalinists and reformists inside the workers movement." ("Statement of Support to the International Majority Tendency," by Ralph Levitt *et al.*, *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Volume 31, Number 11, June 1973, page 3.) In fact the entire thrust of the Ligue Communiste's "from the periphery to the center" strategy is the thesis that the party can conquer the crucial sections of the proletariat by working through marginal and petty-bourgeois sectors, precisely without having to confront the entrenched Stalinist and Social-Democratic leaderships of the organized workers movement. Similarly, the international majority's protestations of outrage at the Canadian section's line on nationalism in English Canada and Quebec are exposed as empty posturing in the light of the European sections' own capitulatory positions on the "Arab revolution," the IRA, the Vietnamese

Stalinists, and all the rest.

Conclusion

The SWP leadership is in its working program committed to a legalistic perspective based on class collaboration as that which flowered in Kautskian Social Democracy. Only the absence of a *mass base* in the trade-union bureaucracy, labor aristocracy, and "progressive" petty bourgeoisie separates the SWP from classic Social Democracy. The SWP's present "orthodox" attack on guerrilla adventurism is, in reality, a frightened reaction to the threat posed by the international majority line to disrupt the acquisition of such a mass base by the SWP, i.e., it is based upon the SWP's own opposition to the revolutionary overthrow of the state. The international majority is a genuine centrist swamp. Whatever the subjective revolutionary intentions of some of them, its denizens range from the thoroughly corrupt union bureaucrats of the Ceylonese LSSP(R) to the workerist sectarians of the British IMG. The international majority is currently defending a policy of insurrectionary nationalist Stalinism which denies the leading role of the proletariat in social revolution as concretized in the military dominance of workers militias during the insurrection. The Fourth International as Trotsky conceived it—a democratic-centralist revolutionary proletarian international—can only emerge through implacable struggle against the reformism of the minority and the centrism of the majority tendency.

July 9, 1973

* The above contribution is not a document of or does not necessarily express the views of the other members of the Revolutionary Internationalist Tendency.

OPEN LETTER TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

July 13, 1973

Dear Comrades:

The purpose of this letter is to formally protest a number of disloyal acts against the Fourth International. Such acts involve a prominent National Committee member plus several comrades in the Los Angeles branch, characterizing the Fourth International as "outside the party," and Comrade Mandel, et al., as "our opponents in Europe." This is especially reprehensible in light of the fact that the leadership of the Los Angeles branch has gone on record in categorizing "political opponents" and "political enemies" as one and the same.

These attacks against our comrades in Europe occurred as a result of two comrades and myself writing letters of protest to the Political Committee, with copies to the USFI. These letters pertained to the undemocratic nature of recent trial proceedings in the Los Angeles branch, in which these two comrades were defendants, and I was a member of the trial body.

Such acts so completely miseducate and poison our comrades against the Fourth International that a long-time activist in our party considers it proper to bring charges against me for "sending letters *outside* our party." While it is true that the SWP is not formally affiliated to the F. I., due to reactionary laws, it is ideologically united, and maintains the status of a sympathizing section. Yet the SWP leadership utilizes this status in an attempt to take advantage of the democratic process of the F. I.,

in order to undermine its authority and threaten its very existence.

The fact that the SWP leadership miseducates its cadre to the notion that our sections in Europe are "opponent organizations," and that to communicate with them is to somehow commit a "disloyal, anti-party act," only reveals that it does not, in fact, consider itself a loyal sympathizing group, at all.

In view of the seriousness of this matter, plus the possible ramifications it could have, not only on the Socialist Workers Party, but on the world Trotskyist movement, in general, I believe that the Political Committee is obliged to disassociate itself from such dangerous statements, while, at the same time, invoke stern admonishments against those who engage in making such statements. It should be stated, at this time, that these violations occurred in the presence of the National Organizational Secretary of the SWP, who neither repudiated nor disassociated himself from these disloyal remarks. This irresponsible attitude deserves the most severe criticism of all.

Comradely,
Judi Shayne, Los Angeles;
for, Supporters of the June 10,
"Statement Of Support To The
International Majority Tendency:

cc: USFI

LA Branch Organizer
Ralph Levitt, Oakland
Bill Massey, Chicago (IT)

IN SUPPORT OF THE RESOLUTION "THE BUILDING OF
REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES IN CAPITALIST EUROPE"

by Berta Langston and Bob Langston, Lower Manhattan Branch,
New York Local; Jon Rothschild, Upper West Side Branch,
New York Local

We support the general line of the draft resolution "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" (IIDB, Vol. IX, no. 5; hereafter referred to as "Draft"). We believe that neither Comrade Mary-Alice's polemic "A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe'—An Initial Contribution to the Discussion" (IIDB, vol. X, no. 3; hereafter referred to as "Criticism"), nor the literary contributions that have been submitted to the SWP internal bulletin, nor the discussions we have heard in our branches has offered sufficient grounds for rejecting the Draft.

In this article we will deal with what we think are the most important issues that have been raised in the discussion so far. These are: the evaluation of entryism *sui generis*; the question of the appropriateness of drawing up a regional document; the character of the period capitalist Europe is passing through; the nature of the new mass vanguard and the party-building method of winning hegemony within it; the question of the relationship between work in the class and work in the sectors (women, students, etc.) and the related questions of the priorities of allocating our forces and the place of workers control in our propaganda and agitation within the work-

ing class; and the question of how to fight repression. In all these areas, save one, we support the general positions taken in the Draft.

Entryism Sui Generis

The question of entryism should be disposed of at the outset. We believe that the general policy of long-term, deep-entry pursued for so many years by the European sections was incorrect. But whether that opinion is sound or not, we agree with Mary-Alice that the question of the historical evaluation of entryism *sui generis* should be set aside for separate discussion. And there is no reason this should not be done, for the methodology of the Draft does not imply a judgement about entryism.

During the branch discussions, some comrades argued that this was not so, that the European comrades who authored the Draft and support it leave open the possibility of practicing entryism *sui generis* again sometime. Not only is the sinner unrepentant, he is brazen and threatens to become a repeat offender. This argument is irrelevant to this discussion. What policies the European comrades *might* follow in a basically altered situation is simply not the question *now*. And the policies the Draft proposes based on an analysis of the objective situation *now* have nothing in common with entryism *sui generis*.

'Continentalism'

"The alternative to 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe' is not an omnibus counterdocument for all of Europe. We reject this approach, just as we reject the idea of a continental counterdocument on Latin America." Thus Mary-Alice (Criticism, p. 27, column 2).

The Draft "even fails to sketch out a concrete program for the construction of class-struggle left wings in the trade unions today." Thus also Mary-Alice (Criticism, p. 5, col. 2).

It is not easy to understand why both criticisms are made—and apparently with equal force. Comrade Mary-Alice frequently objects to the Draft's failure to project concrete demands, slogans, and programs—on the trade-union movement, the student movement, the women's liberation movement, the movement of oppressed nationalities, and so on. But it should be obvious that such slogans and demands cannot be conjured up independent of the concrete situations to which they are intended to apply. A document containing a series of recipes for specific activity in all struggles in all countries would in fact be an "omnibus document," extremely long and quite likely generally meaningless. Comrade Mary-Alice presumably realizes this, and that is apparently the reason she objects to the very notion of producing a general document for capitalist Europe, or for any other "continent."

Now it is true that the Draft does not lay down specific tactics to be followed in the various European countries, and it is completely correct for it not to do so. The Draft is not and does not pretend to be a substitute for balance-sheets of the various sections or for their political resolutions. Comrade Mary-Alice is of course quite right that such balance-sheets are needed, and it is equally true that each section needs its own political resolution, tactical prescriptions, etc.

But by criticizing the Draft for not taking up questions that it obviously could not deal with anyway, Comrade Mary-Alice appears to be objecting to *any* attempt to draft a document that seeks to draw general conclusions about the objective situation in Europe and thus to derive a general framework that can guide the activity of our sections. With this we would disagree.

In fact, it seems to us that one of the main reasons extensive countrywide balance-sheets are needed is that the regional perspective is correct. For if the analysis of the period through which capitalist Europe is passing is correct, then the sections in countries now lagging behind in terms of worker militancy, general degree of mobilization for social struggle, general level of forms of struggle attained, and extent of the weakening of the ideological and organizational hegemony of the traditional workers organizations can be expected to recapitulate many elements of the phases of development of the more advanced countries, though of course at different tempos and in different combinations. What the Draft does is to provide a framework and a perspective within which the exact tactical questions of the various sections can be posed.

We see no reason why this should not be done. We see various compelling reasons why it should be. There are important objective factors justifying a "regional" outlook. Some of these are: the increasing economic integration of capitalist Europe, which is on a qualitatively different level from the integration of capitalist Europe as a whole into the world capitalist economy; the ease with which awareness of forms of struggle cross national frontiers, not only through the information networks but through extensive migration as well; the existence in most capitalist European countries of mass Social Democratic or Stalinist parties that have long had virtual hegemony over both the workers movement and most other social movements; the fact that many struggles in which our comrades will be involved will be posed immediately on a Europe-wide scale exactly because of the relatively high degree of integration in capitalist Europe (the struggle of the immigrant workers, the fight against multinational trusts, the fight against repression, one aspect of which relates to the freedom of travel among the European countries, a crucial need for European workers and for European Trotskyists).

The objective factors that compel a regional outlook directly influence the development of Trotskyist sections. For too long the failure to develop a regional outlook and a corresponding apparatus has meant that individual sections have stumbled empirically through experiences already undergone in one form or another by other sections. The Draft represents part of an attempt to eliminate this unevenness. It is thus justified for there to be a "European" document, and it is equally justified for that document not to try to provide universally applicable recipes for each section in capitalist Europe.

We believe that it would have facilitated the discussion if Comrade Mary-Alice had carefully separated out what appear to be two distinct (although interrelated) criticisms of the Draft—the first being her arguments as to why no such document should have been written in the first place, the second being why the document that was written is incorrect in what it says.

Through What Period Is Capitalist Europe Passing?

The first thing that must be done in judging the correctness of a document such as the Draft is to decide whether its analysis of the character of the period is correct. If it is not, then obviously the rest of the analysis is at least suspect if not total nonsense.

Unfortunately, the question of whether there is any deep difference on the assessment of the political situation in capitalist Europe has been obscured in much of the discussion. In her Criticism, Comrade Mary-Alice mistakenly takes one unclear formulation in the Draft, identifies it with the characterization of the period, perceives therein rigid time-tableism, doomsdayism, and apocalyptic hysteria, and then views the entire Draft as if it were projecting a get-rich-quick scheme the European comrades feel they have to cook up because they have only a few years left before Armageddon is upon them.

The formulation in question appears on page 11, column 1 of the Draft:

"But the fact that we are only at the beginning of the deepening social crisis, that neither the extent of unemployment nor the political level of the workers' struggles yet confronts the bourgeoisie with an immediate question of life or death, allows us to envisage a period spread out in most cases over four or five years before the decisive battles are fought."

In our opinion, this formulation is ambiguous. Taken in the context of the paragraph that precedes it, which discusses how a continuing crisis in the leadership of the proletariat is conducive to the establishment of a strong state, the passage evidently refers not to those decisive battles that will determine which class will rule for a whole historical epoch, but rather to those decisive battles the unfavorable outcome of which would signal the temporary exhaustion of the proletariat and thus create conditions favorable for setting up a bourgeois strong state. Not the final conflict, but a battle after which the proletariat might show a loss of capacity for extensive mass struggle for a somewhat extended period.

The "four or five years" formulation obscures the otherwise clear meaning of the document and diverts from its numerous correct formulations. Such as:

1. *"We must therefore prepare ourselves for years of intense social struggles, in which there will be ups and downs, and for enduring possibilities of revolutionary upsurges, depending on advances in raising class consciousness and strengthening the revolutionary vanguard."* (Draft, p. 10, col. 1 emphasis in original.)

2. Polemicizing against the idea that generalized explosions like May '68 occurred only because of "errors" committed by the bourgeoisie and the labor bureaucracies, the Draft states: "Is the objective scope of the crisis in capitalist social relations such that *in spite of* all the lessons the bourgeoisie and the reformist apparatuses within the workers' movement have learned from the past, similar blind-alleys *have to periodically (though obviously not constantly, nor even every two or three years)* reappear? Our answer to this question is an unequivocal Yes." (Draft, p. 16, col. 2; parenthetical emphasis added.)

To see that the "four to five years" formulation diverts from the real issue, simply replace "four or five years" with "a number of years." You will see that absolutely nothing in the political meaning of the Draft is changed. And the reason is that what is involved here is not de-

termining whether there are four or five years or eight or ten years before the final showdown. What is involved is the character of the period through which capitalist Europe is passing. The question here is a qualitative one, not a quantitative one.

The Draft makes an unambiguous comment on the general character of the period. It says: "The socialist revolution is once again on the agenda in Europe, not just in a broad historical perspective (in this sense it has been on the agenda since 1914), but even from a conjunctural point of view." (p. 9, col. 2) The first five sections of the Draft outline the analysis supporting this assertion.

Comrade Mary-Alice does not directly challenge this analysis, and her polemic on page 13 of the Criticism (the section entitled The Impending Showdown) depends on mistakenly identifying the characterization of the period with the "four or five years" formulation.

On page 13 of the Criticism, however, she refers to possible effects that developments in the colonial revolution and in the Washington-Moscow and Washington-Peking détente might have on the course of events in Europe. Here she suggests that the Draft's general analysis may be faulty—because it has overlooked these possible effects. In the branch discussions also, failure to analyze the effects of the détente was frequently advanced as an example of the inadequacy of the Draft. Unfortunately, no one in the discussion—and this applies to Comrade Mary-Alice in her Criticism as well—has explained precisely what the Draft should have said about the effects of the détente or of the colonial revolution.

This is a decisive question. If we must expect developments in the colonial revolution and the détente not merely to influence "the exact timing and pace of developments"—as Comrade Mary-Alice puts it—but to fundamentally change the direction of development; if we must expect not merely ups and downs, but an extended decline in the scope and militance of the workers' struggles and a prolonged ability of the bourgeoisies to contain or resolve the general social crisis, then clearly the Draft's perspectives will be refuted. In particular, the process of rooting our sections in the proletariat would become vastly more difficult—and less urgent—and the perspective of forcing a realignment of forces within the workers' movement would become unrealistic.

It is not at all clear to us if this is what Comrade Mary-Alice is driving at. She does not submit the Draft's analysis to any kind of critical scrutiny. She does not categorically challenge the Draft's characterization of the period. She admits, for example, that we are in a period "marked by a new rise of workers' struggles." (Criticism, p. 12, col. 2.) And she asks: "Is it correct to project the possibility of explosive new prerevolutionary crises and revolutionary upsurges in one or more countries in the next four to five years? Of course. Will such explosions have repercussions throughout Europe? Certainly."

Well, if the level of workers' struggles is rising in this period, and if this period is the same period as May-June '68, and if May-June '68 was a genuine prerevolutionary situation, then surely we must not merely "project the possibility of explosive new prerevolutionary crises and revolutionary upsurges," but must *orient* our activity toward *preparing* for them; we must regard socialist rev-

olution as being on the agenda in Europe not just in the epochal sense, but in the conjunctural sense as well.

That is, we must regard the assertion that the socialist revolution is conjuncturally on the agenda—that is, on the agenda within a number of years, maybe even within four or five years—not as a manifestation of doomsdayism but as a fundamentally correct observation about the situation in capitalist Europe. And not only a correct observation, but a necessary one without which any strategic analysis would be faulty.

It seems to us that there are only a limited number of ways to argue against the "conjuncturally on the agenda" notion. One of these is to challenge the party's previously held assessment of what happened in May '68. In the branch discussions, some comrades who support the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency seemed to do this.

According to the earlier characterization—and we have not previously heard this characterization challenged within the SWP—May '68 constituted a genuine prerevolutionary situation. The question of power was objectively posed. The May-June upheaval did not culminate in an open struggle for power only because of the lack of revolutionary leadership. And how did this lack of revolutionary leadership assert itself?

The Communist party, during the preceding years and decades, had not prepared the workers for the development of dual power. It had not taught them to struggle for goals determined by their needs rather than by what could be squeezed out of a decaying capitalist society. It had not encouraged them to rely only on their own direct power as an organized class rather than on electoral combinations in order to force the changes necessary to satisfy their needs. It had not led them through the school of struggles for workers control. It had not systematically developed the conviction of the necessity to look to the organized forces of the class rather than to the bourgeois organs of repression for defense against the violence engendered by the class struggle.

And then, when despite these years and decades of misleadership, the workers themselves objectively posed the question of power through a general strike and factory occupations and began to throw up organs of dual power, the CP openly betrayed the revolution. It refused to explain that the question of power was posed and diverted the strike movement toward purely economic demands. It did everything it could to isolate the students, who were bearing the highest political consciousness of the meaning of the struggle, from the workers. Whenever it could not take over strike committees and action committees, it tried to crush them. In committees that it did dominate it did not seek to unify the workers in the plants and press forward toward uniting the committees on a national scale, but rather sent the workers home and dissolved the committees as soon as possible. In short, Stalinism behaved in its usual fashion and yet another revolution was aborted.

This has been our analysis of May '68. Are the comrades of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency beginning to revise this analysis? Are they now coming to regard May '68 as just some kind of massive worker-student protest rather than as a fundamental and immediate challenge to bourgeois rule? Was May '68 simply a quantitative upsurge in a generally ascending radicalization or was it a qualitative challenge to capitalism—conjuncturally?

In our opinion, these questions require clear answers.

Another way to argue against the "socialist revolution conjuncturally on the agenda" notion is to question whether capitalist Europe is still in the same period that opened up in 1967-68. Comrade Jack Barnes seemed to suggest something like this when, outlining the themes of two projected Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency documents, he referred to "the fundamentally new stage of the class struggle in capitalist Europe." He said: "There is a new stage in the crisis of leadership of the European proletariat, and *the European workers face a situation today different from that of either 1963 or 1968.*" (The Unfolding New World Situation, SWP Discussion Bulletin, vol. 31, no. 12, col. 2; emphasis added.)

What does this mean? Was the period that opened up in 1967-68 succeeded by a period of recession and downturn that has now in turn been succeeded by a new period "marked by a new rise of workers struggles"? Or is the "new rise of workers struggles" that we are now witnessing simply the wave-train emitted by May-June disturbances, while the dominant deep tendencies are toward stabilization and crisis containment? Or was May '68 some kind of fluke, a historical accident somehow cutting across the sweep of historical development?

We hold to the previously offered characterization of May '68 as a prerevolutionary situation. We also hold that it was simply the most open, concentrated expression (up to now) of the contradictions that are still unfolding in capitalist Europe. That is why we think it is completely correct to characterize the current period as one in which "the socialist revolution is once again on the agenda in Europe, not just in a broad historical perspective . . . but even from a conjunctural point of view."

WINNING HEGEMONY IN THE NEW MASS VANGUARD

The fact that the socialist revolution is conjuncturally on the agenda is what lends the Draft the sense of urgency that many comrades of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency object to. The Draft's concept of the new mass vanguard and the strategy of winning hegemony within it in order to transform it into an adequate instrument for recomposing the workers movement is, according to Comrade Mary-Alice, the get-rich-quick scheme that derives from the misplaced sense of urgency permeating the Draft.

We believe that once the real meaning of the "urgency" has been understood, the discussion of the new mass vanguard can take place in a more productive way.

The emergence of the new mass vanguard is one of the objective features of the European political scene. It is, we believe, a crucial factor in European politics, one that is ignored at peril of seriously misestimating the possibilities for action on the part of Trotskyist sections.

What is this new mass vanguard? The general setting that must be kept in mind is that in Europe—unlike the United States—there are mass workers parties. These are not merely the equivalent of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. The American union bureaucracy strangles only action within the trade unions. Exactly because there is no mass workers party—labor party, Social Democratic, or Stalinist party with mass influence—radicalizing sectors of the population tend to move initially outside the framework of the trade-union movement.

The situation in Europe is somewhat different. The mass workers parties control not only the organized labor movement but also have at least heavy influence and in many cases political hegemony over mass organizations apart from the trade unions. This means that when, for example, an antiimperialist movement like the antiwar movement develops in capitalist Europe, it faces more serious obstacles than it does in the United States in the sense that the hundreds of thousands of members of the mass workers parties and the millions more who look to these parties for political leadership (vote for them in elections, and so on) tend not to act unless the mass workers parties call for action. And this tends to be true even if these millions of workers share the sentiments of the movement in question.

In countries in which mass workers parties have dominated political life for a long time, Trotskyist sections face a seemingly—but only seemingly—paradoxical situation. On the one hand, the existence of the mass workers party generally means that the working class has attained a higher degree of class consciousness than has the working class in countries where no such parties exist. On the other hand, the weight of the mass workers parties' leaderships makes it that much more difficult to mobilize masses in action—not only masses in the trade-union movement, but masses in organizations that are dominated by or heavily influenced by the mass workers parties.

The individuals who compose the new mass vanguard are identified as such not *merely* because they are possessed of antiestablishment ideas to some extent and because they are prepared to engage to some extent in actions outside the "normal," electoral framework on certain social issues. Central to the definition of the new mass vanguard is that the individuals comprising it are prepared to *go into action on a certain range of social issues independently of and often in opposition to the bureaucracies that control the mass workers parties and the unions.*

And the fact of bureaucratic domination of much of political life imposes a relatively high degree of political consciousness on the members of the new mass vanguard. Breaking in practice with the bureaucratic leadership that has promised peaceful, parliamentary roads to socialism, they tend ideologically toward conscious rejection of capitalist society and toward profound doubt that the traditional workers parties can successfully lead the struggle for basic social change; they tend also to the conviction that this change cannot be accomplished within the normal, legal channels of established society.

In its social composition this vanguard is, of course, still predominantly student. But a *growing* component of it consists of workers, rebellious trade-union activists, rank-and-file leaders who already enjoy significant prestige among their shop-mates, and very young workers who have not yet participated very much in the day-to-day class struggle. Further, in some countries, the most oppressed layers of the workers—women and immigrants—are beginning to enter the ranks of this new mass vanguard.

It is quite appropriate to refer to this formation as a vanguard in the political sense, provided its organizational inchoateness and ideological confusion are kept in

mind. For its members are the contact points from which this relatively higher level of political consciousness spreads out to broader layers of the population, both to those still apathetic or inactive and to those masses still following the traditional leaderships. The vanguard is a mass phenomenon not only in the sense that its numbers are large—several tens of thousands in some European capitalist countries—but also in the sense that the individuals that comprise it find themselves increasingly concentrated in geographically dispersed campuses, schools, and factories where their *collective* actions can have an impact on broader layers. The vanguard is a *new* phenomenon in the perfectly obvious sense that it did not exist as a *mass* phenomenon several years ago, but has grown up out of the social crisis and radicalization that began in the middle 1960s.

Most of the individuals comprising the new mass vanguard do not belong to political organizations. But it is among these individuals that all the organized currents of the new far-left, including the Trotskyists, recruit and make their influence directly felt. It is also to these individuals that the mass Stalinist and Social Democratic parties turn with a left face in order to try to halt the drift away from their organizational and political control. The organized far-left currents listed in the Draft are part of the new mass vanguard, but they do not subsume it. They contend for leadership within the new mass vanguard; they do not *constitute* the new mass vanguard.

This, we think, is a general definition of the phenomenon the Draft is discussing. The phenomenon is real; it is not a mystification, nor is it an excuse to disregard the masses.

The document presents a method of trying to win hegemony within the new mass vanguard as a means of building the Leninist party in the situation of present-day capitalist Europe. Comrade Mary-Alice objects to that method. Unfortunately, her polemic against it expresses some serious misunderstandings of what the Draft says. For example, in her summary of objections to the Draft, she writes: "The document rejects the possibility of building mass revolutionary parties before the projected showdown and mistakenly counterposes an orientation of winning hegemony within the 'new mass vanguard' or of 'transforming the vanguard' into an 'adequate instrument.'" (Criticism, p. 5, col. 2)

The first clause of that statement is simply not true. Nowhere does the Draft reject the possibility of building mass revolutionary parties before any projected showdown. We would appreciate the appropriate citations from comrades who think otherwise.

The second clause is also false. "Winning hegemony" is not counterposed to party building; on the contrary, it is exactly a method of party building in the given situation. Comrade Mary-Alice expresses apprehension that sinister deviations are lurking behind the phrase "adequate instrument." She apparently believes that the terminology is in itself so damning that in denouncing it it is unnecessary even to finish the sentence. Adequate instrument for what? By stating that the Draft "counterposes" transforming the vanguard into an "adequate instrument" to the process of building a revolutionary party, Comrade Mary-Alice implies that the Draft is arguing that the vanguard is to be made into an adequate instrument for leading the working class to the seizure of power.

In reality, there is no cause for concern on this score. The One Name of the Mandel-Maitan-Frank Trinity is *not* Pablo. Nowhere does the Draft even hint that the new mass vanguard is supposed to be transformed into an adequate instrument to lead the workers to power. Rather, it is conceived as a potentially adequate instrument for something quite different: Winning hegemony, the Draft states, "requires *constant political struggle* within this vanguard to transform it, making it an adequate instrument for *recomposing the organized workers' movement*." (Draft, p. 14, col. 1' final emphasis added.) The new mass vanguard is seen as a potentially adequate instrument not for leading the workers to power but for achieving a more modest goal—for realigning the workers movement, for shaking up the balance of forces between the Trotskyists on the one hand and the Stalinist and Social Democratic bureaucrats on the other hand, and for shaking up the balance of forces between the ranks of the mass workers parties and the leaderships of those parties.

The Draft takes as one of its central assumptions the fact that the revolutionary party must be built if the revolutionary struggle is to succeed, that no other formation—not the new mass vanguard and not the traditional workers parties acting under mass pressure (as Pablo envisaged)—can do the job. A careful reading of page 13, column 1, the last paragraph and page 14, column 1, the last full paragraph, should make this clear.

At the same time, winning hegemony in the new mass vanguard does not imply regarding the vanguard merely as a milieu from which we recruit, as Comrade Mary-Alice seems to do when she writes "If by 'transforming the vanguard' the document means we must recruit the most conscious elements and build sections of the Fourth International, there is no dispute. But it is not at all clear." (Criticism, p. 14, col. 2) Rather, "winning hegemony" implies that while recruiting from this milieu, Trotskyists can utilize it for a specific purpose: to advance a realignment of the workers movement which will in turn increase our sections' possibilities for growth, raise the level of political consciousness of much broader layers, and bring us closer to the time when we can begin to directly contest for hegemony within the mass workers movement.

The main assumptions underlying this "vanguardist" approach to party building are these:

1. The economic crisis, the crisis of bourgeois social relations, the bourgeois political crisis, and the crisis of the traditional workers leaderships have given rise to a new mass vanguard;

2. The mass of workers, however, still have general confidence in the leadership of the bureaucratic apparatuses and are still under their ideological and political hegemony;

3. As long as this subjective deficiency exists, no upsurge, no matter how mass, can overturn capitalism;

4. The process of overcoming this subjective deficiency consists in progressively winning hegemony over this new mass vanguard—recruiting from it, extending our ideological influence within it, and mobilizing it in action—in order to a) build the sections both numerically and in terms of political experience and prestige, b) prevent the new mass vanguard from being dissipated, and c) progressively transform the new mass vanguard into a striking force that can increasingly shake the hold of the Stalin-

ist and Social Democratic bureaucrats over the broader masses;

5. Along the way, the bureaucracies can sometimes be forced into united actions that will further undermine their hegemony but into which the revolutionary nucleus by itself could not hope to force them.

In a sense, the "vanguardist" approach to party building is the application, under the present conditions of capitalist Europe, of the "classical" united-front tactic. It is a means of overcoming the isolation of the Trotskyist nuclei from the working class. It is counterposed *not* to building mass revolutionary parties but to a series of would-be revolutionary strategies each of which represents a misguided short-cut attempt to work around the problem of breaking the masses from their bureaucratic leadership.

It is counterposed to the Pabloite notion that mass pressure on the bureaucracies can force them to act in a revolutionary way under certain conditions. It is counterposed to "new left" notions that it is possible to work around the bureaucracies either by projecting some other force besides the working class as the revolutionary agent or by trying to outflank the bureaucracy through small-group actions. *And it is counterposed to the notion that the small Trotskyist nucleus can work around the new mass vanguard by directly leading masses in its own name (or in the name of some other outfit that purports to represent masses but in fact represents the Trotskyist cadres and a few supporters) or by demanding of the powerful labor bureaucracy that it enter into a united front with a small group of Trotskyists.*

Concretely, what does this "vanguardist" approach entail? A good example was provided this past spring by the ex-Ligue Communiste (referred to hereafter as Ligue, since it had not been dissolved at the time to which we are referring). Just after the March legislative elections in France, we saw the rise of the largest upsurge of students in France since May '68—in some respects the mobilization was even more advanced than that of May '68 as far as students were concerned. The mobilization began as a struggle of high-school students against the "Debre law," a reform of the military service system that went into effect at the beginning of this year. Its main provision—the one that touched off the struggle—was the abolition of draft deferments for students. Under the old system, a high-schooler could graduate and go to a university without first doing his military service, compulsory for males in France. Under the new system, high-schoolers would have to go directly from school into the army for one year.

When the law went into effect, there were signs of active opposition to it from high-schoolers. But a mass movement did not spontaneously erupt. The country was gripped by election fever, which made the general climate for organizing extraparliamentary action unfavorable. But the Ligue realized that the law could become a major focus for action. On February 10-11, at a national conference of the Front of High-School Red Circles, the Ligue's high-school support groups, a report was adopted noting that small-scale struggle had occurred in the provinces against the law and calling for extension of the struggle. A communiqué was released proposing the formation of Committees of Struggle Against the Debré Law—action organizations of a united front character. Two slogans

were raised initially: Down with the Debré Law! and Re-establish the deferment and extend it to all youth! The communiqué urged that a national day of action and information be held "without waiting for the elections."

Until the elections, things moved slowly. But afterwards, the struggle began to gain rapidly. The committees against the Debré Law started to emerge at most high-schools—as first under the direct impetus of the Ligue, later more spontaneously. The movement arose in direct opposition to the CP, whose high-school organization, UNCAL, initially characterized it as "manipulated by the regime" and as an attempt to foster provocations to discredit the Union of the Left electoral bloc.

By the middle of March, the majority of high-schools were affected in one way or another by the struggle—strikes, demonstrations, etc.

The Ligue's central role was widely recognized. The March 21 *Le Monde*, for example, commenting on the development of the movement in the city of Toulouse, said: "The first school where pupils went on strike, March 13, was the huge coeducational Raymond Naves School. Why there? Everyone knows in Toulouse that the Ligue Communiste—the Trotskyist movement that is sparking and directing the high-school protests on a national scale—has very strong influence there."

By March 21 the movement had gotten big enough so that the CP felt it had to make a turn. The committees against the Debré Law had called a national day of demonstrations for March 22. The CP intervened and called a demonstration of its own for the night of March 21. They got 20,000 people to the action, which had a police permit.

On March 22 at least 80,000 people turned out for the demonstration called by the Committees, even though it had been banned by the police.

The movement continued to grow. And finally, the CP was forced to recognize the organizational forms of the movement. A second day of national actions was called for April 2. It was even bigger than March 22. By this time, there had been two new developments. The university students had entered the fray, demonstrating and striking against a series of decrees known as the Fontanet decrees. Basically, these set up a new two-year diploma aimed at reducing the number of students at the universities and at getting a larger number of young semiskilled workers onto the labor market. Concurrently, the apprentices of the CET (technical schools) had initiated their own struggle around conditions in those institutions.

After the April 2 actions, the CP made one of the greatest tactical concessions to the far left in its history. The leaders of the CP and the CGT agreed to cosponsor a mass demonstration on April 9 with the various struggle committees that had been leading the Debré movement. The Stalinist bureaucrats were forced to hold negotiating sessions with student and high-school leaders elected by the strike committees, the general assemblies, and the coordinating bodies that had in turn been democratically elected by the movement activists.

The April 30 issue of *Intercontinental Press* published an interview with Olivier Martin, one of the Ligue's leaders and one of those delegated to negotiate with the union leadership on the plans for the April 9 demonstration. Comrades who want to know what "transforming the van-

guard" into an "adequate instrument for recomposing the workers movement" means can find out by reading that interview. The Ligue comrades had built a movement—based essentially on vanguard elements within the youth—that grew to such an extent that the union bureaucracy was forced to enter a kind of united front with it, negotiate with it on an equal basis, and—undoubtedly most galling to the CGT leaders—sit around and wait while the negotiators brought proposals back to the general assemblies of movement participants for approval.

The March-April mobilization played a major role in shifting somewhat the relationship of forces in the workers movement to our advantage. One indication of the extent to which this happened is that the April 8-9 *Le Monde* ran a front-page story on the youth mobilization that dealt with the question of the political forces within it. It was headlined "The High-School Movement and Politics, A Struggle for Influence Between Communists and Trotskyists." It was published in the April 23 *Intercontinental Press*.

We can sum up the main elements of the March-April mobilization this way:

1. It was triggered off by a "student issue"—draft deferments for university students. But in accordance with the position of our comrades, the activists immediately went beyond the slogan "Repeal the Debré Law." The regime had tried to sell its "reform" on the basis that it was aimed at establishing greater social equality between youth going to universities and working youth. By extending the slogan, the movement turned this demagoguery around, forced the class issue to the fore, and prevented the movement from becoming isolated.

2. The issue soon became a "qualitative" one. It was not just a matter of defending a "right" that the regime was trying to take away—student deferments—but also a matter of challenging one of the basic requirements of the bourgeoisie, namely intensifying the role of the army as an agency of socialization of youth. Thus, what might have looked like a sectoral struggle of the "student movement" became instead a struggle against a pillar of bourgeois social relations. Instead of merely appealing to the workers for "support," the leadership of the movement, our comrades in the first place, posed the question in a more general sense, one that immediately related the "sectoral" struggle to the interests of the working class as a class. Posing the question this way also enabled the initial high-school mobilization to easily merge with the university struggle against the Fontanet decrees and the CET struggle against conditions there.

3. The initial intervention by the Ligue was axised around gaining hegemony in action over the essentially high-school struggle. Specifically, in this case hegemony meant pressing for the slogan of extending the deferments to all youth and pressing for the concept of democratic self-organization of the struggle—the formation of strike committees, general assemblies, nationally elected coordinating bodies, and so on.

4. In advancing general and unifying slogans, in forging a democratic self-organization of the struggle, the March-April mobilization provided an example to the working-class movement. The general assemblies in the high-schools pre-figured the future assemblies in the plants; the development of national coordination set a similar

example.

5. By mobilizing the vanguard—and no one should have any illusions that the March-April demonstrations, at least until the CP entered the scene, were much more than vanguard actions of a mass character—the comrades created sufficient pressure on the Stalinist and Social Democratic bureaucracies to force them into a united struggle, thus providing the comrades with increased opportunities to reach workers, thus bringing the weight of the workers movement into the immediate struggle, and thus intensifying the tension that exists between the electoralist, gradualist leadership and the masses of workers.

It has been generally acknowledged in the SWP that the Ligue's intervention in the March-April mobilizations was a correct one by and large. It was not marked by substitutism, ultraleftism, sacking of embassies, small-group armed action, or an orientation to the peasantry. But a number of comrades have asserted that in this case the Ligue stumbled empirically into doing the right thing *despite* its general orientation, that in fact the Ligue applied the line of the document The World Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International rather than the line of the Draft, which allegedly declares the student struggle to be *passé*.

In our opinion, the World Youth Radicalization document contains a number of elliptical and synthetic formulations that render it thoroughly ambiguous. (We will return to this question further on.) For this reason, it is possible that if the Ligue comrades had been guided by it, they would have done pretty much what they did do. On the other hand, they might have done things quite differently.

For example:

1) They might have refrained from raising the slogan Extend the Deferment to All Youth on the grounds that it was diversionary from the *student* struggle, at least until the movement had mobilized the masses of students, at which time they might have felt that the slogan was appropriate in trying to link up with the workers movement;

2. They might have opposed putting the question of the army as an agent of socialization necessary to bourgeois society in the center of agitation around the Debré Law struggle on the grounds that such agitation was "too advanced" and thus diversionary for a struggle around a democratic right that could mobilize the entire "student movement;"

3. They might have opposed raising a multitude of issues including things like the conditions in the CET on the grounds that such issues would divert from mobilizing the high-school students;

4. They might have aimed at establishing "anti-Debré lycees" or "anti-Fontanet universities" as organizing centers from which the struggle could be carried to the workers, thus putting the question of the nature and function of the school and university in the center of agitation.

And in a more general sense, following the line of the World Youth Radicalization document might have led the comrades to regard their task as winning hegemony in a high-school or university student movement—a movement or movements objectively based on some commonality of interests uniting high-schoolers or university students as students—in order to link this (or these) move-

ment(s) with the workers movement.

But instead, the Ligue comrades regarded their task as winning hegemony in a new mass vanguard (with its growing working-class component) on the basis of an issue that was first thrown up in a student explosion—a vanguard that could in turn draw in broader and broader layers, unify those layers through extending the issues and demands, pose the measures under dispute directly as ones involving the clash of interests between the capitalist class and the working class, thus forcing the workers bureaucracies into united action.

We think the comrades acted correctly. But whether they were correct or incorrect, they clearly did act according to the lines worked out in the Draft and not according to at least one common interpretation of the World Youth Radicalization document.

We hope that this discussion shows how groundless is Comrade Mary-Alice's counterposition of the "concerns of the vanguard" to the "objective needs of the masses." She writes: "From the two different starting points flow two divergent courses of action. One tends toward maximalist demands and so-called 'militant' actions that presumably reflect the level of consciousness of the 'vanguard.' In reality they are adaptations to its political backwardness. The other is firmly based on the *method* of the Transitional Program, which aims at mobilizing masses in struggle, whatever their level of consciousness, and moving them forward toward the socialist revolution.

"Even when we are not yet able to mobilize the working masses behind our own banner (or the banner of a united front in which we participate), even though only the 'vanguard' is following us, we still organize that 'vanguard,' large or small, in actions that speak to the needs and consciousness of the masses, not the concerns of the 'vanguard.'" (Criticism, p. 8, col. 1.)

The only way it would make sense to counterpose the "concerns of the vanguard" to the "objective needs of the working masses" would be to assume that this new vanguard is such that its "concerns" are *generally* antagonistic to the objective needs of the broad working masses. It is true that because of its ideological backwardness, the concerns of this new mass vanguard can occasionally be antagonistic to the objective needs of the broad working masses. And that is why the Draft places a very important qualification on the line of "organizing national political campaigns on carefully chosen issues that correspond to the concerns of the vanguard." The qualification is that these campaigns must "not run against the current of mass struggles." But to counterpose *in general, in a methodological sense*—as Comrade Mary-Alice appears to do—the concerns of the vanguard to the objective needs of the working masses is to imply that we are dealing with a vanguard of some movement that is *generally* in opposition to the needs of the working class. If this is what the vanguard is, then it is scarcely even a milieu from which we should recruit.

In reality what is immediately counterposed to the "concerns of the vanguard" is not the objective needs of the broad working masses but *the concerns and objectives needs of the labor bureaucracy*—which are also immediately counterposed to the objective needs of the working masses. The problem is that the bureaucrats still have hegemony over the mass workers movement. We cannot

directly mobilize these masses of workers in struggle; between us and them stand the bureaucrats. What we *can* mobilize to some extent is precisely that layer prepared to go into action independent of or in opposition to the bureaucracies. But if our mobilizations did not stem from the concerns of this vanguard, we could call mass mobilizations forever—and no one would show up. And all the time we were calling the mass mobilizations that nobody came to we could be demanding—Lambert-style—that the CPs and the SPs enter into a united front with us. The CP and SP leaders would, we believe, react to such proposals with a certain derision.

On the other hand, if we are prepared to mobilize this vanguard on issues that can really engage it in struggle—provided such mobilizations do not run against the current of mass struggles—and if we employ slogans, agitation, and propaganda in such a way that through the experience of these struggles the level of consciousness of the participants is raised, then we will not only be able to recruit and weaken the influence of our opponents, we will also be able to initiate "vanguard" mobilizations that reach such proportions and have such an impact on broader layers that they can actually compel the bureaucrats to turn toward these actions. This not only strengthens the actions, it also chips away at the hegemony of the bureaucrats over the mass movement. It brings closer the day that we will in fact be able to lead broader masses, when we will become a pole of attraction for whole dissident currents within the traditional parties, when we can set as an *immediate* task the winning of the majority of workers.

In her Criticism, Comrade Mary-Alice takes the Vietnam work of the European sections as a main illustration of the alleged danger of basing our intervention on the concerns of the vanguard instead of on the objective needs of the working masses. She argues that because the comrades took as their point of departure the concerns of the vanguard—in this case the vanguard's turn to the working class—instead of the objective needs of the masses—in this case the need for solidarity with the Indochinese struggle—they "dropped out" of Indochina solidarity work for a period of roughly three years. They adapted to the moods of the vanguard rather than trying to educate it. Instead, starting from the objective needs of the working masses, they should have patiently, systematically sought to build mass solidarity demonstrations, regardless of the number of participants they might have been able to bring out at this or that moment. They should have patiently sought to educate the vanguard on the need for such demonstrations.

We believe this argument to be incorrect. For starters, it is at best hyperbolic to say that our European comrades "dropped out" of the Vietnam solidarity struggle. The maintenance of an apparatus to organize hopefully-mass demonstrations every six months is not the only way of developing solidarity with a colonial revolution. While we disagree with various (and not unimportant) aspects of our European comrades' political line on the Vietnamese revolution, it is certainly true that they sustained in their press a constant propaganda campaign in support of the Indochinese struggle. It is by no means excluded that this propaganda campaign contributed greatly to the success achieved in rebuilding the united-action Indochina formations during the past two years.

But this is a secondary point. More important is the sectarian logic—surely unintended—of Comrade Mary-Alice's argument. It seems to be utterly antithetical to any possible transitional method. Since the very beginning of the revolutionary workers movement, sectarians have accused Marxists of "adapting" because they pay some attention to the actual level of consciousness and the real, immediate concerns of the masses, whether vanguard or broader. The very essence of at least one common brand of sectarianism lies in counterposing the objective needs of the working masses, which in fact are expressed in the full revolutionary program and nowhere else, to "concerns," or "immediate needs," or "level of consciousness."

We have always avoided this sectarian logic in our actual practice. Surely one of the most basic objective needs of the working masses of the entire world is the overthrow of capitalist property relations and the destruction of the capitalist state in the United States. But we have not ourselves undertaken a patient, systematic effort to continually build mass demonstrations under slogans like Smash the state! or Nationalize industry under workers control!

Conceivably, a sectarian might reproach us for our failure to do so for the past eight years in the following words:

"What if we had spent that eight years trying to lead and educate the 'vanguard,' hammering away at the necessity of trying to reach the broad working masses, trying to mobilize them, organizing actions that would appeal to them, actions that would encourage them to participate—if not in the first, then in the second, the third or the fourth? Are we sure we would have failed?"

"Unfortunately, these questions will never be answered with certainty." (Criticism, p. 9, col 2.)

Possibly we may here be accused of engaging in a bit of hyperbole ourselves. And it is true that the preceding example is pure caricature. But we think it is nevertheless instructive caricature, and this becomes clear if we examine more closely our own antiwar work.

Our decision to make the antiwar movement our main axis of work for so many years was not based *solely* on the centrality of the Vietnam struggle to the objective needs of the masses on a world scale. It was *also* based on the correct judgment that the central issue around which the radicalization in the United States would unfold would be the Indochina war. It was based on the comprehension that the war was precisely the central concern of that vanguard which—as Comrade Mary-Alice points out (Criticism, p. 10, col. 1)—with a couple of exceptions made up our antiwar demonstrations.

And it is ironic that Comrade Mary-Alice was preparing her criticism of the Draft at just about the time that the SWP decided to drastically cut down its antiwar apparatus exactly on the grounds that with the "cease-fire" and U. S. troop withdrawals the basis for mass mobilizations had been drastically reduced—that is, the concerns of the vanguard had shifted. Whether this decision was right or wrong, no one would argue that there is any less objective need today for mass mobilizations in solidarity with the Indochinese revolution than there was several years ago. In fact, we have done the same thing as the European comrades did earlier. And regardless of whether either or both were right or wrong, regardless of the changed

circumstances in the unfolding of the war, *the stark fact is that we decided that people could no longer be mobilized for mass antiwar demonstrations even though the objective need still exists and we acted accordingly.* The most that can be said in this respect of the European comrades' antiwar activity from 1969-1972 is that they misjudged the situation and underestimated the objective possibilities.

But there is more involved here than the question of antiwar work. Comrade Mary-Alice, we believe, has misstated—at least implicitly—the meaning of the term "adaptation." "Adaptation" is not the failure to mobilize masses (vanguard or broader) around issues that *do not* correspond to their immediate concerns; adaptation is the failure to utilize mobilizations that *do* correspond to their concerns *in order to help make them more conscious of their real interests*, that is, of their real objective needs. Application of the transitional method does not consist of issuing calls to mobilization around issues of no immediate concern coupled with slogans of such immediate plausibility and forms of action of such a gentle nature that mass unconcern be overwhelmed—so somebody will show up. Rather, it consists of mobilizing masses—vanguard or broader—in struggles around issues of immediate concern *and* of raising such slogans and conducting such propaganda as will help them become progressively more conscious of the need to organize in solidarity with the masses everywhere in the world to overthrow capitalism and to become progressively more conscious of what must be done at each step along the way in order to achieve that.

Now after 1968 there was, in fact, a turn of the vanguard in Europe away from antiimperialist solidarity and toward more immediate working-class struggles. But for all the economic and populist distortions that accompanied this turn, Comrade Mary-Alice is wrong to see in it a step backwards in consciousness. For this "turn" had a twofold aspect. First, for the overwhelmingly student vanguard, it represented a recognition of the historical role of the working class. At one stroke, all heads were purged of theories of structural integration and permanent corruption of the class. The radicalized students *saw* the might and mission of the working class; they *saw in real life* what force could realize their antiimperialist aspirations.

This was an immense step *forward* in consciousness, and this kernel of true (as opposed to false) consciousness was present even in the most bizarre "serve the people" adventures.

Second, and even more important, this turn reflected the beginning of the growth of the working-class component of the new mass vanguard. These young workers were radicalizing around issues determined by the immediate conditions of working-class life. If they did not at once grasp the centrality of the Indochinese struggle to their immediate struggle, if in some cases they may have even turned away from the solidarity movement in disgust with the CP-led "peace" campaigns, nevertheless their ability to act in opposition to the bureaucratic leaderships, to throw up forms of action in the day-to-day class struggle that went beyond "normal" "legal" trade-union methods and to begin to challenge the notions of an electoral, peaceful road to socialism have constituted a great step *forward* in consciousness.

Our European comrades were quite correct to join in

this turn, not only because they would otherwise have risked isolating themselves from the vanguard as it now exists, but above all because the objective needs of the working masses in this period (in which the socialist revolution is conjuncturally on the agenda) urgently require that our European sections begin to root themselves in the working class.

It is within this framework that the European sections' antiwar work must be examined. Could our comrades have more effectively utilized the Indochina issue to politicize the "younger levees" on the campuses by making more frequent use of the mass-demonstration technique and by engaging in more persistent efforts to force other political formations into united actions? Could they thereby have more effectively carried out the "systematic internationalist propaganda campaign around the axis of solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles" that the Draft calls for (p. 17, col. 2)? Could they thereby have more effectively educated the growing layer of vanguard workers in the necessity of anti-imperialist solidarity? Could they thereby have used the Vietnam issue more effectively in uniting the new mass vanguard in action, thus not only contributing to the process of winning hegemony within it, but also forging a stronger link in the necessary worldwide chain of action in solidarity with the Indochinese revolution? It is our impression that the answer to all these questions is Yes. But these questions cannot even be properly posed if one begins, as Comrade Mary-Alice does, by counterposing concerns of the vanguard to objective needs of the broad masses.

The Class and the Sectors

During the discussion in the branches, a number of comrades denounced the Draft as much for what it fails to say as for what it says. Comrade Mary-Alice also devotes considerable space in her Criticism to the Draft's relative demur on not a few potentially fruitful areas of work. It is true that the Draft does not dwell at length (or in some cases even mention) such matters as women's liberation, struggles of oppressed nationalities, movements for various democratic rights, Indochina solidarity, prisoners rebellions, or the fight against the ban on Ernest Mandel traveling to several European countries.

But it is not true that the Draft minimizes the importance of struggles that may erupt on a sectoral basis. It does lay out a general approach to intervention in them:

"The revolutionary Marxists will organize themselves into communist fractions operating within mass movements or specific existing groups and seek to bring the most advanced elements from these radicalized sectors first into transmission groups of the *Taupe Rouge* type, and then to recruit them to the revolutionary Marxist organization, on the basis of three types of activity—propagandizing for our full program; agitating for immediate and long-term solutions most suited to the needs of these sectors, and at the same time following a firmly revolutionary anticapitalist orientation in harmony with the socialist 'model' we support, advocating forms of organizing and mobilizing that stress self-organization, direct action, linking up with the struggles of the working class, and the convergence of the struggles for workers' control and the various forms of struggle for direct control by the masses of different spheres of social activity."

(Draft, p. 22, col. 2)

It was just this approach, as we have seen, that the Ligue adopted in the struggle against the Debré law.

At the same time, the Draft *relativizes* the significance of these struggles and movements. It sketches out an approach to them—both in terms of the disposition of forces and of the political line that we adopt—based on their subordination to what the Draft defines as the "central political task for revolutionary Marxists in the stage that opened in 1967-1968," namely, "*to win hegemony within the new mass vanguard in order to build qualitatively stronger revolutionary organizations than in the preceding stage, to make the transition from revolutionary propaganda groups to revolutionary political organizations beginning to sink roots into the proletariat.*" (Draft, p. 13, col. 2. emphasis in original)

The central programmatic aspects of this approach are outlined in section 10 of the Draft (pp. 17-18). The central organizational consequences (in the sense of allocation of forces) are summarized on page 24, column 1 of the Draft, where it is noted that revolutionary Marxist organizations the size of the present sections of the Fourth International can "after reaching a certain threshold, win a political following among a layer of young vanguard workers by means of two tactics that must be used as much as possible in the present stage: (1) organizing national political campaigns on carefully chosen issues that correspond to the concerns of the vanguard, do not run against the current of mass struggles, and offer a chance for demonstrating a capacity for effective initiative, even if still modest, by our sections; (2) our sections' ability to centralize their forces on a regional and national level in order to break the wall of silence and indifference surrounding certain exemplary workers' struggles, wildcat actions, and to start off solidarity movements. . . ." The Draft then notes that our sections will be able to attract vanguard workers to their ranks only to the extent that the sections demonstrate their political and organizational seriousness. "And such seriousness involves, in addition to the tasks mentioned above, *regular, persistent, long-term intervention in the plants and unions regardless of the immediate results and regardless of the ups and downs in the class struggle.*" (Draft, p. 24. emphasis in original)

The Draft's *organizational* subordination of intervention in these sectoral struggles to the task of beginning to sink roots in the proletariat derives from its characterization of the period. If the period is in fact one in which the socialist revolution is conjuncturally on the agenda, then we can expect a general trend toward more extensive and militant struggles by workers at the plant level. We can further expect that these struggles will increasingly go beyond purely economic issues, that they will tend to be waged independently of or in opposition to the bureaucratic leaderships, and that they will tend to throw up forms of organization approximating workers control. That is, we can expect not just economic issues but political issues to be raised increasingly in the working-class struggles at the plant level.

We can also anticipate the real possibility of explosions of the scope of May '68.

All this means that we can and must win "a growing base in the workers' and trade-union movement that would enable us to transform the numerically and politically strengthened revolutionary organizations into a permanent factor in raising the level of consciousness and organization of the most militant layers of the workers, into a driving force in preparing the way for future explosions of mass struggles culminating in a system of dual power." (Draft, p. 23, col. 2)

Comrade Mary-Alice regards as "one of the gravest errors" of the Draft the "mechanical way in which it tries to derive the central party-building tasks before each of the European sections of the Fourth International today from an analysis of the previous revolutionary upsurges and from the need to prepare for the emergence of organs of dual power in coming prerevolutionary crises." (Criticism, p. 15, col. 1.)

It is not easy to see the substance of this criticism. Is it a difference about the nature of the period? Does Comrade Mary-Alice regard the Draft's insistence on preparing for the emergence of dual power in coming prerevolutionary crises as one more manifestation of doomsdayism? Does she object to the Draft's stress on the need for such preparation today because she believes such preparation is premature?

Or is she making a methodological objection to deriving party-building tasks from any objective characterization of the period? Or is she expressing a suspicion that an analysis of previous prerevolutionary situations is irrelevant to anticipating the course of revolutionary struggles in the future?

If Comrade Mary-Alice's objection is neither methodological nor related to the estimate of the period, then the objection seems irrelevant. For the factors she correctly points to as conditioning what we are able to do at any given moment—size, social composition, political maturity of our cadre, etc.—are also emphasized in the Draft.

For example, where there are still only a handful of Trotskyists, clearly the "primitive accumulation of forces" has to take top priority. Likewise, recruiting and educating cadres always remains a central task, and of course we must recruit wherever we can—in the schools and universities, in the army, in women's organizations, etc. As both Comrade Mary-Alice and the Draft point out, our intervention in these sectors enhances our ability to penetrate the class.

But is it not also true that our ability to intervene effectively in these sectors will depend increasingly on our degree of penetration of the class? Is it not characteristic of the sort of period the Draft ascribes to capitalist Europe today that all social groups beginning to struggle against specific forms of capitalist misery tend to look for solutions to their problems to the working class with its visible capacity to fundamentally transform society? Is it not characteristic of such a period that a strong centripetal force toward the working class appears? And doesn't this imply that our ability to recruit from these sectors, as well as to lead struggles on issues initially raised within them, will increasingly depend on our ability to sink roots in the class, to appear as the vanguard of the working class not only in the programmatic sense but also in the organizational sense—in terms of our

ability to initiate and lead action?

If all this is not the case, then the concept of the leading role of the proletariat disappears.

Does this mean that sectoral struggles are unimportant? No. But it does mean that proletarians who also belong to other sectors must become conscious of themselves *as proletarians* and that nonproletarian layers must be carried forward by the struggle of the working class. It may be quite true that many workers will radicalize around issues that affect them as members of sectors—as women, as members of national minorities, as consumers, etc. But the essence of their awakening self-consciousness as workers lies in their understanding that all the problems of sectoral character stem ultimately from the exploitation of wage-labor by capital, that the solution to the sectoral problems necessitates the abolition of that exploitation, and that this abolition can be carried out only by the working class *as a class* confronting the capitalist class *as a class*.

It is thus false, for example, to present the task of the liberation of women as a task of women. The preconditions for the abolition of the oppression of women can be established only through the destruction of capitalist property relations. This task can be accomplished only by the revolutionary action of the working class conscious of itself as a class.

We suspect there may be a fundamental difference here. We have the impression that some comrades regard our positions and our reasons for supporting the general line of the Draft as "workerist." During the discussion in the branches, for example, some comrades seemed to regard the women's movement as an intrinsically *independent* movement objectively aimed against a *particular* but *essential* institution of bourgeois society, namely, the family. These comrades seemed to view the "independent" women's movement as one that will at some point *converge* with the working-class struggle in a general onslaught against capitalism.

We were challenged to answer the question, Do you regard the family as a pillar of bourgeois society and as the central institution of the special oppression of women? We do. But the family that is a pillar of bourgeois society and is the central institution of the oppression of women in capitalist society is a historically particular kind of family—the nuclear family, isolated from production. And the nuclear family is itself the product of the generalization of commodity production in the highest level of its development, the capital-wage-labor relationship.

The abolition of that institution requires the establishment of the conditions that foster its withering away—namely, the progressive undermining of generalized commodity production, namely the abolition of capitalist property relations. And this is the task of the working class and of no other group, layer or sector. The family cannot be abolished by attacking it as an institution. The right to contraception, the right to abortion, the relaxation of divorce laws, the purging of sexist advertising from the airwaves, etc., will *not* destroy the family so long as the material base that gives rise to it as an institution remains.

We should encourage women to look to the proletariat in struggle as the agency of their liberation. But the other side of this same point is the elementary Marxist principle

that the working class must be champion of all the oppressed. We must constantly educate the workers to understand that the unity of the class can be achieved only through struggle against the structures of oppression and privilege that divide it. The fight against national oppression and sex oppression is central to our full program. And the necessity of bringing such questions into the class is stressed in Section 10 of Draft, particularly under the rubrics of "organizing a systematic internationalist campaign" and of "popularizing and spreading so-called 'qualitative' demands that arise out of mass struggles themselves and that either undermine the very foundations of capitalist market economy or serve as a powerful stimulus for solidarity and unity among all layers of the proletariat. . . ." (Draft, pp. 17-18)

There is nothing "workerist" about this perspective. Workerist conceptions urge the sectors to disregard their sectoral concerns for the sake of entering into the class struggle on a purely economic basis. The conception we are defending is that while the sectoral issues can only be resolved through the revolutionary action of the working class, it is no less true that the working class—both in order to overcome the divisions within it that weaken it as a class and in order to mobilize nonproletarian layers behind it—can and must take up the sectoral issues and make them its own.

Paradoxically, the view that affirms the existence of "movements for social change with independent dynamics of their own" tends to end in a kind of workerism. For if national minorities are to be mobilized in an independent nationalist movement, and if women are to be mobilized in an independent feminist movement, and if youth are to be mobilized in an independent youth movement, and so on, and if it is also thought that these movements acquire added, even decisive, strength when the workers who also belong to any of these various layers enter the appropriate independent movement, then there is a tendency to regard the movement of those workers who do not belong to any of these sectors as itself a separate sectoral movement. And what issues will those workers who are not young, female, nationally oppressed, etc., move around? Clearly, economic ones. While stressing that the workers are not all white, old, male, etc., one may come to regard those workers who *are* white, old, male, etc., (and there are some, after all) as an additional sector. The term "workers movement" thus tends to refer either to the struggle exclusively around economic issues or to the arithmetic sum of all the "movements for social change." In both cases, the crucial concept—that of class consciousness, of the action of the class as a class—tends to be liquidated.

The question of the student movement should be considered in this context. A number of comrades asked whether we support the World Youth Radicalization document. In discussing the March-April struggles in France, we have already indicated that we think the document is ambiguous. If it simply affirms that outbursts of struggle among students are a more or less permanent feature of a period of the rise of the world revolution and that we must intervene in these outbursts with a program that seeks to link them to broader social struggles, then we have no disagreement.

But if the document anticipates the development of a

more or less continuous student movement having its objective basis in the institution of the capitalist university or educational system, which supposedly establishes a common "student interest"; if the document means that we should try to win leadership of this movement and link it with other social movements—with the goal of unleashing a general onslaught against capitalism; if it means that we should seek to place the nature of and control over the institutions of capitalist education in the center of our agitation on "student issues," then we think the document is false and can be seriously disorienting.

Of course, additional documents and balance sheets on the various areas of intervention of the European sections are needed. But the orientation provided by the Draft is sound: We seek to unify the new mass vanguard in action on issues that may be raised in any sector; we seek to define these issues in class terms and to transform sectoral struggles into class struggles; we propose forms of organization and struggle in the sectors that can be exemplary—above all, self-organization and democratic structure. To the extent that we succeed, we can bring the sectoral issues to the class itself and can point to the exemplary forms of struggle. We thereby aid in raising working-class consciousness and bring important working-class forces to bear in these particular struggles. We increase our sections' credibility as serious political forces; we enhance our opportunities to recruit to our full program; we tilt the balance of forces to the disadvantage of the workers bureaucracies, occasionally even forcing the mass organizations into some united form of action on these issues.

In the framework of this general approach, we stay alert to any potential issue that can mobilize any sector and intervene in such mobilizations energetically. The Draft does not "ignore" the sectors; it does not take a workerist approach.

The priority of sinking roots into the working class derives from the general character of the period. The Draft orients our sections toward advancing and spurring on the tendency on the part of sectors to look to the working class for solutions to their problems. It is opposed to any kind of populist or sectoralist strategy; it indicates the need to *overcome* the "independent dynamic" of sectoral struggles. And it avoids, at the same time, the workerist trap of regarding economic struggles by the trade-union movement as the sum total of revolutionary activity.

It is quite true that the Draft does not project building an abortion movement on a regional basis, or for that matter building a "movement" around any given sectoral question on a regional basis. And this is quite correct, because the question of whether to build mobilizations around such issues is a precise tactical one dependent on the specific situation in various countries. On the question of the sectors, as on other questions, the Draft does not intend to be a recipe book. It provides a general framework within which the precise tactical questions can be properly posed. It is in this spirit that the question of the various tactics for penetrating the class must be considered. Of the many possible tactics—colonization, leaflet distributions and press sales at plant gates or in working-class neighborhoods, building of strike-support com-

mittees, contacts with and recruitment of advanced workers through their participation in sectoral struggles, etc.—the Draft does not attempt to lay down recipes. The utilization of these tactics in proper combination depends on specific circumstances and local situations.

Nor does the Draft lay out a catalogue of slogans to be raised in the trade-union movement; these also must be tailored to specific situations. It stresses the necessity of actively supporting all the day-to-day struggles of the workers and of intervening in them with the transitional program.

The centrality of the workers control demand, however, is a strategic concept—one that must guide our utilization of the transitional program, and one that consequently *is* stressed in the Draft.

That centrality arises from a series of factors. First, as the transitional program itself asserts, the demand for workers control is intimately linked with preparation for the development of dual power. In turn, the Draft's emphasis on preparation (propagandistic and agitational wherever possible) on preparation for dual power derives from its estimation of the character of the period. In this sense, the Draft's insistence on making propaganda for workers control and for organs of dual power a major element of our activity is simply a logical deduction from its analysis of the period. Once again, in looking at Comrade Mary-Alice's Criticism, we find a situation in which her arguments *imply* that she disagrees with the Draft's analysis of the period but in which she never explains wherein lies her disagreement—or for that matter, whether she really has one.

But the centrality of the workers control propaganda also derives from a more immediate factor. In the wake of the rise of workers struggles that have tended to assume advanced forms contesting authority in the factories, a whole ideology of "workers self-management" and "workers participation" has become prevalent. This ideology is reformism's answer to the tendency of workers struggles to flow into dual-power channels. By obscuring the impossibility of achieving real workers self-management without the overturn of capitalist property relations, the destruction of the capitalist state, and the construction of central organs of workers administration, this ideology aids in coopting these advanced struggles through setting up "worker-management committees" and other similar reformist bodies.

It is essential to sharply counterpose our concept of workers control to all such preposterous notions, and this entails raising the demand for workers control as a slogan of struggle, constantly contesting the authority and power of the bosses in order to prevent the workers from being forced or tricked into sharing responsibility for managing their own exploitation.

The Fight Against Repression

Nothing in the Draft has aroused more opposition within the SWP than its treatment of the problems of revolutionary self-defense and the arming of the workers. The final paragraph of Section 19, "The Fight Against Repression," (p. 26, col. 1) has offended most:

"The spirit in which our sections will have to educate the entire mass vanguard, moreover, 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. History has shown that from any point of view, such an eventuality is preferable to an institutionalized civil war in the form of a bloodthirsty dictatorship where the bourgeois camp murders and tortures at will, while the proletariat and the worker militants, disarmed and disoriented, stand by helplessly and watch the massacre of their own."

Comrade Mary-Alice comments on the last sentence of the paragraph:

"No one can take exception to such a noble sentiment, which has motivated rebels for many centuries. 'Give me liberty or give me death.' 'Patria o muerte.' 'Before I'll be a slave I'll be buried in my grave.' This resolve has been expressed in many moving ways.

"However, given the current opportunities for revolutionary work and party building in Europe, it does not reflect a very optimistic outlook." (Criticism, pp. 26-27)

Comrade Mary-Alice seems to misunderstand what is involved here. This sentence is no appeal to any noble sentiments, to any heroic willingness to sacrifice one's life for some great cause or any righteous passion to take some of the oppressors with one when one goes. Rather, the sentence soberly states one of the most important lessons to be drawn from the past triumph of fascism. Nor does it reflect any lack of optimism, unless by optimism is meant the hope that the bourgeoisie has grown milder, that it will not again attempt to impose a bloody dictatorship when its vital interests require such a drastic solution. That kind of optimism, though, would be lethal to the working class. There can be no revolutionary work and no revolutionary-party building that is not accompanied by the assimilation of this lesson, both on the part of the party that is being built and on the part of ever broader layers of the working masses.

As for the first sentence of the paragraph, Comrade Mary-Alice sees in it "a formula that can only encourage the further development of adventurist tendencies. This formula represents an extension of the Latin American guerrilla warfare line applied to the current European situation." (Criticism, p. 26, col. 2) In support of this assertion, Comrade Mary-Alice constructs an astonishing chain of amalgams.

In her first attempt to assimilate the "showing the bourgeoisie in practice" line and the Latin American guerrilla warfare line, Comrade Mary-Alice refers to two articles in *Rouge*, one favorably reporting the fire bombing of a Honeywell-Bull display, the other favorably reporting a molotov cocktail attack on the Argentine Embassy in Paris after the Trelew massacre.

Was support to these actions an interpretation by the French comrades of the line of "showing the bourgeoisie in practice," as Comrade Mary-Alice believes? The answer is no, and we can be certain the answer is no because in the articles endorsing the actions the French comrades tell us quite explicitly what they thought the actions were about. According to the May 13, 1972, *Rouge*, the militants who attacked Honeywell-Bull "have denounced the war profiteers who furnish the matériel for imperialist aggression. And they have demonstrated their solidarity

with the Indochinese people—at the very moment when the French government was trying vainly to ban the mass demonstrations that took place Wednesday night."

Similarly, the communiqué on the Argentine Embassy attack in the Sept. 2, 1972, *Rouge* explains that the action was a "symbolic" one, "part of the worldwide wave of protest developing in the wake of the savage murder of sixteen unarmed Argentine revolutionists by the mercenaries of Lanusse."

In neither case is there any hint that the actions were approved because they were supposed to show the bourgeoisie that under certain circumstances it would have a real civil war on its hands. They were endorsed as symbolic actions protesting the imperialist slaughter in Indochina and the military dictatorship's massacre in Argentina, and expressing solidarity with the people of Indochina and with the Argentine revolutionaries. The approval (whether right or wrong) flowed *not* from an interpretation of the "showing the bourgeoisie in practice" line but from an interpretation of the "international solidarity" line.

Moreover, exactly because these attacks were understood as purely *symbolic* actions, the endorsement of them could not have anything to do with extending the Latin American guerrilla warfare line to Europe. The guerrilla warfare for which the Latin American sections were to prepare was conceived to be *real* guerrilla warfare—not a series of symbolic acts of protest, but a prolonged, direct, material engagement of the repressive forces that would progressively weaken them.

Comrade Mary-Alice's second attempt to amalgamate the Draft and the Latin American guerrilla warfare line doesn't withstand analysis any better. This time, she takes an article by Comrade Bensaid that appeared in the June 10, 1972, *Rouge* as the purported link. In this article, Comrade Bensaid develops a theoretical justification for certain kinds of symbolic acts of violence that are linked to mass struggles. Under certain circumstances, he argues, such acts can aid in breaking through the mystification of bourgeois norms in mass consciousness and thus can contribute to intensifying mass combativeness. In our opinion, Comrade Bensaid's arguments are wrong. But he does *not* link them at all to the necessity of showing the bourgeoisie in practice that an attempt to establish an open dictatorship will lead to civil war. Nor does the Draft in any way promote the conceptions developed in Comrade Bensaid's article. Nor are these conceptions intrinsically related to guerrilla warfare.

Nevertheless, such ideas *can* of course be integrated into a guerrillaist strategy. And in fact an internal document of the Ligue that Comrade Mary-Alice seizes on in her final attempt to draw together the Latin American line and the Draft does contain arguments similar to those of Comrade Bensaid and it does relate them to some hypotheses that might point towards a guerrilla warfare strategy in capitalist Europe. The document in question, "Is the Problem of Power Posed? Let's Pose It," by Comrades Jebrac, Anthony, Arthur, and Stephane was submitted last summer to the Ligue's discussion bulletin. (Bulletin d'histoire et de sociologie du XXe siècle, No. 30).

The hypotheses in Bulletin No. 30 that might point towards a guerrillaist strategy may be summarized as follows:

1) The traditions of legalism are so strong in the working class and the bureaucrats and bourgeoisie have so thoroughly learned the lessons of 1968 as to preclude any generalized working-class explosion except as the climax of a period of violent struggle on a nonproletarian base;

2) The peasantry and some urban middle layers have demonstrated a capacity for sustained, offensive violence;

3) Given the unevenness of development among the countries of capitalist Europe accompanied by the deep intertwining of their ruling classes, any revolutionary victory in a single country will immediately pose the question of revolutionary war on a regional scale;

4) The social base and the sphere of activity of the proletarian party is at most a secondary feature in determining its proletarian character; what is decisive is that it historically turn out to have been at the head of a social upheaval terminating in the establishment of a workers state; a proletarian party may thus base itself primarily in the peasantry or urban middle strata in order to capitalize on their superior military capabilities.

Consider point by point the position of the Draft on each of these hypotheses which, taken together, might suggest a guerrilla orientation.

1) The Draft (p. 16, col. 1) contains an explicit polemic against the idea that any lessons the bureaucracy or the ruling class may have learned can prevent the recurrence of generalized social explosions of the order of May-June '68.

2) Sections Seven, Eight, and Nine of the Draft (pp. 14-17) offer an unambiguous reaffirmation of the classical Marxist theory that in the advanced capitalist countries the proletariat and *only the proletariat*, provided the proper leadership develops within it, is capable of unfolding all the prerequisites for the development of generalized dual power and the resolution of that dual power in the establishment of a workers state. Methodologically, Comrade Mary-Alice stands much closer to the authors of Bulletin No. 30 than does the Draft when she writes: "One of the gravest errors made in the European document is the mechanical way in which it tries to derive the central party-building tasks before each of the European sections of the Fourth International today from an analysis of previous revolutionary upsurges and from the need to prepare for the emergence of organs of dual power in coming prerevolutionary crises." (Criticism, p. 15, col. 1; emphasis added.)

3) The first workers state in capitalist Europe will certainly be exposed to the danger of counterrevolutionary military intervention by the remaining European capitalist powers. Under these circumstances, the possibility of generalized revolutionary war on a regional scale, in certain phases of which guerrilla tactics might play an important role, cannot be ruled out. The Draft deals with this question in completely classical fashion: "A powerful revival of the workers' reflexes of international solidarity, moreover, plays a major role in the development of the class struggle in Europe in the present period . . . to prepare the masses of the European proletariat for any attempt at counterrevolutionary intervention against a socialist revolution winning victory first in a single country of capitalist Europe, preparation that must be undertaken in advance and in a systematic way as the proletariat returns to its internationalist traditions." (Draft,

p. 26, col. 1-2)

4) Consistent with its characterization of the way the proletarian revolution in capitalist Europe will take place, the Draft insists that our sections will not qualify as the revolutionary, proletarian *parties* that are necessary to lead the revolution to victory until they have sunk deep roots in the working class. It thus stands directly opposed to any conception of the party that suggests that a proletarian base and sphere of activity are in any way secondary or inessential features of it.

In short, the Draft contradicts each of those theses of the authors of Bulletin No. 30 that, taken together, might point towards a guerrilla strategy in capitalist Europe.

Not one of Comrade Mary-Alice's attempts to show that the Draft represents an extension of the Latin American line to Europe can withstand analysis. Each of her amalgams dissolves as soon as it is confronted with the texts.

As far as the question of the organization of revolutionary violence is concerned, the line of the Draft has only two features in common with the line of the 1969 World Congress Document on Latin America together with the International Majority's subsequent modifications of it:

1) The perfectly orthodox conception that many stages of the unfolding class struggle, and not just its climactic moments, confront the movements of the exploited and oppressed with the problem of developing the appropriate organized physical response to the violence of the ruling class;

2) The perfectly orthodox conception that even before the Trotskyist organizations have become mass parties, under certain circumstances they can and must begin to present solutions to this problem—as to all the other problems objectively posed by the class struggle—in practice, through initiatives in action, and *not only* through propagandizing what the correct solutions would be if there were a mass, revolutionary party to lead the masses in implementing them.

In terms of concrete tasks, however, the 1969 World Congress resolution on Latin America and the Draft point in opposite directions. On the basis of its analysis of the objective situation in Latin America, the 1969 resolution defined technical preparations for guerrilla warfare as the central political task of the sections. In our opinion, errors in this analysis—particularly regarding the room for maneuver by the Latin American ruling classes, the scope of the interludes in which mass movements could unfold, and the anticipated role of the Cuban leadership—encouraged some errors in practice by the Bolivian section and probably hastened the general political degeneration of the official Argentine section. Moreover, in our opinion, these errors have not been completely corrected in subsequent documents on Latin America presented by the International Majority. However this may be, though, it is certain that the 1969 Latin America resolution did not anticipate an ascending mass movement in which our sections would have to root themselves and for which the problem of the organization of revolutionary violence would be posed as one among many political problems at each stage of the unfolding of the mass struggle. Rather, the resolution anticipated that confrontation between revolutionary armed forces and the armed forces of the state would be a necessary *precondition* of the rise of the mass movement and that the party would have to be built under these conditions. Thus, technical preparation for

armed struggle was defined as the central political task.

The Draft offers a completely different analysis of the objective conditions in capitalist Europe. It anticipates an ascending mass movement, above all of the working class. It thus defines as the central task the winning of *"hegemony within the new mass vanguard in order to build qualitatively stronger revolutionary organizations than in the preceding stage*, to make the transition from revolutionary propaganda groups to revolutionary political organizations beginning to sink roots into the proletariat." (Draft, p. 13, col. 2) It thus defines the solution to the problems posed by ruling-class violence—and, more generally, by repression—as just one among our "central political tasks" (Draft, pp. 17-18). It orients our European sections in a fundamentally different direction than the 1969 Latin American resolution oriented our Latin American sections.

It is better to look at what the Draft actually says about the fight against repression than to assimilate it via a chain of amalgams to the Latin America line of the 1969 World Congress.

First of all, the Draft considers the problems posed by the danger of selective state repression, within the framework of formal legality, directed against our sections or other far-left groups. It insists on the need to lay the foundations *now* for counterattack "by creating a climate of general solidarity against repression, of defending all the democratic rights of the workers' movement, and of de facto recognition that the far left organizations are part of the organized workers' movement. Our fundamental line for blocking this first danger is to prevent the extreme left from becoming isolated from the mass workers' organization." (Draft, p. 25, col. 2) The behavior of the CP, SP, PSU, CGT, and CFDT up to this point towards the ex-Ligue comrades' struggle to regain legality suggests that the comrades have been able to carry out this line remarkably well.

Secondly, the Draft considers the problems posed by the ruling class's use of extra-legal repression—whether hired goons, special police forces operating outside the norms of bourgeois legality, or organized fascist groups. "The most effective response to this danger," the Draft notes, "is to revive the reflexes of self-defense and to lay the basis for workers' militias arising out of worker and student strike pickets." At the same time, it points out that "it has already proved indispensable in Spain and France for the revolutionary organizations themselves to take initiatives in self-defense. This may be the case tomorrow in other European countries." Then the Draft goes on to warn, "Such initiatives must be conceived and executed in such a way that they will be understood and endorsed by the workers, link up with the workers' organizations' tradition of self-defense against the fascists, and serve as exemplary strongpoints to encourage more massive forms of self-defense on the part of the working class." (Draft, p. 25, col. 2)

As this last sentence makes clear, the fight against the repression directed at our sections is not isolated from our general political tasks. One of these is:

"Through general propaganda, but also and especially by pointing to actions, incidents, and concrete events that have an obvious pedagogical value, to systematically educate the workers' vanguard and broader working-class

layers on the need for armed self-defense against the violence of big capital, both in its extralegal variety (fascist gangs, private armed forces of the capitalists, secret police forces, strike-breakers) and its 'legal' variety (police, riot squads, and armies). To undertake a campaign of anti-militarist propaganda, including in the bourgeois army itself." (Draft, p. 18, col. 1)

This context defines the immediate, practical meaning of the line of educating the entire mass vanguard "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." This context makes clear what the Draft is really recommending that our sections do in practice *now* (as part of a process, stretching from now until the final struggle for power) in the way of showing the bourgeoisie that there will not again be an ignominious capitulation to its open dictatorship. The Draft is recommending that our sections project for the new mass vanguard exactly those things mentioned above: where necessary, the far-left organizations must defend themselves against fascist attack in such a way that the defense will be understood by the workers, will link up with the workers organizations' traditions of anti-fascist struggle, and will serve as exemplary strongpoints for more massive forms of self-defense; where necessary, and where the relationship of forces permits, the new mass vanguard must take initiatives in the formation of strike pickets.

What can the new mass vanguard do in practice *now* to show the bourgeoisie that it will have a real civil war on its hands in the *future* if it attempts to establish an open dictatorship? Very simply, it can, as far as possible, crush the still-weak fascist bands and take initiatives in battling strike-breaking goons. The Draft is not recommending that our sections form popular revolutionary armies or try to unleash guerrilla warfare, either rural or urban, to show the bourgeoisie anything.

But even after the confusions caused by trying to assimilate the Draft to the Latin American document of the last World Congress are cleared up, there still seem to be some important differences concerning the problems of ruling-class violence between the line of the Draft and the line indicated in Comrade Mary-Alice's Criticism.

Her own positive formulations of the criteria of the acceptability of actions that involve the possibility of violence are ambiguous. She approves, of course, of active self-defense against right-wing efforts to deny us the right to distribute our press or hold meetings, on the grounds that such actions are essential to our political work and possess such a clearly defensive character as to place the onus for any violence clearly on our adversaries. (p. 25, col. 1). Yet her polemic against "exemplary actions" would suggest that she is opposed to utilizing incidents of successful self-defense pedagogically, to pointing to them to demonstrate how workers in struggle can organize themselves against ruling-class violence. Moreover, her emphasis on the defensive character of actions might be construed as opposition, for example, to the kind of militant demonstration which, however defensively the call to it may be formulated, has the clear goal, understood by all participants, of preventing some fascist action from taking place.

The crucial ambiguity, however, appears in Comrade Mary-Alice's general formulation of our role in preparing the self-defense of mass struggles:

"As in every other aspect of the struggles of the masses, we play a *vanguard* role. We take the initiative *within the masses* on such questions as the formation of strike pickets and workers militias or, in certain situations, guerrilla units to defend the mass struggles of the peasants. We take these initiatives as members of the *mass* organizations, and in the name of the *mass* organizations, even if initially few besides ourselves are involved. The course followed by Hugo Blanco in Peru and the course followed by the Trotskyist leaders of the 1934 teamsters strike in Minneapolis offer instructive examples." (Criticism, p. 26, col. 2)

The ambiguity of this formulation turns around the ambiguity of the terms "masses" and "mass organizations." Does "masses" refer only to those broad layers still today following the traditional bureaucratic leaderships, or does it refer also to those individuals and layers beginning to act independently of those leaderships who will be joined by broader layers in the future? Does "mass organizations" refer only to the established mass organizations as they are today, or does it also refer to those somewhat tenuous, more or less *ad hoc* groupings that are the initial organizational form of struggles taking place independently of or in opposition to the bureaucratic leaderships? At the level of a French factory, for example, does "mass organization" refer only to the local chapter of the CGT or CFDT, which often brings all its weight to bear to oppose such objectively necessary tasks as the formation of strike pickets and which often excludes militants who insist on these tasks? Or does it also refer to a strike committee which can arise at a moment of upsurge in opposition to the bureaucrats, unite to some extent unorganized workers with union members prepared to break in action with their leaderships, and within which we may be able to play a leadership role, proposing, for example, the organization of strike pickets? In general, it is always ambiguous to speak of "masses" without specifying the leadership of those masses.

Unfortunately, Comrade Mary-Alice seems to resolve the ambiguity in the wrong direction when, in connection with slogans proposed for trade-union intervention, she writes:

"Still another category of problems relates specifically to preparing the workers to defend themselves against strike-breaking goon squads and direct intervention by the police and other military or paramilitary forces—whether 'legal' or 'extralegal.' A broad propaganda campaign *waged by the mass workers organizations* to expose the violence of the ruling class is the only way to create a climate in which the organization of strike pickets, defense guards, and workers militias becomes realistic." (Criticism, p. 17, col. 1; emphasis added.)

We do not see what this can possibly mean except that the Trotskyists must wait to take any initiatives in the development of workers self-defense until the bureaucratic leaderships are prepared to wage a broad propaganda campaign around the issue of ruling class violence. We thus do not see what "taking the initiative within the *masses*," "as members of *mass* organizations, and in the name of *mass* organizations," can possibly mean except con-

fining our initiatives to propaganda aimed at encouraging the members of these mass organizations to pressure their bureaucratic leaderships into undertaking the "broad propaganda campaign" that is supposed to be the prerequisite for a struggle against scabs.

In our opinion, this is quite incorrect. The bureaucratized mass organizations will never undertake such a propaganda campaign unless they are forced to do so by the development of initiatives that are beginning to unite their own members in action against the will of the bureaucrats. All our propaganda about the necessity for the mass organizations preparing the proper climate for the organization of workers self-defense will remain words swallowed up in the void unless we take advantage of specific situations in which the given relationship of forces allows us to initiate the appropriate forms of workers self-defense, which can then be used as examples to be followed in other situations. Workers self-defense will never develop on the necessary scale if we restrict our activity to propaganda in favor of it.

Trotsky included a warning against just such "propagandism" in "The Decisive Hour in France" (*Socialist Appeal*, Dec. 24, 1938):

"We have not the least intention of offering from afar counsel on tactics to our French friends who find themselves on the scene of action and who can feel much better than we the pulse of the masses. Nevertheless, for all revolutionary Marxists it is now more than ever evident that the only serious and definitive measure for drawing a balance of forces, among them the willingness of the masses to struggle, is *action*. Pitiless criticism of the Second and Third Internationals has no revolutionary value except to the extent that it aids in mobilizing the advance guard for direct intervention in the events. The fundamental slogans for the mobilization are given in the program of the Fourth International, which has in the present period a more timely character in France than in any other country. On our French comrades there rests an immense political responsibility." Trotsky did not make any distinction in this respect between the tasks connected with arming the workers and the other tasks laid out in the Transitional Program.

The approach indicated by Comrade Mary-Alice is also at variance with our own SWP traditions. Consider only two examples.

The late 1930s saw a dangerous rise of a fascist movement in the United States. The SWP conducted a vigorous propaganda campaign aimed at alerting the entire labor movement to this threat. It defended itself against fascist attacks. But it also did more. It organized extremely militant demonstrations to prevent, as far as possible, the fascist groups from functioning and to serve as an example to the labor movement of what should be done. Whenever possible, the party called these demonstrations jointly with other organizations; in many cases, however, it was forced to call them in its own name alone.

The largest of these actions took place on Feb. 20, 1939, in front of Madison Square Garden in New York City on the occasion of a major fascist "united front" meeting. There was no support from the organized labor movement; the Stalinists stigmatized the action as a Trotskyite-fascist provocation; all three of New York's Yiddish dailies urged Jews to stay away from it.

To the surprise of the party, 50,000 people showed up. A street battle between the antifascist demonstrators and the cops, whom progressive Mayor LaGuardia had mobilized to protect the fascists, raged for four hours.

To avoid any misunderstanding about the character of the demonstration as the party conceived it—and as it must have been understood by all the participants—it is worthwhile to quote the text of the call issued by the New York District SWP:

"Labor: Picket the Fascist Garden Rally on February 20!

"Workers of New York!

"Rally to stop Fascism!

"They are mobilizing at Madison Square Garden, Monday night, February 20.

"Hitler's German-American Bund gangsters. Pelley's Silver Star scum and Coughlin's mob of labor-haters have hurled a brazen challenge at the workers of New York.

"Wrapping themselves in the cloak of patriotism and 'Americanism,' the Fascists prepare to spew their anti-labor and anti-Jewish poison throughout New York City.

"These gangs have already gone too far. They must be stopped.

"What are you going to do to stop this murderous crew?

"We must not let this filthy, creeping slime get a foothold in New York.

"Gather in front of Madison Square Garden Monday by the thousands!

"Be there at 6:00 p.m. sharp!

"Let the Fascists feel the anger and the might of the working class—Get out and picket!

"Don't wait for the concentration camps—Act Now!

"On to Madison Square Garden Monday night."

The party's attitude, after the demonstration, towards the kind of self-defense that became necessary in the face of the police attack—and preparation for self-defense is, of course, essential in the case of any such militant demonstration—was perhaps most clearly demonstrated in the chatty "On the Line with Bill Morgan" column in the March 3, 1939, *Socialist Appeal*:

"We saw one young comrade, who was about four feet one and who weighed slightly more than a copy of the *Communist Manifesto*. He was defending himself from two huge plainclothesmen with a piece of gas pipe which he had just picked up. The pipe was about two and a half feet long and everytime he swung it he almost fell on his face—but the effort was worth the attempt. The dicks kept a safe distance from that little dynamo. . . .

"Another youth—a slight but determined Yipsel [then the Trotskyist youth group]—wore a cap stuffed with paper. On the sidewalk he just happened to find a rolled-up newspaper which he used with skill and speed. Twice during the rout of the police on 51st Street, he turned to his comrades and said, 'See, they are yellow. They are waiting for the mounted cops to help them.'"

The Madison Square Garden action was only the largest of these demonstrations. The other, smaller ones—in Los Angeles, for example, where *several hundred* pickets clashed with fascists and cops, and in the Bronx where an anti-Coughlin rally of 500 was broken up by the police, and in Philadelphia where a fascist meeting was cancelled after the SWP issued a call for a demonstration—were all likewise called by the party in its own name with only an occasional endorsement from a local union.

Writing in the March 14, 1939, *Socialist Appeal*, Felix Morrow explained the party's approach to the fight against fascism: "The only way to fight the fascists is by mass struggle, by bringing the workers out into the streets and the neighborhoods where the fascists rally, by thus organizing the power of the working class in direct conflict with the fascists. Once this is understood, the best of the workers must be organized into Workers Defense Guards, prepared and trained to smash the fascist gangs. *There is no other way.*"

These actions were all of a "vanguard" character; even the Madison Square Garden demonstration was small in comparison to what it might have been had the trade unions mobilized their members. In most cases, they were called by the party alone. They were not conceived as peaceful, legal protests but as actions aimed at blocking certain fascist undertakings. Moreover, they were conceived as the initial steps towards broader conflict with the fascists on the basis of which the organization of workers defense guards could proceed. They were organized in the absence of any propaganda campaign by the mass workers organizations aimed at preparing the proper climate. They were undertaken in the face of the hostility or at best indifference of almost the entire trade-union movement and of the other organizations of the left.

The party did not *merely* appeal to the workers to pressure their union leaderships to launch a struggle against the fascists; we called the workers into the streets to undertake it themselves. We organized a national political campaign on a carefully chosen issue that corresponded to the concerns of the vanguard, did not run against the current of mass struggle, and offered a chance for demonstrating a capacity for effective initiative, even if still modest. It was an issue, moreover, that we presented as directly linked to one of the central themes of the Transitional Program—the arming of the workers. And through that campaign we were in fact educating the entire mass vanguard in the necessity to show the bourgeoisie in practice that the price it would have to pay for any attempt to establish fascism would be a civil war in which both camps would use arms.

It appears that by Comrade Mary-Alice's criteria the entire undertaking would have to be condemned at best as "unrealistic," and at worst as hopelessly ultra-left adventurism.

We disagree. We think the campaign was basically correct. Likewise, we think the antifascist-antiscab campaign waged by our comrades of the Ligue Communiste during the past two years has been basically correct. They have applied fundamentally the same method as that employed by the SWP in 1938-39. They *have* systematically conducted propaganda on the necessity of workers self-defense; they *have* attempted to draw the mass workers organizations into such activity wherever possible; they *have* stressed that the masses of workers must be mobilized if the fascist threat is to be stopped. But they have *also* undertaken initiatives in this respect—in the context of the propaganda campaign they have been waging and in situations in which the relationship of forces has allowed them to apply in an exemplary (that is, pedagogic, not simply symbolic) way the principles explained in the propaganda campaign.

Of course, this method involves risks—as does any method that does not amount to waiting for the bureau-

cracy to lead. It requires careful calculation of the exact relationship of forces in specific conjunctures. Errors in judgment—which are inevitable occasionally—can lead to setbacks, sometimes serious ones. We cannot presume to judge yet at this distance whether the French comrades' decision to initiate the June 21 action against Ordre Nouveau at that precise time and in that precise manner was a correct one. The fact that the regime seized on the June 21 events as a pretext to ban the section and to indict two of its leaders in no way condemns the action. There is a real possibility, given the situation in France today, that French Trotskyism will emerge considerably strengthened.

One thing, however, seems to us almost sure. If the Ligue had not undertaken its antifascist-antiscab campaign in the way that it did, as well as its closely related initiative in helping to organize the Overney actions, the CP and the CGT would still be denouncing the far left as the government's partner in provocation; they would still be calling Krivine the twin of Marcellin, instead of inclining their way towards an at least mild propaganda campaign exposing the violence of the ruling class.

A more recent effort of the SWP will serve as our second example. In 1957, Robert Williams, the chairman of the Monroe, North Carolina, chapter of the NAACP acquired a charter from the National Rifle Association and organized a detachment to defend the Black community of Monroe from the depredations of the Klan. The party began to focus attention on the Monroe example in 1958, in connection with a defense campaign for two Black children imprisoned by racist officials there. In 1961, Williams, who was also an early partisan of the Cuban Revolution, and four others were framed-up on kidnapping charges following some incidents stemming from an effort to desegregate the local swimming pool in cooperation with a group of Freedom Riders.

The SWP continually publicized Williams's initiative in organizing the armed self-defense of the Black community and treated it as an example to be followed. After the kidnapping indictments were handed down, the party took the initiative in forming a broad committee to defend the victims. The Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants was based, of course, on the purely civil-liberties demand to end the frame-up and on providing legal defense for the victims. Within this framework, however, it was possible by publicizing the ideas of the defendants to launch a broad propaganda campaign to popularize the concept of armed self-defense of the Black community.

This was a "vanguard" undertaking if ever there was one. The entire mass, civil-rights movement—to say nothing, of course, of the trade-union movement—was absolutely opposed to Williams's ideas and deeds. For a long time, the Committee couldn't get a single leader of an established civil-rights organization even to support the purely civil-liberties campaign against the frame-up!

It is true that the party's role was essentially a propagandistic one. We were not in a position ourselves to actually initiated Black self-defense groups. But we do think that if, for example, Williams had been recruited to the SWP while he was still in Monroe the party would *not* have instructed him to withdraw from the self-defense effort.

Moreover, the content of our propaganda was not: Pressure the civil-rights organizations to undertake a broad

propaganda campaign to create a climate in which armed self-defense of the Black community becomes realistic; it was not: Armed self-defense of the Black community will be very important sometime in the future, but it will remain unrealistic until the mass organizations have launched a broad propaganda campaign; it was: Do it! with a careful explanation of why it was necessary to do it.

What the party did around Monroe was to organize a national political campaign on a carefully chosen issue that corresponded to the concerns of the vanguard, did not run against the current of mass struggle, and offered a chance for demonstrating a capacity for effective initiative. It was moreover an issue closely linked to one of the central themes of the Transitional Program—armed workers self-defense. Further, we were in fact educating the entire vanguard in the necessity to show the bourgeoisie in practice that the price it will have to pay for an open dictatorship will be a civil war in which both camps will use arms.

The passages in the Draft dealing with the fight against repression and with propaganda, agitation, and initiative on workers self-defense have nothing whatever to do with guerrillaism. They do not open a door to adventurism or to ultraleftism. They offer a restatement, appropriate to the present conditions of capitalist Europe, of the established Marxist positions on these questions.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of her Criticism (pp. 5-6), Comrade Mary-Alice lists eight "major errors" of the Draft—presumably the main reasons she and the other ten comrades at the December 1972 International Executive Committee meeting voted against it. Essentially, these were: the Draft falls into the error of "continentalism," seeking to develop a "single continental orientation" to deal with very varied countries; the Draft advances a "dogmatic timetable" that "gives all of Europe only four to five years before the 'decisive battles' are fought to determine which class will rule for the next historical period"; the Draft tries to derive our political tasks and tactics from this dogmatic timetable and "ignores or underestimates many of the actual political openings that could be taken advantage of, such as the youth radicalization, the women's movement, and anti-imperialist struggles"; the Draft falls into a "vanguardist" error by projecting winning hegemony in the new mass vanguard and transforming it into an adequate instrument for recomposing the workers movement as an orientation, and it deepens this error by taking the concerns of the vanguard as the starting point for our political initiatives; the Draft "opens the door to adventurism by proposing that irrespective of our size or real forces, we start right now to teach the ruling class *in practice* that we will use arms"; the Draft demands a vote on the past practice of entryism *sui generis*; the Draft tries to extend "the orientation and method of the 1969 resolution on Latin America" to the current situation in Europe, which is the underlying flaw that accounts for all the other mistakes; and the Draft "ignores the real political differences existing within the European sections," these differences allegedly going "to the heart of the problems of constructing sections of the Fourth International today."

As we have explained, we agree with Comrade Mary-Alice that the evaluation of entryism *sui generis* has no business being in the Draft, but we do not see its inclusion as a reason for rejecting the Draft's general line. As for the differences in the European sections, Comrade Mary-Alice herself did not explain in what way these go "to the heart of the problems of constructing sections of the Fourth International today." The only exception to this is the discussion in the *ex-Ligue Communiste* about the Jebrac, et. al. document, and, as we have explained, the Draft rejects all the important errors of that document.

As for the six other general criticisms, we believe them to be wrong criticisms and have tried to explain why. "The discussion on European perspectives and orientation is not fundamentally about 'Europe.' It is about differing approaches to and perspectives on party building," Comrade Mary-Alice writes. (*Criticism*, p. 27, col. 2) We agree. And we further think that the Draft represents nothing other than a basically correct application to present-day Europe of the principles of Leninist party building. It should be supported on that basis.

July 18, 1973

BOURGEOIS MILITARY INFLUENCE IN THE
FRENTE REVOLUCIONARIO ANTI-IMPERIALISTA:
AN ANSWER TO COMRADE ERNEST GERMAIN

by Steven Warshell, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

In October 1970, General Juan Jose Torres came to power in Bolivia taking advantage of a bumbled right-wing military coup led by General Rogelio Miranda.

The Torres government began with aims similar to that of the Velasco regime in Peru, what Comrade Livio Maitan accurately calls military reformism. That is, using the mass movement and the radicalization in the country to gain concessions from imperialism by attacking imperialist control of natural resources while preserving military rule.

The Torres was a bourgeois *desarrollista* [national development] government, based on the left wing of the national armed forces that had been forged in the previous decade. They had thrown their support to the various juntas and dictatorships in the intervening period.

Torres did not move against the other sections of the army after he took power—his cabinet included several prominent right-wing army figures, the war college was headed by Luis Reque Teran (who later left Torres to join Banzer), and only a few of the leading right-wing figures were forced to resign.

For a deeper analysis of this period the balance sheet "The Lessons of Bolivia" is the best source. The point in rehashing a few facts here is to show that Torres and his group were the left wing of the Bolivian Armed Forces; they came to power as the result of the mass mobilizations in the cities; and attempted to carry out a bourgeois nationalist developmentalist program.

The Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR—Bolivian section of the Fourth International) was blind to the mobilization in the cities. They had accepted faithfully the line of the last World Congress and were faithfully carrying it out. They continued to carry out that line as members of the Frente Revolucionario Anti-imperialista (FRA).

The POR's orientation during that period is simple to sum up—the orientation of preparation for guerrilla warfare.

Even during the time of the People's Assembly, Hugo Gonzalez Moscoso, the leader of the POR, stated the party's

position as follows:

"But obviously this work cannot be capitalized on (work in the People's Assembly), or have any meaning in the long run, except in the context of preparing our organization for armed struggle. In the present unstable situation we look on everything as temporary. The repression that is to come will signal the start of a new stage of armed struggle on a scale previously unknown here." (*Intercontinental Press*, June 14, 1971.)

The POR saw "armed struggle," which the Latin American resolution defines as "rural guerrilla warfare," as the central task for revolutionists.

The "New Epoch"

The Bolivian comrades were correct about one thing: A showdown with the right-wing of the army was coming. It came on August 19, 1971 in Santa Cruz. Banzer had mobilized his section of the army and with the help of the fascists started a revolt. Very rapidly all the centers of the country came under control of the Banzer forces. The last holdout was La Paz. The right wing had four thousand soldiers invading the city, plus the fascists and the local cadets from the war college. Within a matter of hours, Torres fled the Presidential Palace, and Banzer placed himself in command.

The January 1972 issue of *Combate*, the organ of the POR, devoted several pages to these events of the 21st of August. Most of this account is merely factual: who fought where, what the outcome was, etc. But one paragraph, however, is interesting from another viewpoint:

"At about 4:00 p.m., three ELN columns appeared and concentrated at the Stadium heights, reinforcing the attack that was unfolding against the fascist officers on the different fronts of Miraflores. At the same time, the Colorado Regiment [the presidential guard unit] under the command of Major Sanchez attacked the gran cuartel [La Paz barracks]. This was the beginning of a new epoch in the revolutionary struggle. The Bolivian left and the officers that rose up against their gorilla chiefs to join

the people sealed in these struggles an alliance, that later gave birth to the FRA."

To clarify one thing right here, Sanchez did not rise up against anybody. He was attempting to *put down* a revolt of the right wing of the army, to keep his own gorilla chief in power.

This paragraph, including the misunderstanding of the dynamics of the right-wing coup, is an accurate presentation of the POR's view of the role of the army left wing in the August fighting. They "rose up against the gorilla chiefs," and "joined the people." One could easily assume that they are not only talking about Sanchez, but about Torres as well.

After a few hours of the "new epoch," Torres, Sanchez, their forces in the Army and police, and the left-wing organizations fled to the hills. As many as possible made it to Chile.

It was in Santiago in late October 1971, that most of the anti-Banzer forces regrouped into the FRA.

The Origins of the FRA

The FRA was announced to the world on November 1, 1971 with the publication in the Chilean CP paper of the "Manifiesto of the Frente Revolucionario Anti-imperialista."

The FRA began as a coalition among the following organizations that signed the document:

1. The Communist Party of Bolivia.
2. The PRIN, the party of labor bureaucrat and former vice-president of Bolivia, Juan Lechin.
3. The POR of Guillermo Lora, attached to the Healyites before the coup and the Lambertists afterward.
4. The POR of Hugo Gonzales M., the section of the Fourth International.
5. The MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary left).
6. The Bolivian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist).
7. The ELN, the Army of National Liberation formed by Che Guevara in 1966.
8. The Socialist Party of Bolivia.

Not much needs to be said about most of the groups in this list—especially the CP, SP, and PRIN—who have done much to defeat the Bolivian workers. The Bolivian experience is no exception to the international experience we have had with Stalinists, Social Democrats, and labor bureaucrats in a "revolutionary" front.

There were, however, two other names on the list of signers of the "Manifiesto"—the "Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (Mayor Ruben Sanchez Valdivia)" and General Juan Jose Torres Gonzalez, the former president of Bolivia.

Sanchez, as you may remember, was the man who rose up to "join the people" in August. You might not know, however, that Sanchez was a major figure in the hunt for Che Guevara in 1967. Che got the better of him, however, and Sanchez was captured by the ELN on April 10, 1967. He was released later that day after promising to deliver a press release to the Bolivian newspapers. Sanchez worked very closely with Torres, not only before Torres's coup, but in the Torres regime as well. Sanchez was put in charge of the Colorados Regiment (1,500 troops), the presidential guard unit. He was a trusted friend of the regime.

The "Revolutionary Armed Forces" are the remnants

of the Colorados Regiment and the other pro-Torres army elements that escaped capture after the Banzer coup.

A short time later, two other military groups joined the FRA: The Policia Boliviana (Grupo Revolucionario), the pro-Torres wing of the national police force; and the Vanguardia Militar del Pueblo de suboficiales y clases (People's Military Vanguard of Petty Officers and Non-Coms).

What was Torres's role in the army before he came to power? Here are a few highlights: In 1966, he was appointed Chief of Staff by President Barrientos. Torres designed and executed the military operations that hunted down, captured and murdered Che Guevara in 1967. In 1968, he was appointed to the diplomatic corps serving as ambassador to Uruguay.

To round out the story, he was retired by President Ovando in the summer of 1970, he seized power in October, was kicked out by Banzer in 1971, and in November of that year we find him in the Frente Revolucionario Anti-imperialista along with our POR.

The Program on which the FRA was formed is represented in the "Manifiesto" which is available in Internal Information Bulletin Number 5 in 1972. It makes interesting reading, and there are a few sections worth taking special note of:

"The August 21 coup imposed a fascist government on Bolivia, a government in the service of Yankee imperialism and the antinational forces.

"The coup was aimed both at blocking the achievement of national liberation—as the consequence of the popular mobilization—and at ousting a democratic and antifascist regime. . . .

"The fascist coup was staged because Bolivia had become a danger point for Yankee imperialism, an advanced position in the revolutionary rise in Latin America. The coup could not be carried out bloodlessly. The murderous assault was met with heroic popular resistance in La Paz, Oruro, and Santa Cruz, in which workers, students, revolutionary officers, progressive priests, and peasants gave their lives. . . .

"It is evident that the August coup was directed against national independence and sovereignty, against the liberty and fundamental rights of the Bolivian people. It is also clear that the coup could not be consummated without eliminating the progressive sectors of the Fuerzas Armadas de la Nacion, which were beginning to take their place in the process of liberating the country. . . . Therefore, the need is undeniable to build a fighting unity of all the revolutionary, democratic, and progressive forces so that the great battle can be begun in conditions offering a real perspective for a popular and national government.

"This is not a battle that concerns only one sector of the exploited people, or one class, institution, or party. This is a struggle between the majority of the now oppressed Bolivian people and the counterrevolutionary dictatorship of Banzer. Any form of sectarianism is counterrevolutionary. . . .

"Our unshirkable task is to close ranks around the FRA, organized by the forces that fought in the battle of August, to win political power for the people. . . .

"All acts of resistance must be directed in accordance with the tactics of struggle adopted by the Frente. Every

measure in defense of a persecuted patriot, prisoner, or exile; every action to rescue the natural resources and political sovereignty of Bolivia; every step in defense of university autonomy . . . freedom of the press . . . trade-union rights, in short, the entire battle must be directed with the following in mind. The Frente Revolucionario Anti-imperialista is not only the instrument for ousting the dictatorship but the power by which the people will win their rights and Bolivia will consolidate its independent existence. . . .

"We call on the workers, the peasants, the university and high school students, the revolutionaries in the armed forces and the police, the noncommissioned officers and the cadets . . . to join us and struggle in the ranks of the Frente Revolucionario Anti-imperialista."

Aside from the dominant theme of class-collaborationist two-stagism, there is one paragraph that should be quoted separately from the above, because Ernest Germain in defending the POR in his "In Defence of Leninism, in Defence of the Fourth International" uses it to say that:

"It should be noted that even the public appeal of the FRA, which we strongly criticised, stated that the leadership of the Bolivian struggle should be in the hands of the proletariat." (page 14)

The paragraph in question in the Manifesto says the following:

"Our goal is not just to eject the dictatorship from the Palacio Quemado. We propose to establish a government of Bolivians under the leadership of the proletariat, the ruling class of the revolutionary process."

Comrade Germain puts in his assertions about the FRA's program, and its founding Manifesto (which he describes as a "public appeal"), in order to prove in some way that the FRA is (a) socialist in program, (b) is under the "hegemony of the working class," and (c) that there is nothing wrong with the POR being a member party of the FRA.

I don't think that this one paragraph in the Manifesto or any one paragraph in any document, proves whether or not the program is revolutionary. The simple fact is that the dominant theme of the FRA founding Manifesto is class-collaborationist and two-stagist, the first stage putting the left-wing of the military back in power.

This is not the position of the POR as I have already shown—they don't think that the army left-wing exists anymore. After all, didn't they "join the people" in the battles of August 21st?

The dominant force in the FRA at its founding was clearly the military components. They were the ones who wrote the Manifesto (with the one concession to the left-wing parties), and they were the ones who wrote most of the propaganda.

The program of the Torres forces can be summed up very briefly as military reformism—in exile. It is bourgeois populism.

A question arises at this point: How can you tell exactly what the program of the military elements are by only one document signed by a wide range of groups and parties?

Answer: You cannot tell. But by turning again to the January 1972 issue of *Combate* you can tell.

On the front page of this issue, across the top of the page appears the large headline: "The Slogan of the Movement: Build and Strengthen the FRA across the Country!"

Inside this issue, beginning on page 11, a series of articles begins, all with the title "from soldier to soldier. . . ." They are all printed without comment. They all include appeals from different military groups to specific sectors of the army calling on these sectors to join the FRA.

The first statement in the series is signed by two army sergeants and three army corporals, members of the Vanguardia Militar del Pueblo de sub-oficiales y clases. This statement begins with more adulation of our Major Sanchez (who "joined up with the people").

These five people were guards at the concentration camp at Madidi. They helped an escape from the camp and fled with the prisoners. They say that they have left the army to join up with the people themselves. This article deals primarily with the conditions in the concentration camp.

The second part in the series is entitled "Call to the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers of the Army."

This statement has a more impressive list of sponsors: One general (and ex-president), two majors, two colonels (one of whom doubled as a cabinet minister), one air force captain, two army captains, three army lieutenants, one air force lieutenant, one police major, one police captain, one police warrant officer, a navy warrant officer, a sergeant major in the air force, one ex-cadet, and the same two army sergeants and three army corporals who wigned the first article.

Since most comrades haven't seen this issue of *Combate* or this Call, here it is in full:

"Today more than ever the struggle for national sovereignty and freedom unites us with our people. From hiding and exile we are communicating to all the comrades in Armed Forces and in the Bolivian Police that as a whole and in a way that represents both institutions we have joined the ANTI-IMPERIALIST REVOLUTIONARY FRONT, the great popular alliance of all Bolivia's revolutionary sectors.

"The August 21 antinational coup has led us to confront everyone in the military and the police to make an unavoidable decision: do you stand with the aspiring and sadistic hierarchs who bathe themselves in the blood of the people, or do you side with the people who are demanding a more just fatherland for all; do you stand with the sellouts who abandon the national wealth to yankee imperialism and prostrate themselves before foreign enemies like the Brazilian General Bethlem, or with the men and women who are struggling for a free nation and a sovereign future; do you stand with those who carry out assassinations in the mines, the countryside, the universities, and in the streets, or with the workers and students and peasants who are resisting the bloody repression of the fascist regime; do you stand with the coward and mentally deranged Colonel Andres Selich, or with the mothers, the older sisters, and the families of those who fall victim to this bloodbath; do you stand with those who betray the armed institutions, allying with the MNR [Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionaria.—Revolutionary Nationalist Movement], which was banned by the Armed Forces, or with the national majorities; finally, do you stand with those who commit crimes compromising the prestige and honor of all the Armed Forces and the Bolivian Police, or with the fatherland.

"All of us in the military are told that we have to fight against socialism, against communism, and against ex-

tremism. We ask ourselves: Who are the real extremists? Those who want to initiate a revolutionary process to free our fatherland from North American dependence and from those who have grown rich by exploiting the country; from those who order the assassination of men and women, workers and peasants, trade-union and university leaders; from those who order the universities, high schools and primary schools to be bombed and closed down!

"SOLDIERS OF BOLIVIA:

"We have already made our choice: We are with the people! Day by day more men are joining the ranks of the fatherland to fight against the antinational Banzer-Selich government. Corporal Eduardo Nina and soldiers Lorenzo Vargas, Felipe Mita, Gregorio Humeres, and Daniel Bustos from the 19th Andean Infantry Regiment stationed in Madidi provided a worthy example of bravery and loyalty and determination for their people by uniting with exiles they were watching over and hiding the plane to be used to release the country from sick hands.

"Like them, all men and women who are fighting against the bloodthirsty and the unpatriotic who sully our institutions with their sabers, each one of us must make our own decision. As soldiers we form part of the new generation that must fight for a reformed and just Bolivia. The great majority of us are descended from the people and we can't lend ourselves to repressing, torturing, or gunning down our own class brothers; we must not obey the orders of a few gorillas who, to better serve their yankee masters — the exploiters of our own people.

"Henceforth, every commissioned officer, noncommissioned officer, and soldier must observe the slogan to defend political prisoners against torture, help them to escape from jail and exile, prevent assassinations and 'gunning down.' Don't carry out any order than means persecuting and repressing the people!

"As members of the military it is our duty to look after the lives of all Bolivians. Now being added to the assassinations and tortures, is a decree by the regime to reinstitute the death penalty, so as to legalize 'gunning down.' We must halt the bloody plans for assassinations carried out under the pretext of an order that goes against the laws that we have sworn to defend.

"COMRADES:

"We have made our choice. We are calling on every one of you to swell the ranks of the ANTI-IMPERIALIST REVOLUTIONARY FRONT (FRA), which are the ranks of the sovereign and free fatherland that we must forge.

"We must as Bolivians complete this duty, for our People, for our institutions.

"DEATH BEFORE THE LIFE OF A SLAVE!!!"

This statement was signed by the following officers of the Bolivian Armed Forces: General Juan Jose Torres Gonzalez, Major Ruben Sanchez Valdivia, Major Simon Sejas Tordoya, Colonel Mario Candia Navarro, Colonel Jorge Cadima Valdez, Police Major Jaime Fernandez Gonzalez, Police Captain Jaime Cespedes Barrientos, Police Lieutenant Hernan Martinez.

The list goes on through the lower ranks. These are not important. But, what this statement and these signers demonstrate is that the "Revolutionary Armed Forces" did have a real leadership in exile. A leadership which had been tested in what Comrade Livio Maitan calls an "Army/Party."

I do not like the term because it is subject to very broad interpretation. But nevertheless the concept of the army as a political institution is sound. The Military caste continues to provide a source of political leadership for Bolivia.

These proud officers are the revolutionary armed forces, the FAR, that Germain refers to in his contribution. On page 13 of Germain's document, he states that "even the 'revolutionary armed forces' under Major Sanchez state that they are in favour of a socialist revolution and adhere to Marxism-Leninism."

Comrade Germain has been laboring under an illusion for some time. The leaders of the FAR see their role quite differently: "We must halt the bloody plans for assassinations carried out under the pretext of an order that goes against the laws that we have sworn to defend." Comrades, they would not have said that unless they meant to say it! These people are still defenders of the national bourgeoisie of Bolivia.

Finally, the last article in the *Combate* series is by the man himself, Major Ruben Sanchez Valdivia, the man who at four in the afternoon of August 21st, changed the course of history by 'joining up with the people,' the man who leads an organization that states that "they are in favour of a socialist revolution and adhere to Marxism-Leninism."

Let's see what Sanchez has to say for himself, in his letter to the Bolivian military caste entitled, "Now is the time for struggle and sacrifice against imperialism":

"Comrades:

"Bolivia is being severely scarred and subdued by the mandate of North American imperialism through its sinister machinery: The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the American Military Mission, assisted by their national instruments.

"During these times of bitterness, despair, and frustration in the country, I am addressing myself to you to denounce the Machiavellian determination of imperialism and its allies to definitively transform Bolivia into an oppressed colony of injustice and poverty.

"I want to inform you how imperialism and its servants have erected a great scheme of selective repression, persecution, tortures, and assassinations whose accomplices and executors are a few high-ranking military officers who, while staining our honor, call themselves 'patriots,' 'nationalists,' and 'institutionalists.'

"Never before have the barracks — the civic temples for Bolivian youth (!) — been transformed into prisons for torture and assassination. Never has the National Army, because of the deception of a few high-governing military officers, lent itself so shamefully to a sinister plan of gunning down university and high-school students, our workers, revolutionists, even the people, always fabricating the existence of a guerrilla group in the tropical zones of the country.

"I'm sure that most of those who make up the institution [army] are aware of the secret goings-on of the current tragedy of our people which rests on the shady meetings in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, or Sao Paulo, and Washington where the surrender and sacrifice of Bolivia was negotiated. Not only was the assassination of revolutionists and patriots, the destruction of leftist organizations, and the beheading of trade-union entities planned,

but the transfer of our forces and resources to imperialist monopolies as well.

"Today's Judases, now called 'patriotic' and governing military figures, by mandate of the northern empire have initiated their plan to mortgage the entire nation. Instead of shamefully begging for charity or for the rebuilding of old arms, which wouldn't be particularly useful during an international contest or for defending their sovereignty, rather, they are selling out in order to repress the longings for the liberation of our people and to indefinitely disregard their desire for a new, just, and decent society.

"The 'nationalist' rulers are paying the price for having betrayed the people. Underhandedly, they have been transferring natural resources that had benefitted Bolivians, and in fewer cases, granting nationalized concerns the prize of indemnification through starvation wages, poverty, and the blood of our people.

"The few military figures called 'institutionalists' lie when they assert that the Armed Forces are now serving the nation. The 'institutionalists,' known for their banality, have surrendered the honor and dignity of our Army to the service of the eternal exploiters of our fatherland.

"What have our institutions gained from this camarilla? I'm not referring to the Davids who make offers to imperialism, because they only help to fatten the bank accounts of the ruling minority.

"What has our institution [army] gained from this established and unjust order whose safe-guarding has been imposed on us by a minority of ambitious officers? Are officers and non-coms paid wages that enable them to live a decent life, so their children don't have to run around in tatters and go ill-fed? Can we hope for a roof over our own head? Is there any chance of hoping for a system of hospital and medical care or on a retirement plan that meets our human needs? Do we have barracks that are at least pleasant and hygienic for completing compulsory military service, basic elementary education for our peasant majority, in addition to military training? No, comrades, no. Our Armed Forces are only used as the instrument of the indigenous oligarchy and of imperialism for their degenerate means, debasing its principles and fundamental mission. They force us to become an army of occupation for supervising the greater exploitation of our people. It is the military clique which, to vindicate themselves, periodically pin another star onto their epaulettes, put up a puppet as President, add another Military Leader to the list of civilians, or open a new personal checking account in a foreign bank, while we comrades are forced to uphold this unjust and ignominious order and to shore up the rapid and dishonest presidential 'careers' during the frequent 'risings' or to be ready for a new and 'glorious' barracks uprising, because the ruling class isn't satisfied any longer with its new puppet; adventures that always end in a bloody battle between our poor and those in uniform and civilians who, on ruined farms and in shacks, with rifle or plough, bitterly ask themselves if these hopeless struggles are only going to leave a toll of dead and frustration.

"The outcome of these struggles has always benefited North American imperialism and its lackeys who, as they are now shackling Bolivians, are giving our land away to greedy foreign interests.

"We don't ignore the latest assault of the regime. We don't ignore the dreadful maneuvers that have caused our people to be exploited. We don't ignore the presence of imperialism's 'advisers' who, like the Brazilian general Hugo Bethlen, want to take over and further hoist the banner of exploitation in our land.

"Hugo Bethlen, one of the 'advisers' of the governing clique, is an example of our colonialization. This military figure has already had the gall to publicly state that Bolivia is fading as a sovereign nation, pressing for its transformation into a protectorate of Brazilian subimperialism. It is this species of the imperialist fauna that, like Bethlen, can penetrate the Bolivian military circles with the utmost ease, can indoctrinate our young officers, can gain possession of industrial planning to ruin our incipient industry, whose managers weren't able to enlarge it, and what is most shameful, can transform themselves into councilors to the governing camarilla with the aim of more faithfully carrying out the bloody job of assassinating Bolivians under the pretext of a death struggle against communism.

"It is these 'advisers' who are now trying to definitively alienate our institution and transform it into the docile instrument of a military-civilian minority which, obeying the slogans to surrender, will order workers' and peasants' sons, in uniform because of circumstances, to murder their parents, their brothers and sisters, their people, forgetting that these sons of the people won't always be soldiers, soon fully rejoining their class, which they are now forced to repress. Not only is it the soldiers, but also the vast majority of commissioned, warrant, and non-commissioned officers who, coming from the same people, are used as the executioners of their own fatherland because of the deception of a minority in the military.

"Comrades: This state of affairs cannot go on. It is time to struggle and sacrifice, the hour of the majority of Bolivians who have decided to struggle for the liberation of our people. It is time to consolidate ranks by uniting the country's workers, peasants, commissioned and non-commissioned officers, patriots, university students, intellectuals, and middle class.

"The moment has come to wage together the national battle against the oppression of imperialism and the oligarchy. We must organize a militant resistance; we must prevent the gunning down of revolutionists; we must protect and help the persecuted; we must form fighting cadres from one end of the nation to the other; we must instruct our soldiers not to fire on their people; we should all unite as a collective will, prepared to win the final victory.

"We know that the struggle will be long; we know that in this struggle for the liberation of our people our enemies will launch slanderous campaigns to discredit the revolutionary members of the military, but it will be useless to them, as useless as what they concocted against me in the aim of belittling the strength of the truth of my words and distorting the meaning of my struggle. They have attributed slanderous statements and intentions to me that are not mine. At times they have said that I am a member of the ELN [Ejército de Liberación Nacional—Army of National Liberation], or that I have applied to join that organization; they maintain that I favor the dissolu-

tion of the Armed Forces and its replacement by armed militias; they assert that I intend to Vietnamize the country, and finally, they accuse me of having sold my loyalty for five thousand dollars. Nothing could be more untrue. This campaign of slander and lies, concocted by the fascist government, has only tended to intimidate commissioned and non-commissioned officers, who have decided to place themselves in the service of their people.

"I am not in the ELN, nor do I favor the liquidation of the Armed Forces, nor do I intend to Vietnamize the country, nor have I sold my loyalty for five thousand dollars, as have those who are presently illegally holding power.

"Loyalty to the people and to their interests cannot be sold. My struggle has no other objective but to achieve the integration of the Armed Forces with its people, or any other end but that of winning the liberation of our oppressed fatherland.

"Comrades: We are living in an historic period, and on this occasion I want to inform you that because of a spontaneous and patriotic decision, the unifying political instrument that will lead us to victory has been organized, made up of all the leftist political forces, trade-union, university and popular movements, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias [FAR—Revolutionary Armed Forces], and the Bolivian police force.

"I have assumed a position of responsibility in this alliance after having consulted with many comrades and translated the spirit of dignity and honor of the great majority of commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

"Our struggle is not antimilitarist; it is essentially anti-imperialist. No revolution can go forward without the assistance and strength of the Armed Forces, an institution born of the very heart of the people to serve the people.

"United, we will free Bolivia from the clutches of our common enemy: North American imperialism.

"THE REVOLUTION IS ON THE MARCH!"

"Ruben Sanchez Valdivia"

Whatever term you want to use to classify the ideas presented in this letter, the term cannot be "Marxist-Leninist."

These words, printed without comment in *Combate*, are an accurate expression of the real political line of Sanchez, the Call to the Officers and Non-coms was an honest presentation of the views of the FAR, the "revolutionary armed forces." One has to be blind not to see the impact that these views have had on the FRA, especially as reflected in the founding Manifesto.

The military elements ran the FRA in this period, defined its program, and decided what actions it wanted to hold.

You can see that the program of the military wing of the FRA is identical in essence to that of the founding document, the "Manifesto." I hope that readers have noticed in these documents that the military elements wrote that there are no appeals to the average foot soldier, in Spanish, *soldados* or *Tropas*. The fact is, that none of the documents of the FRA that I have ever seen has ever even dealt with the soldiers as a social stratum. However, the *oficiales* (officers), the *suboficiales* (petty or warrant officers), and the *clases*, (the non-coms), are given ample coverage in the Bolivian radical press, including *Combate*.

Finally: if the only people who put out the appeals are

military; if the only real document has the military line (with one sop to the radical parties: "government under the leadership of the proletariat"); if the paper of the section of the Fourth International prints absolutely uncritically the garbage that the Military produces; and if the people who are quoted in newspapers in Latin America and the United States as leaders of the FRA are military figures; then what would be the logical conclusion? That it is not a "popular front" because there is not a single bourgeois party in it? No. The conclusion is that the FRA is led by members of the Torres military-reformist regime, that they determine the political program of the organization and therefore have the major voice in its practical functioning. The conclusion that follows from this is that the FRA is a class-collaborationist formation due to the political dominance of the military elements in the Front.

The reformist parties in the FRA, notably the CP and SP can live very happily with both the class-collaborationist program and the military elements who dictate that program. This is because the reformists believe that multi-class programmatic blocs are the best way to fight fascism. Of course, we do not agree.

Trotsky made one of his most important contributions to the revolutionary movement on the subject of fighting fascism. He continually emphasized the need for a united front of the working class to stop Hitler. When the ultra-left CP objected, "how can we bloc with the murderers of Luxembourg and Liebknecht?" Trotsky replied:

"They (the German CP leaders) do not understand the difference between, let us say, a parliamentary agreement and an ever-so-modest agreement for struggle in a strike of or in defense of workers printshops against fascist bands.

"Election agreements, parliamentary compromises concluded between the revolutionary party and the Social Democracy serve, as a rule, to the advantage of the Social Democracy. Practical agreements for mass action, for purposes of struggle, are always useful to the revolutionary party. The Anglo-Russian Committee was an impermissible type of bloc of two leaderships in one common political platform, vague, deceptive, binding no one to any action at all. The maintenance of this bloc at the time of the British General Strike, when the General Council assumed the role of strikebreaker, signified, on the part of the Stalinists, a policy of betrayal.

"No common platform with the Social Democracy, or with the leaders of the German trade unions, no common publications, banners, placards! March separately, but strike together! Agree only on how to strike, whom to strike, and when to strike! Such an agreement can be concluded even with the devil himself, with his grandmother, and even with Noske and Grezesinsky. On one condition, not to bind one's hands." (*For a Workers United Front Against Fascism*)

That last sentence is important: "One condition— not to bind one's hands."

The March Conference

In March 1972, the forces in the FRA met in Santiago, Chile for their first conference. All the parties that signed the November 1 Manifesto of the FRA were present plus one addition, the VALOR (Liberation Vanguard of the

East led by Luis Sandoval Moron who split from the left MNR after the coup.

Among the military forces present at the March conference were the "Revolutionary Armed Forces" of Sanchez, the Bolivian Police (Revolutionary Group), and the People's Military Vanguard. I have seen no evidence that Juan Jose Torres did not support the conference.

The March conference of the FRA is significant because steps were taken both to appease the left-wing parties in the organization and to strengthen the political dominance of the military forces.

At this conference, the following theses on discipline was voted on and adopted:

"1. No political organization or party may go against the fundamental line established in the fundamental founding documents of the FRA subscribed to by the representatives of the different groups belonging to it.

"2. The political parties retain their ideological and organizational independence but their conduct is bound by the agreements they have endorsed.

"3. The FRA shall act as a single entity in all areas of social life (trade-unions, universities, high-schools, popular organizations, etc.). In elections of any kind, the Front will present common slates after fully discussing them internally.

"4. A trade-union and student commission will be set up to take charge of coordinating trade-union and university student work. The highest political-union-student commission constitutes the leadership of the FRA, and the political parties and organizations must subordinate themselves to it in executing the line determined by the Front.

"5. In trade-union, university-student, and other type assemblies, the FRA will present a previously studied and agreed upon line, and it is recommended that its official speakers be assigned beforehand.

"6. Those voicing the FRA's propaganda must present its common views and not solely the partial line of one or some of its components." (From the March 1972 issue of *FRA denuncia*, official organ of the FRA.)

As anyone can see, these theses bind the hands of an organization that has politics different from the leadership's. Note also the term used in the first point, "founding documents." This refers to especially *one document: The Manifesto of the Frente Revolucionario Anti-imperialista*.

You might also note, that the United Secretariat of the Fourth International also characterized the Manifesto as the "founding document" in its February 6, 1972 statement printed in the February 21, 1972 issue of *Intercontinental Press*.

Comrade Ernest Germain, in his contribution, does not refer to it as such. To him, it is merely a "public appeal." You know, one of those propagandistic blunders — it happens all the time!

Unfortunately, the leaders of the FRA don't see it that way. To them, this "public appeal" is the cornerstone of their movement.

The second event of note in the March conference was the adoption of a "Fundamental Charter," which Germain uses to try and prove that there was nothing wrong with the POR being in the FRA, because deep inside, the FRA has a socialist program.

Germain first says that the FRA is not a popular front because "not a single bourgeois party participates in it." ("Even the 'revolutionary armed forces' of Major Sanchez state that they are in favour of socialism and adhere to Marxism-Leninism.") Then he takes another step and says that the "programme of the FRA is explicitly socialist in character."

In saying this he is trying to answer the charge of the Leninist-Trotskyists who have said that the program of the FRA, as set down in the *Manifesto*, is a bourgeois common program.

Germain then introduces the "Fundamental Charter" of the FRA, written and adopted at the March conference to disprove this charge. Germain even treats us to a long quote from the *Carta fundamental*. Personally, I have always appreciated long quotations from important documents. In fact, there is only one thing better than a long quote — the whole document.

Unfortunately, Comrade Germain cannot comply. For written into the Charter is a paragraph instructing the members of the FRA *not to make the document public*. It was agreed that the Charter would be a *secret program*, available to no one except members of the FRA.

It was a way for the military to have continued dominance in the organization and to keep it together at the same time. Remember that the FRA believes splitting to be counterrevolutionary.

But why a secret program? Especially one that calls for socialism? Comrade Germain has supplied us with the answer. He has given us the perfect example of why this was done.

On one side are the members of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency, and the other comrades who do not support the Latin American resolution. These comrades are saying that the FRA, among other things, is a class-collaborationist front with a bourgeois common program. It has bourgeois representation in it and this was reflected in its Manifesto, which is the real program of the FRA according to the March conference.

On the other side are the members of the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency. They answer: "What bourgeois program? I have the *real program* right here. It even calls for socialism. And Sanchez signed it!"

Herein lies the reason for the secret "Charter." Whenever somebody complains, begins to get uneasy about being in a front with Sanchez and the "Revolutionary" Bolivian cops, all you need to do is drag out the secret program and give them a taste of the first three points. Then you can tell them:

"It is impossible to call this a 'bourgeois' programme. Although as Trotskyists we would have formulated some of the parts differently, it cannot be denied that the line of this Charter is substantially that of the theory of Permanent Revolution." (In *Defence of Leninism* . . . page 14)

If the distance is great enough, if the comrades don't have all the documentation, you don't even have to tell them that it is a secret program.

But as we all know, no one can say whether or not they support a document by reading only part of it. What else does it say? Apparently only the FRA members and Comrade Germain know this. Until the rest of the International knows what the *whole* document says, no judg-

ment can be made of the Charter. However, the secrecy of the Charter is a telling judgment on the "socialist" character of the FRA.

Interestingly enough, aside from not mentioning that the Charter was a secret document, Germain never mentions that General Juan Jose Torres was a member of the FRA.

The POR's Hands Bound

In the two issues of *Combate* printed by the collective leadership of the POR in exile since the 1971 coup, two differing lines on the FRA have been reflected. The first issue was published in January 1972. The second in August-September 1972.

Interestingly enough, the POR in neither of these two issues has ever shown why *it* thinks that Bolivian workers should "swell the ranks of the FRA." The POR let the military elements do all the talking in the January issue.

The second issue, however, carried a very interesting statement, available in full in the February 1973 issue of the *International Socialist Review*. The statement says:

"For some time the organizations of the Bolivian left have felt the necessity of uniting in a front in order to put an end to sectarianism and to bring all the revolutionary forces together behind a common program.

"This unity which was concretized in the formation of the FRA, must be maintained as one of the necessary premises for the triumph of the socialist revolution in Bolivia. But we cannot ignore the difficulties that unfailingly continue to arise within the FRA owing to divergent political conceptions about the Bolivian revolution, especially with regard to the role of the FRA as an anti-imperialist front and the tasks that have to be carried out in practice at the present stage.

"*Since the FRA does not authorize the publication of various documents that would clarify these questions, we will limit ourselves here to presenting some of our positions on the FRA counterposed to those of the reformists in the Front, since it is impossible to ignore the ideological struggle between the revolutionary and reformist tendencies.*" (emphasis added.)

This statement, in very vague and general terms, proceeded to outline the political views of the POR at the time: organize a real military-political command to carry our actions and take the offensive.

Contrary to what Germain would have us believe, this one statement is not sufficient. Germain is perfectly satisfied with it. But the POR is not; they even complain about the fact that the FRA won't allow them to publish certain documents. Germain has apparently not seen this issue of *Combate*, for in his document, he says that ". . . The publications of the section which have appeared since the establishment of the FRA . . . contain numerous and severe criticisms of the reformists and centrists bankruptcy during the 1970-71 period."

Whether or not they dealt with the 1970-71 period, what they don't have in *Combate* is a systematic examination and exposure of the reformists and centrists and military figures in the FRA. Just vague suggestions which are not enough for the education of the party membership, and not enough to help guide the followers of the POR among the Bolivian workers and peasants. A Top Secret "theory of permanent revolution" doesn't correct this error.

The FRA Today

Because of the problem of communication between sections of the Fourth International and the parties that are in political solidarity with it, we have serious problems in keeping up with the events that the bourgeois press deems insignificant. Because of this problem, we are unable to tell exactly what has happened to the FRA.

We know that Torres has left the organization to set up his own grouping—the Alliance of the National Left. But, the interview which he granted to the Buenos Aires weekly *Panorama* did not give any clues as to who else was in this new entity.

Does the fact that Torres left the FRA change its character? I do not think so. If the Chilean bourgeoisie *completely* abandoned the Unidad Popular, the UP would not cease to play the same role that it has in the past. The CP and SP would still be there.

Torres's departure from the FRA would not make it possible for the section of the Fourth International to accept a common program with reformists, nor to submit to their discipline.

What if the section was the majority of a programmatic front? Or a labor party?

We would do exactly as Trotsky suggest in 1938—throw the reformists out. Until such time, continuous polemics—and no common program!

"Under the Hegemony of the Proletariat"

Comrade Germain, on page 14 of "In Defence of Leninism, In Defence of the Fourth International" devotes a paragraph concluding his defense of the POR, and the FRA:

"One can have differences of opinion on the estimates of the impact of the FRA on the Bolivian working class, and, in that light, differ on the sagacity of this particular tactical move. But there is nothing wrong, in principle, in entering such a united front with working class organisations on a clear socialist orientation, under the hegemony of the working class."

Since Comrade Germain is using this opportunity to summarize his case, I'll do the same.

1. On "socialist orientation."

According to the theses on discipline passed at the March conference, the orientation was expressed in the Manifesto.

2. On united fronts with workers' organizations on an explicitly "socialist programme".

According to Trotsky, the revolutionary party cannot enter programmatic fronts with anyone, at all.

3. On "the hegemony of the working class."

In my opinion this is close to the heart of the question from Germain's point of view. I will leave aside, for the moment, the fact that Torres and his gang played the leading role in the Front, because the question of proletarian hegemony is an important theoretical consideration in the abstract, even in a situation like the Union of the Left in France where the bourgeois "left radical" played only a secondary role.

Here is a question for the supporters of the Germain document: As I have said, the Charter was not written until March 1972. If the FRA had come to power on the basis of the November 1 Manifesto, or before the Charter was written, what would have been the character of a

FRA regime? What about after the March conference?

In reality, the term "under the hegemony of the working class" means that an organization, coalition, etc., has both a proletarian leadership and composition, and a proletarian program. This is an important distinction. There is not a single reformist party that has these characteristics. There are no governments in the workers states that are under the "hegemony of the working class" either.

Where was the proletarian "hegemony" in the FRA? For that matter, where was it in any of the multi-class fronts that we have seen in the last half-century? In the reformist parties like the CP and SP? Not at all. They are not proletarian parties. They are parties that have arisen out of a specific stage in the workers movement, that in most cases have large working class followings, and that contend for the leadership of the workers movement. But both the Stalinists and Social Democrats are reactionary through and through. Proletarian hegemony is ruled out by definition in a coalition or front where they have substantial influence.

In fact, mass reformist parties do not enter multi-class fronts except for the purpose of strengthening the *bourgeois political hegemony* not only inside the front, but in their own parties as well.

In the FRA, the only organization that could have represented the hegemony of the proletariat was the section of the Fourth International. Does Comrade Germain believe that this was the case? If so, then the POR is responsible for the line of the FRA. In fact, the POR had little influence on the program of the FRA if they had any influence at all.

The formula "under the hegemony of the working class," threatens to lead our sections into a posture of approving multi-class fronts, like the FRA if they are led by reformist workers parties or make formal obeisances to "socialism" and the "leadership of the proletariat, the ruling class of the revolutionary process."

The Real Turn at the World Congress

I agree with the "Majority" tendency comrades when they say that an important "turn" was made at the last world congress. I disagree with them when they say that this was a "turn from entryism to mass work." In a very real sense, it was a turn away from the Trotskyist concept of the proletarian party and the proletarian orientation.

Look at the Resolution on Latin America adopted by the last World Congress. This is the resolution that the majority of the IEC reaffirms along with the approval of the European document as the basis of their tendency. These four points are the key to understanding the document. I have changed the order to show a certain conclusion that the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency comrades have reached over the past period:

"(20) The Cuban revolution, the conflicts in the International Communist movement, particularly the Chinese polemics, and the experiences of the struggle in recent years have produced profound upsets, new relationships of forces, splits, and multiple realignments in the Latin American revolutionary workers movement. The overall picture can be outlined as follows:

"(a) The Cuban revolution continues to represent the fundamental pole of attraction, and on the level of ideological and political influence the Castroist current re-

mains by far the strongest. However, this tendency has not developed any important degree of organization and in fact the OLAS likewise has not succeeded either in finding a solution to the problem of crystallizing and consolidating organized new vanguards.

"(b) The traditional workers organizations have been undergoing an irreversible erosion and are being ceaselessly shaken by grave crises. In certain socialist parties (Chile, Uruguay), the Castroist influence is very strong. And this is true for most of the Communist parties, especially those which have not yet suffered left splits and are compelled to engage in centrist maneuvers in order to capitalize, if only partially, on the prestige of the Cuban revolution (e.g., the attitude of the current represented by Arismendi and certain attitudes even of the Chilean CP).

"(e) The revolutionary left is going through a feverish phase of splits and restructuration with a whole gamut of results, going from the important advances in vanguard regroupment in Brazil (especially the formations of the POC) to the still very difficult situation of the Peruvian revolutionary organizations. . . .

"(21) Revolutionary Marxists, in the work of regrouping and organizing the vanguard, must bear in mind the following very general criteria:

"(a) Integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by the Cuban revolution and the OLAS, which involves, regardless of the forms, integration into the continental revolutionary front which OLAS constitutes.

"(b) Rejection of any *a priori* exclusionary attitude toward any revolutionary tendency, which, while not excluding criticism and polemics, implies the possibility of common revolutionary fronts making it possible to regroup forces and to collaborate in both the antiimperialist and anticapitalist struggle and the struggle against the conservative and bureaucratic tendencies of the workers and peasants movement."

"Far from improving, the lot of the peasants remains tragic and is even getting worse. Hence the persistent impetus to struggle and revolt. This is all the more true because the peasants are less and less isolated from the international political and ideological currents; have largely assimilated the lesson of the Cuban revolution; have learned a great deal from the guerrilla experiences and are not cut off from the student revolutionary movements, whose influence reaches them through a thousand different channels. (from point 5.)

"(13) In a revolution proceeding according to the logic of the permanent revolution and in a worldwide and Latin-American context, which necessarily forces a split between the fundamental classes at the outset, the leading role in achieving revolutionary democratic objectives belongs to the working class, which, by its place in the process of production, is the basic force antagonistic not only to imperialism but to native capital. This does not imply any underestimation of the role of the peasantry, especially the poorest peasant strata and the radicalized petty-bourgeois layers. In fact, in most of the countries the most probable variant is that for a rather long period the peasants will have to bear the main weight of the struggle and the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie in considerable measure will provide the cadres of the movement. This means that the leading role of the proletariat

can be exercised under diverse forms: either directly by the wage workers . . . participating at the head of revolutionary struggles, which will doubtless be the case in only a minority of Latin-American countries; or indirectly, the leadership of these struggles being in the hands of organizations, tendencies, or cadres issuing from the workers movement; or in the historic sense of the term, by means of the program and theories issuing from Marxism. The completion of the revolution into a socialist revolution is in any case inconceivable without the mobilization and very broad participation of the proletariat."

Now let me summarize the most important points:

1. A "new vanguard" consisting of all the various tendencies in the far left has arisen, and is currently going through a period of splits. The task of revolutionary Marxists is to reorganize this vanguard.

2. There should be no hesitation on the part of sections of the Fourth International to form "common revolutionary fronts" with "any revolutionary tendency" in the anti-imperialist or anticapitalist movements, or in fighting bureaucratic and conservative tendencies in the workers movement.

3. That the peasantry, as a whole social layer, are: (a) no longer cut off from radical politics; (b) have assimilated the lesson of the Cuban revolution (exactly what lesson is not known); (c) receives a political direction from the revolutionary movements "through a thousand different channels."

4. That the working class will not participate in the revolutionary process until the very end, and even then, the only thing that is needed is its "mobilization" and "broad participation" to complete the process.

All these points in the Latin American resolution when applied to the day-to-day struggle lead away from the traditional concepts of the party that our movement has held. The POR was loyally following the general line of this document when it joined the FRA.

Put yourself, for a moment, in the position of the POR. You think that the peasants have assimilated the main lesson of the Cuban revolution; that the peasants will bear the main burden of the struggle; the workers will not directly exercise a leading role in the Bolivian revolution; and that the entire continent has entered a period of prolonged civil war—in which rural guerrilla warfare is the most important form of struggle.

The "Majority" tendency comrades have accused the members of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency with being fixated on the "classical" example of the Russian revolution. In my opinion, the leaders of the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency have made a very fundamental error, an error that they have not reversed. They did not merely adapt to an alien line, or method, or tactics, or strategy. They adopted one—one which is not yet fully clarified.

The Latin American Resolution of 1969 took the example of the Cuban revolution and turned it into a schema for the seizure of power by revolutionists. The party became a peripheral question. The central question, according to both the POR and the Argentina PRT-ERP was the *real People's Army*.

It was not important to have roots in the workers movement, because the workers would play their leading role in an "indirect way" through a movement based on the peasantry and built by the petty-bourgeoisie.

And since the central task was the preparation for rural guerrilla war—anyone who was willing to help became part of the vanguard, with which one can form "common revolutionary fronts."

All of these points lead to one disastrous conception: That it is the revolutionaries that take power, not the working class led by the party.

This idea is worked out in point 13 of the Latin American resolution. In that section, the concept is expressed for the first time that a "revolution" happens first, i.e., the power is seized by "revolutionary forces" who indirectly represent the ideas, the "tendencies" the traditions, or the cadres of the working class.

Then, because of the position that the working class holds in the productive process, it is essential in order to "complete" the revolution into a socialist revolution to have the "broad participation" of the workers.

If a "revolution" is not the party leading the working class to power (if the workers only come onto the scene in order to "complete" the process), then there is not a single good reason why the POR should not have joined a front with Sanchez, Torres, the Bolivian cops, the reformists, Lora, et al in order to create a "military-political command" to aid in accomplishing the first step—putting the revolutionaries in power.

When you lose your orientation to the class struggle, you lose politics altogether.

This erroneous concept is beginning to be transferred to Europe. It is especially reflected in the approach to trade-union work taken by most of the European sections and reaffirmed by the European resolution now before the world movement. They show by action and in writing that they don't have the concept of political struggle against the reformists *inside the trade-unions*.

To the authors of the resolution on Europe, a left-wing tendency in the unions and other workers organizations is unimportant. The central task is to "forge the vanguard" into an "adequate instrument" to fight the union bureaucracy—they want to build a revolutionary front.

This is another schema that leads the parties of the international Trotskyist movement in the wrong direction. This is not intended to be the line for the next six months, or one year, this is not a short-term projection. It is a line that is supposed to prepare the comrades in Europe for the decisive battles that are to come in the next "four to five years." This is a line for the duration—"until it takes us to power."

* * *

The "turn" that has been so widely advertised by the leaders of the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency was a turn from entryism to "winning hegemony within the new vanguard." This is our politics turned on its head.

I believe that the world Trotskyist should keep in mind the slogan of the Comintern's Third World Congress: Build the party, win the masses.

Building the party by developing the program, educating the ranks not only in the traditions and politics of the movement, but also in the real-life school of the mass movement. By continuing to strengthen party institutions, the press, and strengthening its professional staff.

Winning the masses by joining with them and leading them in struggle with the transitional program—*where*

they are now: in schools, factories, unions, communities. . . . By giving them the tool that they most need—not a valiant revolutionary example, but our revolutionary perspective.

In my opinion, the simultaneous call for the reaffirmation of the Resolution on Latin America and for the adoption of the European document by the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency is a warning signal. These comrades believe that the Latin American line of the last World Congress is still valid despite the disasters in Bolivia and Argentina; still appropriate in spite of the fact that

the reasons given for the guerrilla line (a stage of intense repression, no legal work possible, etc.) have been proven worthless. They believe that this represents a revolutionary Marxist approach to the coming confrontations in the Americas.

The European document, based on the identical method, proposes on several key points, the same orientation as the Latin American resolution, will lead to the same end. This line is a danger for the world movement and it must be reversed. It is for these reasons that I am joining the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency.

July 19, 1973

THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT MEMORANDUM: INADEQUATE METHOD, INCORRECT CONCLUSIONS

by Jon Hillson, Denver Branch

The following contribution will attempt to clarify and sharpen the differences between the gay liberation movement memorandum approved at the last NC plenum and the counterresolution to it, "For Intervention Into the Gay Liberation Struggle," by Green and Thorstad.

It is not the task of this contribution to wonder aloud and relate hearsay about "inadequate compromises" or other subterranean motives that might have produced the memorandum. We should reject that method of arguing out differences. The task of serious opponents of the meaning and method of the memorandum is not to mine the discussion for speculative bits of "revealing" information, but to, with a clear alternative in mind, debate and refute its ideas and projections.

* * *

The Theoretical Basis of the Memorandum

The memorandum at the outset " . . . rejects with contempt all forms of bourgeois prejudice against gay people, including quack psychological 'theories' labeling gays as mentally ill—prejudices echoed by the Stalinists." This is a very modest beginning. The memorandum should be seen as the product of three years of consideration by the party's leadership of the meaning of the gay liberation movement. This short sentence is the *only* specific rejection of prejudice in the whole memorandum. In fact, the short statement of rejection of prejudice was inserted into the memorandum after criticism from the floor of the plenum because the original draft contained not a word of specific rejection of the prejudices of capitalist sex morality.

One of the key aspects of the dispute in the party on the question of the gay liberation struggle is how can the party best contend with the deep bigotry of bourgeois sexual morality, against the norms of which the gay movement has emerged. In that context, a question is posed to the leadership which authorized the memorandum. Why was there absent from the initial draft of the memorandum an outright, complete rejection of the reactionary biases of the ruling class against homosexuality?

"The party," states the memorandum, "does not and should not take a stand on the nature or value of homosexuality." It is necessary to divide this sentence to get to its meaning. The party, in fact, should not take a stand on the "value" of homosexuality or, for that matter, heterosexuality. I do not know exactly what this statement means. If it is a subtle polemic against the partisans of the "gay is better" stripe, the authors of the memorandum should have been less oblique. The party does not make sexual value judgements. Those are and should be matters of personal taste.

The sentence quoted, however, amalgamates the correct position of not making that value judgement *and* the necessity not to take a stand on the "nature" of homosexuality.

What is the "nature" of homosexuality? Webster's New World Dictionary gives its first definition of the word nature as "the essential character of a thing; quality or qualities that make something what it is; essence."

The question of the "nature" of homosexuality is not answered by a "value judgment," but rather, by a scientific response. The "nature" of homosexuality is a scientific question. Its nature is that of sexual activity between members of the same sex, a sexual activity that is a natural, human form of sexual behavior.

The memorandum admonishes the party from making either a value judgment or a position of science. In that sense, it is possible there is another meaning involved.

That is, the sentence means to say the party should not state whether or not it considers homosexuality a natural form of human sexual behavior. That raises another question that is a component of the dispute: indeed, *is* homosexuality a natural form of human behavior?

If, as the appended memorandum states, "we reject with contempt all forms of bourgeois prejudice against gay people. . . ." and the *basic* bourgeois ideological defense of its hatred and criminalization of homosexuality is its unnaturalness—a crime against *nature*—then, according to that statement, we apparently believe homosexuality is a natural form of human sexual expression. On the other hand, the memorandum goes on to state we should

take no stand on the nature of homosexuality.

The authors of the memorandum owe the ranks of the party clarification on this evident contradiction.

Further, if the urging against taking a stand on the "value" of homosexuality is an argument against the party taking as its own slogan that of the oppressed homosexual population "gay is good" then that should be stated. The slogan "gay is good" is not a demand, but a rallying cry of the gay movement that affirms the humanity and dignity of gays in the face of one of the deepest, most profound social prejudices in society. At bottom, it is an affirmation of the naturalness of their sexuality against all the subtle and blatant forms of capitalist backwardness that pose as science, sociology and sexual normality. It is a clarion which Marxists, who champion the struggle against all superstition and mysticism, welcome and embrace. The slogan of "gay is good" is not a "value" judgment. The thrust of its meaning is not one of taste or opinion but a reflection of the authentic and correct belief of the gay movement that their sexuality is neither criminal nor abnormal, unnatural or inferior to heterosexuality.

That belief is opinion as much as the Black movement, for instance, "believes" theories of Black racial-genetic inferiority are wrong. For Blacks, it is not a matter of "value judgment" or taste or opinion.

The questions raised are those of *science*. Specifically, if the party believes, contrary to capitalist sexual morality, that homosexuality is a natural, normal aspect of human sexuality, that it is *scientifically* incorrect to attribute to homosexual eroticism the definitions of perversity, abnormality, or that it is a product of hormonal, genetic or social deformation or a result of capitalist decay then the party can and should embrace the slogan which epitomizes that in the gay community: gay is good.

At the same time, the *party* should not, obviously, proselytize one or another lifestyle nor should it state one or another form of sexual behavior is superior or inferior to another. Those notions are not the questions in this debate, but for a handful of sexual utopians and conservatives. And, by no means, is it a serious question in the discussion.

The memorandum opposes taking a stand on homosexuality and taking as our own slogan the call of "gay is good." This would "go beyond" the position advocating civil rights for gay people and that might open the door to "diluting" the party's character, "narrowing" its appeal and "crippling" its ability to mobilize the masses.

The first reason advanced for wariness of "going beyond" is that the political character of the party determines that "it does not take positions on a whole range of scientific, cultural and other questions." Before we take this claim up, a point should be made about "going beyond" the civil rights position.

It is clear that the fighting slogans and political actions of the gay movement are subsumed under the category of democratic rights, and that those civil and human rights should be unconditionally supported. But revolutionary Marxists are not bound by the category of struggle to inhibit the critical powers of our analysis and investigation of the social reality that produces struggle, the meaning and implications of that struggle, and how best to combat the attacks of the bourgeoisie against it. We support civil rights because, as Trotskyists, we under-

stand the dynamic of the fight for democratic rights, not because we are civil libertarians. Our serious support of democratic rights for gays is *weakened* by the party's not going beyond the parameters of civil libertarianism in the realm of analysis of the struggle against bourgeois sex morality. While the struggles of the gay movement are based on democratic rights, the movement and its supporters generally are not involved solely on the basis of extending legal rights: they fight for *liberation*. The end of gay oppression is not possible under a capitalist system whose patriarchal norms of heterosexual monogamy, in large part systematized by church and family, are critical to that system's stability. While certain aspects of formal, legalistic oppression may be temporarily or partially eased, the character of the gay liberation struggle itself "goes beyond" that of civil and democratic rights. In that context, our limitation to "unconditional support to civil and human rights" without taking a stand on the "nature" of homosexuality gives us only half a position, and one which, at that, *lags behind* the political dynamics and social criticisms offered by the gay movement on questions the memorandum urges we not take up.

The party does and must, at certain times, on certain issues, take positions on "scientific, artistic and cultural questions." We take them as social struggle arises, in the context of taking on the prejudices and attacks directed against social struggle by the enemy class. Part of our political capital involves opposition to "socialist realism," the "proletarian culture" of the bureaucracy. We oppose it spilling over into science (Lysenko's "socialist genetics"), etc.

We of course do not state "surrealism is superior to impressionism." We do not involve a political combat organization in the debates in different fields of endeavor in art or culture.

In the realm of science, contrary to the statements of the memorandum, we do take stands, a whole series of them, without which we would be rudderless in class struggle. We affirm dialectical materialism—Marxist science—against empiricism, pragmatism, instrumentalism, idealism, existentialism, rationalism, positivism, etc. We affirm Marxism, against all its bourgeois and petty-bourgeois critics—be they in the fields of sociology, philosophy, or economics—as a science, in method, in investigative ability and in the historic authenticity of its conclusions.

Our Marxist scientific method, which allows us to distill from empirical data correct conclusions pertinent to the class struggle has produced other positions in the realm of science.

We reject any notions of racial inferiority. We reject any and every bourgeois "scientific" belief in Black genetic inferiority, those of Shockley, Jensen, *et al.* We reject the bourgeois conclusions of sociology, anthropology or sociology imbued by patriarchal and class prejudice that categorize women as biologically or intellectually inferior to men. We reject the alleged historic "universality" of the patriarchal family, classes, the maternal "instinct" in women, etc. We reject bourgeois ideology's belief in the "innateness" of human greed, the presentiments of sociology that all revolutions must end in bureaucracy, that Marxism-Leninism is historically antiquated by neo-capitalism and the emergence of the "middle class." Our rejections of all the aforementioned—and much more—are

not our "opinion." They are basic political axioms that are verified by the science of Marxist materialism.

The memorandum's attempt to sidestep the challenges of bourgeois ideology and its reactionary sex morality and the unprecedented questions posed by the gay movement's struggle against it by invoking the so-called limits of the party's ability to take political positions on a variety of questions is insufficient and inadequate. In fact, because of the depth of prejudice directed against homosexuality *per se*—not to mention the gay liberation movement itself, and the critique of sex-role stereotyping it offers—it is only Marxism and only, in the United States, its historic embodiment in the SWP that "can and should" come to grips with the questions the memorandum urges us not to answer.

The question we should ask ourselves is, does stating that homosexuality is a natural, unaberrative form of human sexuality, and consequently embracing the gay movement's formulation of gay pride, "gay is good" point to the possibility of the "dilution" of the party's character, the "narrowing" of its appeal and the "crippling" of its ability to mobilize the masses?

The answer is a hard no. The authors of the memorandum have the responsibility to answer, to back up their charge, *how* will this dilution, this narrowing, this crippling occur?

What does dilution mean? Does it mean we orient to a layer that threatens dilution? That we recruit scads of utopians and dillettantes on the basis of "going beyond" civil rights? That "going beyond" on the gay liberation movement means we will "go beyond" on unnamed, other questions?

How is our base of appeal narrowed? Not, certainly, in the gay movement. Nor the women's liberation movement. Backward layers of the working class may well be taken aback by our unconditional support for human rights for gays and our strenuous, principled support for the emancipation of women. Certainly, taking the position we are warned against would not "narrow" our appeal among youth, would it?

How will our ability to mobilize the masses be "crippled"? Which "masses" will reject the genuine, level-headed attempts of the SWP to draw people into action? The memorandum makes no differentiation, is vague and un-specific. For comrades studying the memorandum, the possibility of "crippling" our ability to mobilize the masses can only be seen as fully unsubstantiated.

What dilutes the party's character is conservatism and fear in the face of bourgeois ideological challenges. As revolutionary Marxists we should take prejudice head on, not bend, ignore or capitulate to it. We need *answers* from the authors of the memorandum, not categorical and unproved warnings. In fact, hasn't our ability to mobilize in the gay movement been crippled over the past three years? Our bases of appeal narrowed because of our initial and unfortunate positions on the gay movement, especially in the feminist movement at one time?

The insufficiency of the method of the memorandum is compounded by the assertion that if it were in the purview of the party to "go beyond" the civil rights positions, "especially concerning homosexuality little is known, and it is difficult to ascertain what is objectively based and what represents prejudice in what knowledge is avail-

able."

But don't we "reject with contempt all forms of bourgeois prejudice against gay people"? What *guidelines* are proposed by the memorandum to differentiate between what is prejudice and what is "objectively based"? If it is difficult for us to separate fact from prejudice, on exactly what basis have we "rejected with contempt all forms of bourgeois prejudice against gay people"? If it is not a scientific basis, what basis is it? Morality? Sentimentality?

Comrade Barnes stated almost three years ago, in his memorandum on the membership question:

"For the first time, scientific knowledge on the extent of homosexuality, and the characteristics of homosexuality has become widespread. This has helped in breaking down the stereotype of society into exclusively homosexual and exclusively heterosexual people. The fact that individual human beings go through different periods in their lives, with different characteristics to their sexuality has become more widely known. The fact that homosexuality of one kind or another is widespread in the population, that it cuts through all geographic and class layers, has been established.

"There has also been the experience, the growing body of literature available and the evolution in the understanding of the younger generation. The younger generation has begun to differentiate between sexuality and reproduction, sexuality and religious norms, sexuality and the sex-roles imposed by the nuclear family system and has begun to understand the relation between sexuality and class society. . . ."

Three years ago, Comrade Barnes noted a "growing body" of literature; the "widespread" availability of "scientific knowledge" on aspects of homosexuality and the beginning of the younger generation's ability to understand the relationship between "sexuality and class society." Last year, Comrade Sheppard offered the perspective in the literary discussion that it was inappropriate and unnecessary to discuss where "homosexual impulses" come from. He made it clear that theoretical issues ("the relationship between sexuality and class society?") were not on the agenda for discussion. A year since that discussion, the memorandum on the gay liberation movement denies the existence of enough scientific information to "go beyond" civil libertarianism, pointing implicitly to our own inability as Marxists to separate fact from prejudice as an excuse, among others.

While there exists a generation which, according to Comrade Barnes, has begun to make excellent headway against the deepest of bourgeois prejudices on sexuality—challenging religious, filial and biological-reproductive defenses of heterosexual, monogamous norms—now we hear that if the party were to "go beyond" a civil rights position it *might* end up: diluting its character, narrowing its base and crippling its ability to mobilize the masses. Is this sexually rebellious "younger generation" part of the "masses" whose ability to be mobilized by the SWP is up for question? Can we expect a balance sheet from the authors of the memorandum on the progress this generation has made in the past three years in understanding the relationship between sexuality and class society? Would that generation's progress have been enhanced if the SWP and YSA has politically intervened in the gay movement and supported that intervention with propaganda in the

past three years? And isn't that prospect checked by the substance and content of the memorandum, which backs off those questions raised by the "younger generation"?

The memorandum's claim that not enough objective information exists for the party to make a scientific statement on the nature of homosexuality is false. Aside from the general comment of Comrade Barnes that a "growing body of literature exists"—and it has grown much larger in the interceding three years—a number of studies and books have been noted in this bulletin. There exist volumes of empirical research on homosexuality in the fields of anthropology, history, psychology, physiology, etc. It is unfortunate the authors of the memorandum did not apparently read some of it, at least, because it contravenes their position. So much of it exists, in fact, that the rather bourgeois Presbyterian Church is in the process of stating that homosexuality is a natural form of human sexuality. Episcopalians consecrate gay marriages, accept in their clergy gay priests, because they believe, apparently, homosexuality is a rather natural practice. Is this, too, bourgeois prejudice?

Aside from a wealth of data and objective information, we should not believe, as the memorandum implies, Marxists cannot differentiate between science and prejudice on this question. Which Marxists cannot differentiate between science and prejudice? The *prejudiced* Marxists, the comrades who have shut their mind to science and hold onto the remnants of capitalist sexual superstition, that's who. If the liberal wings of Protestantism—bourgeois ideology's feudal leftovers!—can state homosexuality is natural, against the whole tradition of Judeo-Christian heterosexual chauvinism—and we Marxists supposedly cannot differentiate between science and prejudice then something is amiss, something is wrong somewhere. That something is the gay memorandum's method and content.

It is precisely because of the scientific method of dialectical materialism that our party can separate class prejudice and objective fact, that we can analyze the empirical data from a variety of studies and books on sexuality and homosexuality through the prism of Marxism and arrive at an objectively verifiable, scientifically accurate position on this question. That method, and the existence of the material evidence for embarking on it, is rejected by the memorandum, but not by the Green-Thorstad document. It is the counterresolution that uses the method the party's leadership has used on every other basic, serious political question of struggle and analysis we've been faced with. Every other question except the one the memorandum deals with.

The question is asked openly. Do the authors of the memorandum believe that homosexuality may not be a natural form of human sexual behavior? If it is not, what is it? If it is, why hasn't that been stated in the memorandum?

The memorandum states the lack of advancement of scientific knowledge on the sexual question makes it impossible for us to ". . . say what future human sexuality will be like in classless society." This is true and not true. On the one hand, material conditions and the social reality it produces—coupled with the intervention of the leadership of the socialist society, etc.—will determine the evolution of morality, lifestyles and so on. It would obviously be incorrect for the party to say "everybody will be bisexual,"

or pretend to be a sexual soothsayer.

On the other hand, though, does the memorandum statement mean to say there may not be homosexuality in socialist society? The party is owed an answer on this question.

One implication of the statement is that homosexuality may not exist in socialist, or later, in classless society. That can only mean that homosexuality is a "product" of something in prerevolutionary society, a product that will disappear in revolutionary society. I do not raise this point as part of any specious discussion of "future sexuality." That should be left to the utopians. What must be pointed out is that if we leave open the door that homosexuality may not exist in revolutionary society, the key assumption in that is that it exists as a general aberration in class society. One assumes there will be heterosexual activity in socialist society; at least that is the assumption the memorandum leaves one with.

If homosexuality is a natural form of human behavior now, if it has been in history—no matter the distortion of it, and heterosexuality, by the crude norms of property society—it will be in revolutionary society. Without taking a principled stand, a scientific stand, the memorandum dovetails prejudice. The Stalinists *know* there will be no homosexuality in revolutionary society because it is the sexual leprosy of decadent capitalism. The memorandum says we cannot decide between what is objectively based and what is prejudice, implies there may not be homosexuality in revolutionary society. But it also urges us to reject with contempt Stalinist echoes of bourgeois prejudice. How? By professing ignorance? The insertion of the condemnation of prejudice in the memorandum breaks up the internal consistency of the memorandum, which did not concern itself with the deep meaning, scope and impact of anti-homosexual prejudice. The amendment flowed from the thinking of some comrades at the plenum that this concern is important. That is a root of the contradictory nature of the memorandum and the dispute in the party.

The memorandum axiomatically states revolutionary society will "relieve the sexual misery of the masses." A big part of that misery is the stifling, constricting, bourgeois, patriarchal sexual norm of exclusive monogamous heterosexuality—which oppresses human sexuality in general. Wouldn't it be equally simple to predict that homosexuality will not disappear, especially if it is a natural form of human behavior?

That is, under socialism, the natural expression of human sexuality, both homosexual and heterosexual, will be uninhibited by the warping, distorting and emiserating norms of capitalist sexual morality. And that is the scientific position that combats Stalinist backwardness, a backwardness that indeed echoes bourgeois ideology, and whose function is to slow the pace of radicalization of the working class. If we do not completely take up Stalinist sexual demonology in the present, we leave their reactionary, fear-mongering picture of the future equally unchallenged.

The method of the memorandum in the realm of theory is entirely insufficient. There is no serious investigation. There is no attempt to get to the roots of the whys and history of gay oppression. There is no need stated to begin analysis of the links between sexuality and class society, sexuality and class struggle. There seems to be a

rejection of the impact and meaning of a body of scientific literature which would overturn the sentiments of the memorandum. Indeed, there is an apparent refutation of its existence. There is the implication that Marxists cannot demarcate the hard line between superstition and fact.

The responsibility to move the best foot forward was underlined two years ago noting the dearth of such knowledge in the Marxist movement. It is unfortunate that the product of two years of preparation has produced the memorandum. Its theoretical and analytical weaknesses have set a tone, necessarily, for inadequacy and weakness on every other area it touches.

The Practical Conclusions of the Memorandum

The insufficient method and conservative tone of the memorandum link up with a factually incorrect assessment of the present status of the gay movement, its mass potential and consequently lays out tasks for the party that, compared to the line of the counterresolution, are the second-best choice for both party building and the development of the gay movement.

1. *The demands of the gay movement are peripheral and appeal to a narrow sector.* First, what is a narrow sector? Kinsey's studies are indeed dated by some 20 years, but his conclusions would have us believe there are some 15-20 million gay people. Is this narrow? Only a small fraction of this oppressed sector has thus far moved, yet the memorandum says the gay liberation movement has had "considerable" impact on society. If only a fraction of the homosexual population has been in motion and has caused "considerable" impact, how can the rather large sector it appeals to be considered narrow?

If by narrow and peripheral we are to understand the gay liberation movement does not, nor will it have the social weight nor strategic power in the class struggle of the trade-union movement, the Black struggle, the women's liberation movement, the Chicano movement, well, the gay movement is narrow and peripheral. It is *not* what it is *not* and what it cannot *be*. The struggle for democratic rights for gay people is not peripheral to the lives of oppressed gays—be they Black, female, Chicano, workers, *et al.*—who can be mobilized and led in action against the capitalist state. Whether or not they are going to be there to some extent hinges on whether or not the SWP decides to play a role in the leadership and development of the gay movement. Our intervention in the gay movement must be balanced, must be level-headed, must assess conjunctural as well as long-term possibilities and must allocate cadre cautiously and deliberately. But that intervention should be able to see where the movement really stands and what it's really based on, what its real dynamics are and what real potential it has. We can't skip the theoretical issues posed by the gay movement and think our practical tasks will then be "easier."

2. *The limited mass potential of and lull in the gay movement: the conjunctural limitations.* The memorandum's conjunctural analysis of the gay movement and its mass potential is factually incomplete. Unlike balance sheets of similar questions in the Black, Chicano, anti-war, feminist, etc., movements, there is no balance sheet

of the gay movement. In the internal bulletins, the factual information on actions, their size and breadth have come from the ranks, not the leadership. The pattern holds true with the memorandum and the political resolution. If we are talking about mass potential, and the present situation, the relative consistency and size of actions by the gay movement have been larger than those of both the feminist and abortion law repeal movement. This summer's New York City Christopher St. Day action was larger than *all* the WONAAC activities, both locally and nationally, in 1972. The Christopher St. actions in a variety of local areas for the past couple years have demonstrated significant mass potential. While August 26 actions have faded off, while local women's liberation actions are rarely held, gay civil rights actions, picket lines, anti-harassment actions have had significant size, given the lull, and, importantly, the absence of Trotskyists, whose leadership role would provide a determined political and organizational boost. Forums on gay liberation have been among the largest held by branches; candidates meetings in the gay community have been among the biggest; the UCLA lesbian conference was among the biggest political conferences of the sectors in motion in the past two years, bigger than the last two WONAAC conferences and the last two SMC and NPAC conferences. In the period of contingent building in the antiwar movement, the gay contingents, both nationally and locally, were among the largest.

I do not mean to raise a "numbers game" argument. There are reasons for the lull and its impact on varying movements. But it should be understood if the *memorandum* is going to raise the question of mass potential, let's see concretely what the *real* balance sheet has been, and not have a few vague sentences suffice.

The memorandum states that since there is no national focus for the gay movement and since it would be incorrect for us to start from scratch a national organization, there should be no reallocation of cadre on a local level. This is formal logic, applied to and for only the gay liberation question.

There is no national focus for the women's liberation movement. There is no national focus—save for African Liberation Day—for the Black movement. And, Christopher St. has what amounts to a national focus for the gay movement as much as ALD does for the Black movement. Because of the absence of a "national focus" or a national organization—as in the women's liberation movement—or the Black struggle, we don't just pack up our bags and wait.

Wherever we can, in the Black struggle, the women's liberation movement, around the issues of inflation or cutbacks, etc., initiate united front activity, do propaganda work, and so on. We are encouraged to do so, no matter the absence of national focus. We enlarge existing fractions, constitute work fractions, etc., to accomplish interventions for sales and other propaganda work, as well as that of advancing the work of the party for a specific action. We "reallocate" cadre on the basis of local, as well as national openings and focuses.

Not so for the gay movement, according to the memorandum. With no national focus, we patiently wait for civil rights oriented actions to be built and then "support them." This is the core of a "gay intervention" which is

not fully based on a complete analysis of the conjunctural situation of the gay movement—especially in terms of other movements and arenas of work.

3. *The tasks of the party.* According to the memorandum, our practical tasks consist of supporting civil rights demonstrations and cases and not giving undue propaganda coverage to the gay movement. Support to "any such work" should be carried out "within the context of carrying out the major campaigns conducted by the party."

What "any such work" means is up for grabs. It means no work if comrades in a given situation feel that "major" campaigns by definition mean the gay movement is peripheral, narrow and minimal occupying the low priorities rung, or if comrades feel raising any serious organizational commitment means going through a cheapening branch debate of "social weights" and "mass potentials." This whole statement is vague to the point of producing confusion and unclarity, and is the most unenthusiastic "motivation" for political work in a given area short of a formal opposition to any sort of intervention whatsoever.

At no point in the memorandum is recruitment of gay activists mentioned or welcomed. There is no statement, which would seem standard, of our desire to "recruit the best gay activists to the revolutionary party." Is this an oversight? perhaps the same kind of oversight that precluded a forthright, complete rejection of anti-gay prejudice in the original draft of the memorandum?

The memorandum's "interventionist perspective" does not call for the involvement of comrades in ongoing gay organizations, from which we could push a mass action strategy around democratic demands and recruit militants. The memorandum by implication opposes our comrades struggling to provide leadership for the gay movement. In other words, the crisis of leadership in the gay movement—which poses vying counter-institutionalist, utopian and reformist wings for leadership—poses no special challenge to our movement. The memorandum thus seems to abandon the leadership and the development of the gay movement to opponents and rotten currents.

If our work is "support" oriented after actions are called, since we are unable to be involved in the gay movement otherwise—building campus groups, involved in citywide formations, etc.—who is going to call these demonstrations? The counter-culturalists? The reformists? The ultra-lefts? Or perhaps our sympathizers, who, as soon as they are recruited have to wait for "such demonstrations, defense cases, etc., (to) occur." The actions in the past period have indeed been called by the above layers and this is to the credit of the dynamic of the gay movement itself, not to these currents' adherence to mass action. Without proper leadership, the continuity of action may dwindle. How can the Trotskyists have a presence of authenticity and seriousness in the gay movement if its role is adviser (in suggesting defense cases from the outside) and possible supporter of actions which might be called in our absence?

Since any action at all is in the context of major party campaigns (the definitions of which could be used as a clout against gay work as well as for developing a balanced view of integrating it), since there is no enthusiasm presented for our intervention, since there is not enough scientific information to decide whether or not homosexu-

ality is at least "natural," since that doesn't matter anyhow, and since the gay movement is narrow, peripheral and lacks a national focus and there is no projection for the recruitment and assimilation of gay militants, the difference between the memorandum and the Green-Thorstad resolution is the difference between ambiguous *non-intervention* and serious, feet-on-the-earth *participation* in the gay movement.

The propaganda aspect of the memorandum's perspective for involvement is equally lacking. There have been no *ISR* articles nor Pathfinder titles on the gay movement, its debated questions, or a variety of imaginable topics. We should have a balanced propaganda face, titles, serious coverage in *The Militant*—interviews with gay leaders, or local leaders who join our movement, periodic coverage of debates in the gay movement, "In Brief" articles, etc.—and the *ISR* should have periodic pieces on the history, contending theories, etc., that have made up, and make up the gay movement. The memorandum's low profile apparently discounts that. If the PC draft resolution appears in the *ISR*, it will, if it stands as it does now, have no reference to the gay movement.

In a sense, the memorandum states another party task, point 5 of the document. It concerns questions of dress and appearance, decorum, social conduct, party image, what a feminist is, the behavior of comrades at social events, etc.

Why is this point included on a memorandum designed to define the party's orientation to the gay movement? If the authors of the memorandum considered them valid ideas, why did they tack it on to the memorandum as a lecture on conduct? Why wasn't it separated for a party builder or a point on social norms in the bulletin?

What precedent is there in our movement for a lengthy point being made on a variety of questions around social norms in a document dealing with strategy, tactics and the question of orientation? Point 5 only serves to demean the already conservative tone of the memorandum as a patronizing addenda of etiquette for derelict comrades.

Is the memorandum, in fact, nothing more than a defensive response to an amalgam of criticisms raised in the past couple of years and a response to some of the inevitable social problems of party building in the period of the broadest and deepest radicalization in American history?

Two Dangers: Utopianism and Conservatism

One of the weaknesses of the contributions of the comrades who argued against Comrade Sheppard's perspectives last summer was the absence of criticism directed against views on the disputed question that were utopian. While many of those who argued against Comrade Sheppard's contribution made errors most have learned from them.

From the 1971 pre-convention discussion, to the summer discussion to the present discussion, Comrades Gebert and Trippet stood and stand out in the arena of ultra-left errors, utopian formulations and represent a small party current which has adapted to the alien pressures of counter-culturalism. During last summer's discussion these comrades injected extraneous and irrelevant comments—which overshadowed and outweighed some of the better points they made—ranging from posing homosexuality as su-

perior to heterosexuality; frivolous comments on transvestism; peculiar ramblings on animal sexuality and speculative and inappropriate comments on the "inadequate compromise" they singlehandedly discovered on the Political Committee.

The vast majority of comrades have rejected the factional tone of Comrades Gebert and Trippet's remarks, including the former's recently stated fear of his nickname not being used in *The Militant* because it might imply his high press sales means his politics on the gay liberation discussion are better than "those of the N. O." Comrade Gebert should know that innuendo and nitpicking will not build the healthiest of followings.

The utopianism of these comrades and the few who follow their thinking is a product of an adaptation to the counter-cultural milieu, a complementary lack of understanding of the party's analysis of human oppression and its program to overthrow it and a consequent belief that that program and analysis keeps us from "reaching out" to the counter-cultural layer. "Improvements" must be made. We should reject those improvements and the mood and political pressure which produce them.

The whole of point 5 in the memorandum, however, and the very theme of that document, *builds up* this insignificant component as the major danger.

It should be remembered that no matter their mistakes, Comrades Gebert and Trippet are opposed to bourgeois sex morality and gay oppression and support the struggle of the gay population for democratic rights and emancipation through socialist revolution.

And that is healthy. To essentially balloon out of proportion the "counter-cultural" pressure on the party is to create a bogeyman. Comrades Gebert and Trippet and those comrades who are in agreement with them should understand their counterproductive role in this discussion. What is *most* counterproductive and *false*, however, is giving these comrades and their ideas more weight than they have and using them as strawmen in the discussion, creating the spectre of utopianism as a defense for the real political inadequacies of the memorandum.

This should be seen above all. It did not take criticism from the plenum floor for the memorandum to call on the party to resist the pressures of counter-culturalism. There was no criticism needed to give a lecture on social norms. Nor to refute notions of "gay is better." Nor to note the weaknesses of the gay movement's leadership or its problems in the period of lull, nor to make sure all-female functions did not appear to be "restricted to lesbians."

But it was only after criticism from the floor of the plenum that the memorandum was amended to include a specific (and with contradictory and ambiguous implications) criticism of bourgeois prejudice, of capitalist sexual bigotry and the Stalinist variants of it.

The memorandum is rife with criticisms, warnings and admonitions which point *not* to the meaning and scope of bourgeois ideology and its subtle and blatant forms of prejudice against gays, but *more* to incorrect attitudes within the SWP and the gay movement, the erroneous ideas shaped by *opposition* to homosexual oppression, and sexual oppression in general.

It is unquestionably *correct* to inveigh against utopianism in the ranks of the revolutionary party, to firm up and clarify social norms, to subject the gay movement to

scrupulous criticisms of its strengths and weaknesses. There is no disagreement on this. But in what context? Where is the balance?

Why is there *no* warning against the party cadre bending to popular opinion which mediates bourgeois ideology's vilification of homosexuality, alongside the memorandum's correct call to resist the pressures of counter-culturalism?

Since it is the authors of the memorandum who have raised the idea of "resisting outside pressures" they should respond to these questions. Is the party sufficiently immune from reactionary prejudice? Are the antigay prejudices of capitalist sexual morality a greater magnet for adaptation than petty-bourgeois counter-culturalism? Do they pose a stronger danger to the party's fiber than those of the alien class?

These questions are not the fruits of idle speculation, but have a concrete basis in fact. Fact one is the tone of and process which adjusted the memorandum at the plenum. Fact two is the comment by at least one NCer—Comrade Weinstein—which illuminated a studied weakness on the gay liberation discussion.

Comrades should also reread Comrade Ring's contribution to last summer's discussion which deals briefly with attitudes on the National Committee.

Utopianism among a handful of comrades is one thing. There are comrades on the National Committee it appears—aside from those mentioned—who oppose strong intervention in the gay movement and whose opinions are smogged by silence or misrepresented by gossip. Do their reasons, do the roots of their opposition include a bending to prejudice, a dovetailing of the deepest sexual bias in human society, or an adaptation to the popular attitude of squeamish hesitancy about talking about such things? Let's put all the cards on the table. And let's see if counter-culturalism is the only pressure to resist.

Has There Been a Shift in the Stated Attitude of the Leadership on the Disputed Questions: A Comparison of Some Comments

In rereading some earlier statements concerning the gay movement, it is possible to note differences in at the very least, the tone some comrades took, and now take on the gay liberation movement.

The definitions of narrow scope and peripheral character of the gay struggle, as articulated in the memorandum, stand in *contrast* to earlier statements made by party leaders, earlier statements which have far greater awareness and insight into the dynamics of the gay movement.

Comrade Horowitz, in his introduction to *Towards an American Socialist Revolution*, written more than two years ago, states:

"Under capitalism, side by side with the exploitation of the working class, there also exist *new* forms of long known oppression, the reactionary institutional and ideological remnants of a pre-capitalist era; the oppression of women and nationalities, religious superstition, the persecution of homosexuals, reactionary social morality, restrictions on civil liberties are but a few examples. These have become instruments for upholding the present system and *cannot* be eliminated within its framework. As a result, the coming American revolution will have to ac-

comply with an entire range of historically overdue democratic tasks, as well as socialist tasks. . . .

"With this in mind, we see that the movements such as the women's liberation movement, the struggles of oppressed nationalities, the gay liberation movement and the revolution in culture are a part of the general struggle against the outmoded capitalist system. . . a revolution by the oppressed nationalities for liberation and self-determination, combined with a revolution of the working class against the exploitation and alienation of capitalist relations. . . is the only way in which capitalism can be overturned in the United States. That is the only way the door can be opened to the eradication of racism, sexism, exploitation, alienation and the warped human relations bred by capitalist society.

"Thus, these new movements are not unimportant or peripheral to the socialist revolution but at the center of its advance.

. . . far from *diminishing* in importance as the labor movement itself radicalizes, these movements will *grow* and continue to be a *key part* of the general process leading to socialist revolution. To think otherwise is to think that the radicalizing layers of the working class will be completely incapable of *identifying* with feminism, Black nationalism, gay liberation and progressive standards of morality. If that were the case, there would be no prospect of the working class identifying with the *goals of socialist revolution*. To the contrary, the radicalization already involves large numbers of workers—as women, as GIs, as Blacks, as Chicanos, as gays, as youth, as antiwar activists—who will play a *key* role in the radicalization of the labor movement. This makes it all the more apparent that the radicalization of labor will *necessarily* include support to the central demands of the sectors of the population already engaged in independent struggle." (All emphasis added.)

Is it true the above statement remains true two years hence, save that because of the line of the memorandum, the reference to the gay liberation movement is dropped because it deals with a layer now deemed narrow and peripheral? And if that is true, what prompted that change, what new senses of reality gave rise to it? While Comrade Horowitz's opinions are indeed his own, the introduction to the basic documents of the SWP on the new radicalization did not drop individually from the sky.

From a defense of the "new movements," which explicitly included the gay liberation movement as "not unimportant or peripheral to the socialist revolution but at the center of its advance" in summer 1971, we come to the memorandum of summer 1973:

"The gay liberation movement directly relates to a relatively narrow sector of the population.

"In our long term strategic priorities, the gay liberation movement is *much more peripheral* to the central issues of class struggle than either the women's movement or the movements of the oppressed nationalities." (My emphasis.)*

To be perfectly clear, I do not dispute the fact that the gay struggle is as decisive, or has as much strategic weight in the class struggle as the movements of the oppressed nationalities, women, and the class mobilization as a whole. It has its own dynamics, its own potential and should be

The memorandum states because of the character of the movements for self-determination and the role economic exploitation of women and the role of the family in class society, the demands raised by the nationalist movements and the women's movement are "class demands." "The gay liberation movement," states the memorandum, "is much narrower in the scope of its demands." Earlier, the memorandum states the issues raised by the gay movement are "essentially limited to the struggle for democratic rights of this sector," as if that were a weakness.

Comrade Horowitz wrote with, at least a different political tone, if not with a different political understanding in mind. He stated the "new movements" would not diminish as the class as a whole radicalized, but grow and be a "key part of the general process leading to socialist revolution. To think otherwise is to think that the radicalizing layers of the working class will be completely incapable of identifying with feminism, Black nationalism, gay liberation. . . ."

Comrade Horowitz cites the inevitability that the "radicalization of labor will necessarily include support to the *central demands* of the sectors of the population *already* engaged in independent struggle." (My emphasis.)

The memorandum's hesitancy to consider the demands of the gay movement for democratic rights and liberation as demands of the working class, as class demands, should be a question the authors of that document should answer for the party. Does the "narrow" base and "peripheral" character of the gay struggle mean the demands which flow from it are oriented to or from another class or class layer?

More than two years ago, Comrade Barnes, in his report to the March NC plenum, made remarks which appear to answer some of the questions raised by the memorandum. Like Comrade Horowitz's remarks, they seem to be, to one degree or another, contrasted to the mood and theme of the present leadership document.

Comrade Barnes, in his report, is discussing the impact of the new radicalization on the working class.

"Take even the gay liberation movement for a moment. How many workers are gay? We don't know for sure. But we know the initial findings of the Kinsey studies and other scientific surveys puts the figure in the *millions* rather than the thousands. Leaving aside all barren speculation as to things like whether many gay workers will come out, we know one thing for sure. Their attitudes toward willingness to struggle, toward the assertion of their humanity and rights as workers have been *advanced*, not set back, in these American workers by the rise of the gay liberation movement.

"*Any* component of this radicalization, *any* sector of the population that for its own reasons, begins to struggle and begins fighting, affects *broad layers of the American working class*." (My emphasis.)

It is not, in my opinion, a question of terminological juggling or tearing quotes out of context to score debating points that these comments have been raised. The disputes in this discussion are not semantic; the quotes presented are in context and have been presented with authenticity in

assessed in terms of them, in terms of the dynamics of other movements and in that context the party can arrive at a balanced level of intervention.

mind.

What exists, it appears, is the existence of a shift in political assessment and a consequent adjustment in the level of enthusiasm with which the leadership appreciates the gay liberation movement. That insight is not hard to come by in comparing quotes and comments. It is not hard to come by when the PC draft political resolution *does not mention* the gay movement, save for a reference to the memorandum, which contain the slimmest possible conjunctural analysis of the gay movement over the past period.

If there has been a shift—and there is nothing wrong with that, of course, in any event—in the thinking of the leadership, what produced it? What changes in events, what new insights, etc., shaped that change? If there has not been a shift—we shouldn't quibble over terms—do we affirm the correctness of Comrade Horowitz's confident perspectives and Comrade Barnes' comments about the gay movement's impact on the working class, and, by implication, his statement that it has affected "broad layers of the American working class"? If these statements are correct, and I believe Comrade Horowitz's analysis and Comrade Barnes' statement are, is there a contradiction between them and the theme of the memorandum on those specific points (peripheral character, narrow base, class impact, etc.)? Or are they more akin to the comments advanced in the counterresolution?

The ambiguity of this aspect of the discussion—is the memorandum an assessment of, or an unstated reassessment of different positions once held on the gay liberation movement?—underlines the need for clarity in the discussion.

The need for clarity, for all avenues to be used to reach precision on the disputed questions, is one reason why a separate point on the convention agenda should be set aside for the gay discussion.

For a Separate Point on the Agenda

The PC draft resolution contains one sentence on the gay movement, which is a reference to the memorandum. Counterposed to that balance sheet of the past two years of the gay struggle and the party's analysis of that is the document "For an Intervention Into the Gay Liberation Struggle." The memorandum states since "we project no national campaign in the gay liberation movement" it is unnecessary for a separate agenda point.

The party has never had a point on its convention agenda to discuss and debate its formal orientation to the gay movement. The memorandum is under obvious dispute. Since there are disagreements in the leadership, disagreements in the ranks, and two counterposed lines on the gay movement, shouldn't there be an open, separate convention discussion and consequent vote? What has the point of a "national campaign" got to do with convention agenda in this context?

The convention hammers out the *line* of the party. And there are line differences on the question of the meaning and level of party orientation to the gay liberation movement. The function of the agenda is to, among other things, organize the democratic discussion of the convention to come to grips with what has been placed before the party. The level of 1972 discussion during the summer alone would be enough to allow the party to have the opportunity to hear convention delegates seriously discuss ac-

tually counterposed ideas, so that the decision made can be carried out with exactitude and rigorous discipline.

In the SWP, among the vast majority of comrades who support the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency and the struggle for orthodoxy and revolutionary class politics in the world movement—the *major* difference on *domestic tasks* surrounds the orientation to the gay movement. Outside of two groupings which emanated from a small, anti-leadership clique two years ago, the ranks of the party are divided—I have no idea the level of division—on only one question about our work in the coming period. A separate point on the agenda dealing with the question of the party's orientation to the gay movement would afford a clear context for debate, discussion and resolution. Anything less could inhibit and blur clear sharp argumentation of disagreements.

For Serious Discussion of the Disputed Questions

The central theme of the coming convention is the role of the SWP in the world movement and a decision by the ranks on the line the party should pursue in its capacity. In no small sense of the word, for the party and the international it is a watershed event.

At the same time, at the same convention, the party's orientation to the gay liberation movement is up for vote. We should avoid counterposing that task to the other major tasks of the convention, but in the process of pre-convention discussion balance and integrate the necessity of having a detailed, open, serious discussion of party orientation to the gay movement.

That is, the debate on the gay memorandum and the counterresolution should be treated with no less seriousness and no less politically than any other disputed question. That is the party building attitude on this debate, the outlook that avoids both frivolous overemphasis and any attempts to minimize or kick under the rug real debate, or relegate it to an optional niche in the discussion.

The memorandum raises questions of science, aspects of the role of the party, questions of fact and conjunctural analysis, for dispute. This is not a debate on a matter of taste, or one in which lines are drawn on the basis of sexual proclivity. The scope of the debate flows from specific disagreements, but raises a rich variety of contending views on the hows and whys of a class-struggle party's approach to new and unprecedented political questions.

The test of a Marxist vanguard, especially in the realm of theory and assessment of bourgeois ideology, is to be at the very forefront of struggle and innovation, of advancing and deepening revolutionary challenges to the oppressor class.

That is a nub of the disagreement at present: how best to do that. The task and role of the party today is fundamentally unchanged from the time of the Bolsheviks. But in the interceding 70 years from the development of the Leninist party, previously unimagined struggles have emerged in relationship to, and developed out of the advanced nature and decay of capitalism. New questions, new tasks, new aspects of Marxist analysis have been demanded by these developments.

The meaning of the memorandum is to *lag behind* these developments and challenges, to be conservative in the face of them.

On the theoretical, and the practical side, the counter-

resolution simultaneously advances the party and aids in the struggle of an oppressed layer against the capitalist government. The distinction between the two lines is that of standing still and going forward. And in this

radicalization, where no layer is too denigrated to struggle, where there are no sacred cows, standing still is a step away from going backwards.

July 17, 1973