

Horowitz

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April 28, 1971

FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEE INFORMATION ONLY

Dear Comrades,

The attached uncorrected transcripts of excerpts of the discussion held at the recent plenum of the National Committee are for your information only. This should not leave your possession.

Comradely,

Barry Sheppard
Barry Sheppard
National Office

UNCORRECTED EXCERPTS OF COMMENTS BY GEORGE NOVACK MADE UNDER
THE DISCUSSION OF THE RESOLUTION ON ISRAEL AND THE ARAB REVOLUTION

. . . In my recent book on Democracy and Revolution . . . it's pointed out that the bourgeois democratic revolutions began at the top of the existing society with the reform of church and state relations, then went down into political and legal relations, and eventually reached the substructure of society, namely its economic foundations, with the emergence of the socialist movement. But that wasn't all; during this whole period of a number of centuries, there was the awakening of a whole sequence of subsidiary social layers, starting with the revolutionary bourgeoisie, to the petty bourgeoisie, to the peasants, and then to smaller layers of a specific type: debtors, slaves in the United States and in the Caribbean, paupers, the insane (who previously had no rights), children -- for the first time the rights of children began to be recognized, and special consideration given them -- foreigners, immigrants, women and so on.

Now, a parallel process has begun to express itself in connection with the permanent revolution of our era. And in this upheaval, we see sectors of society, which have hitherto been passive, silent, unpoliticalized, unradicalized, suddenly springing, as it were out of the ground, or in some sense coming out of the closet, and making their grievances and their demands known in very clamorous fashion so that no revolutionary movement can possibly afford to ignore them, and in any case will have to orient themselves towards these radicalized sectors who have come upon the arena of action, whether they like it or not. And what happened in the democratic revolutionary era goes a hundred-fold, I believe, in the period of the combined revolutions of our era in which there are not only the unfinished tasks of the democratic period, but of course the much broader and bigger socialist tasks.

Because, what is happening is that layers of earth in society, which have not only barely been touched, but certainly were never turned over and new life come out of them, are now being harrowed up by the colossal revolutionary developments of our times. Now we've already seen that under our own eyes in connection with the women's liberation movement, but I think it's even more pronounced with the gay liberation movement. So far as I know, this self-assertion of homosexuals as a body in a very conscious and radicalized way, is something new, certainly on a national scale and in an organized way. I haven't read about it in any of the annals of the democratic revolution. I simply cite this as an example of the fact that we've got to be prepared for a few more surprises along this -- I don't know what the surprises are, or else I'd keep you from being surprised (laughter), but, maybe we'll have children's crusades, or something or other. That is, all those sectors of society which really don't like what is going on and feel oppressed and want to be liberated are going to take the cue from the great liberation movements which sweep over our country and over the world and our task, of course, is to be sensitized to them.

UNCORRECTED TRANSCRIPT OF DISCUSSION
OF GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT UNDER YOUTH REPORT

NAT WEINSTEIN: It's too bad that I have to introduce a note of dissent after a very promising report and very promising developments and a very good report, but I'm very much disturbed by the proposals in relation to the gay liberation movement. It's been coming, I know it's been coming. There's been a number of changes taking place that I found a little hard to take but after they've been done I think I can appreciate the necessity of them because of the circumstances of our participation in the mass movement where there are all kinds of changing attitudes and we have to adjust to the changes in attitude and have to recognize that the old prejudices that existed are changing. I raise this point, I use this word deliberately, prejudices, because there is a prejudice and that is what we're dealing with, prejudice against homosexuals that pervades a wide layer of society -- to a lesser and lesser degree, it's true, and that's responsible for our shift in attitude toward this phenomenon.

There's two sides, I feel, to the development of the gay liberation movement and there's a reference in the political resolution, a key sentence without any proposals for action in relation to it. There's two sides to it. One is the side of the rights of people who prefer this life-style, if that's what you want to call it. I think that it's their right. I don't challenge the right of homosexuals to choose that life-style and when they're repressed and oppressed and persecuted by the bourgeois government, I think that it's demanded of us that we come to their defense. It's persecution of people who are performing or carrying out their own lives in a way that they see fit and that's their business. It doesn't harm anybody else.

On the other hand, proposing the entry of comrades and the organization of our party -- because that's what it means, I know it's a youth report but this report is here and that's what it will amount to -- the organization of sections of our party to participate, intervene in the gay liberation movement. I think that carries it to a different stage, a different degree and I think it has consequences that can be damaging to the party in the future. Right now, I suppose, we go along with the current trends with the milieu that we're involved in and it will be an advantage to us. I presume. But I think in the future it will be a source of problems. I don't want to commit the error of so many other idiots that have been around -- tried to act like Trotsky who saw the danger of gangrene in a scratch. I don't think there's a danger of gangrene in this scratch because I think that we're going to learn a lot sooner than before it can become that sizable, that qualitative degree of infection. We're going to learn that there are very possible consequences in this kind of deep orientation toward and relationship with the gay liberation movement.

I think, to put it one way, that when there is a radicalization of the working class that the presence -- and I know I'm not going to be very popular -- but the presence of a large number of

homosexuals, particularly in some areas, conceivably whole YSAs and whole party branches could be predominantly homosexual, that this is going to prove to be a very important barrier to the entry of workers into the revolutionary party. That's my opinion. I think we'll learn before then, because there are all kinds of other problems. I know it's very complex. I know that women comrades have been examining this question anew in relation to the whole problem of the oppression of women in our society and the relationship with men. I know it makes it very complex and I know there are different attitudes toward the question of homosexuality on the part of women than there are toward men. I don't pretend to be an expert on the matter. I don't pretend to be among the most advanced in the party in sensitivity to this question and to understanding of this question. I have not been convinced by any of the discussions that I've heard that we were wrong in the past in our attitude toward this question of homosexuality.

I just want to say, in conclusion, that I have always felt, I've always used it as an argument -- we had proscriptions against beards at one time, we don't have it any more, but we had a proscription against beards that came under the general heading that we always adapted, if I may use such a strong word, to the prejudices of the people that we were addressing ourselves to and hoped to recruit into our ranks. We always adapted on the small things so as to be ever the more harder on the important things. We have enough of a problem standing up to the pressures of not adapting on the important things and that's why it's necessary to avoid getting into a dispute over the less important things, and I think this is one of the less important things just as I think, for example -- although I know it's not the same and I don't want to make a parallel that's obviously limited -- just as I think it would be wrong for us to propose entry into the sexual liberation league because they too are fighting against restrictions. This whole thing of attitudes toward sexual norms and sexual morality can't, in my opinion, be dealt with in a political struggle. It's an educational thing that we should participate in and give our point of view in a pedagogical way, I think. But it's not the kind of thing that we see that we send forces into and involve ourselves in and see as a part of the general movement that we've trying to build and trying to develop into a general struggle against capitalism.

So I think it has limitations and it's in the area of the kind of thing that Trotsky talked about in his polemics against those who favor proletarian art, for example. And this has to do with its relevance, I think. I don't think I'm bringing it in by the hair at all. It's one of those things that flows -- prejudices against homosexuals, prejudices against sexual promiscuity -- these things flow from the nature of our society that flows from the basic structure of the system based on private property. And you're not going to change it by a political movement, you have to change the whole society. And it's going to take a period of change before you change the morality and before you change the attitudes of the people and I think we're making a mistake that could have harmful consequences by encouraging this development in the direction of recruiting large

numbers of homosexuals into the party.

EVELYN SELL: In his report Frank gave some indication of the significance of the YSA on a national scale.

I want to pick up on this idea of the cool Trotskyists in relationship to this question of gay liberation and I had raised some questions and some problems under the political report on this. I think that the key thing, or one of the key things, that Frank said in his report is that this activity, as all other political activity in a branch or in a local, must be under the direction of the branch or local leadership. I think this is very important. This is appropriate and I think that the whole outline -- I think that my question is at least partially answered, I think it's a good answer. I think that this is the only way we can get the kind of information we need. It's the only way that we can help dispel precisely the kinds of prejudices that Nat is talking about. And when the comrades do get involved in this under the cool leadership of the YSA executive committee and local and the party executive committee and local, you're going to find out that male homosexuals don't all walk around with limp wrists and simper. You're going to find out that they're human beings who because they have been sexually oppressed have come to question very deeply all the institutions in society and many of them have come to a very serious political conclusion. Now the thing that oppressed them the most, the thing they're most concerned about right now is their own personal lives and obviously the question of gay liberation. But I can think of the experiences we've had in Austin and I can think of the people that we have been working with in the antiwar movement, for example, and on the campus, who are members of gay liberation. And I can see where this kind of approach, which obviously we're adopting now, is a correct one for us and is one that will help us in our understanding and in developing the kind of orientation that we're going to have to develop in the near future.

Let me just give you a few specifics. We have been working with a leader of gay liberation in Austin who has gone through a number of experiences, for example he's been in the Peace Corps and he's run up against the problems of his being a homosexual in that organization, in the ordinary schools, in the college campuses and in ordinary working life, etc. And a result has been doing a lot of reading, has read Marx, Engels and Lenin etc., and had come to the conclusion that he was a Marxist. At one point he was very interested in joining the YSA, could not join the YSA because of the membership policy that was extant at that time. But he has been working very closely with us over a period of time, is one of the best, most competent organizers in the antiwar movement that we have down there and is the kind of person -- and here's where comrades have to dispel this image they have of the homosexual -- he can go all over that state and do antiwar work and not rile up anybody, not get any trade unionists upset at him, not get anybody turned off or anything like that, because he is a human being and if he sat here in this room today, and if you walked up to him and talked to him, etc., unless he told you that he was in gay liberation and a homosexual you would take him as a very serious political person that was worthwhile working with. And he has done a lot of good work in the antiwar movement. He is now one of the leaders of organizing a gay liberation conference

which is going to be held in Austin at the end of this month. We have been cooperating with him in that work.

They had to run off leaflets. He knows how to organize something. He's seen us in action, he's worked with us. He knows how to go about organizing a national conference. He had to run off leaflets, didn't have a mimeograph machine. We helped run off the leaflets in our hall. Because he's part of the SMC, some of his leaflets were run off by our comrades working in the SMC office. In small ways we have been helping them.

Now, here's where the cool part comes in. Obviously, we're a branch right now of 14 comrades and we are doing everything, and we have all the fractions and departments that all of you have that have 85 comrades in a branch. We obviously cannot throw large forces into building, for example, this national conference for gay liberation. It's beyond our capacity. It would harm the other political work that we have already undertaken and that we have assigned people to. So in small ways, like helping run off leaflets, like helping provide housing, by doing things like that, we are helping them, we're showing our support for their democratic right to hold that conference and to be able to discuss the problems that they face, etc. At the same time, we're not throwing our whole women's liberation fraction into it, we're not throwing half the branch into it, we're not assigning any comrade to really work on that thing, to build it. We cannot do that. Possibly if we had a much larger branch and the rest of our political work as going along full-steam without any difficulty, we might be able to do something like that. We can't, because it's a practical problem.

And that's the kind of thing that a branch leadership can weigh. The practical problem that you have so many people in the branch or in the local, or in both combined, and you have so many things that you have already outlined in your tasks and perspectives that you already have begun to work on. And of course it's a question of priorities, it's a question of finances, it's a question of staff, personnel, all those kinds of things which must be weighed. And this is the kind of thing we do in any area of political work. And I would imagine that is the kind of thing that the branch leadership and the local leadership will do in regard to this work as well. So it's a question of not going overboard one way or the other way, but treating this as another aspect of our work like we treat everything else, weighing it very carefully and at the same time, understanding as was pointed out in the report, that it's a probing operation at this point, gathering information. It's beginning to get into discussions with people in gay liberations, finding out how they feel about things like the family and the other kinds of questions that are coming up now. And reading the press, reading the articles that they're writing and that they're beginning to circulate. Finding out more about it so that by the time that we get back together again the next time we'll have some substantial information and we'll have some real-life practical experiences. So that when we get together to discuss this

it won't be abstract and it won't be something that we suck out of our thumbs. But it's something that we really know something about. At the same time that we're getting all this information, obviously you have to keep the practical kinds of problems within their context.

I do think that in terms of the attitudes of people that -- yes, there are certain problems and I think we all recognize this. There is still a lot of prejudice in our society. At the same time, as happens with everything else, this is changing. We have been going through a sexual revolution in this country and it's not only a sexual revolution in terms of the physical activities that people are going through, but it's a revolution in the attitudes that people have and it runs through all levels of society. The people that I work with are mostly Blacks and Chicanos and Chicanas and they're workers, they're not petty bourgeois or bourgeoisie or anything like that, and we know that prejudices in the working class are more backward in this respect than in any other class. And yet, I today am much freer to discuss my personal sexual relationship with co-workers than I ever was five years or ten years ago. I can be honest in discussions with people now and not get the same kind of reaction that I would have gotten previously. And I think that this is also going to be true and I think that we've already seen some inklings of that in terms of prejudices against other kinds of sexual activity that are going on. The important thing to remember is that one of the things that changes attitudes is that when a group of people stand up and say "enough!" -- anyone who stands up and fights for their rights at this point earns a certain amount of automatic respect from other people no matter what their prejudices have been up to this point. I think we're going to see some of that developing more and more and more as time goes on. While we're very careful and while we should foresee the problems and be very sensitive to these kinds of problems, we have to be sensitive to the fact that things are changing and we have to be in tune with what those changes are.

GEORGE WEISSMAN: I'd like to say a few words about the issue that Nat raised and I think it's an important thing to have been raised so that we have some discussion. First of all I'm in accord with the party and YSA decision on accepting as comrades homosexuals who are Trotskyists and who want to be Trotskyists. But I think we can bear a little on the question.

We've had homosexual comrades in the party. We had a group in the branch that I came from, in the Boston branch. In the CIA days, that's way back. When I came in, as we were already in the SP or just gone into the SP, these comrades were no longer active in the party, they were sympathizers. And they remained sympathizers for a long time and were very useful in the way of doing favors, contributing money and so on. From everything I heard from comrades who had been contemporaneous with them, in the CIA, they were very fine comrades, on a high political level and worked very hard. They were male homosexuals and they were not obviously homosexual and this consequently made their functioning easier for us at that time. They were not, to my knowledge, asked to leave, but dropped out as many comrades do when they tire of political activity.

Now the reason given in the document for our previous policy was the susceptibility to blackmail or police pressure of homosexuals and this represented a danger for the party. Well that's undoubtedly so, that it would represent a danger for the party. Well that's undoubtedly so, that it would represent a danger for the party, but I don't think that that was the main reason. I only know of a few cases, there have been cases in the labor movement, in the revolutionary movement, the McNamara case, the famous bombing case on the West Coast. I don't know if any of you have read or seen O'Neil's play "The Iceman Cometh" where one of the principal characters is a young man, a young homosexual who in the final act commits suicide after having told the whereabouts of two refugees, two defendants in the McNamara case, after having acted as a spy for the FBI inside the movement. That's one case based on history.

But an ordinary homosexual comrade, especially in this period, I don't think would represent a danger, would not be susceptible to blackmail, except in cases. Another case I can recall in the party was a comrade who got into difficulties with the police for making advances to youngsters in public places. Such a comrade, of course, like a heterosexual comrade who made advances to women in the street or physical overtures to women, would also be subject to arrest and consequently to blackmail. But I don't think comrades who thought in the past where we had this question of homosexuality of party members before them, considered that as the principal reason for not having them in.

The principal reason was the party image. The difficulty of getting a hearing from workers, getting a hearing from outsiders who consider our movement way-out, Russian, and so fourth, is so difficult that this seemed to be just adding one more difficulty to give the party a public image of homosexuality in a period when this was something that was hardly mentioned in public, which couldn't be defended in public without sidetracking your audience emotionally from the political issues. This is a valid consideration, if we want to make a revolution and build a revolutionary party, we don't want to get sidetracked into having to spend 90% of our time arguing on something which is not an important issue. Other movements have faced this, and it comes down to the question of what is an important issue. What's unimportant in one period, what's a diversion in one period, can be an important issue in another period. Some examples. The abolitionist movement split, I think in 1842, on the question of the right of women to participate fully as delegates to conventions, as public speakers and so on, and we know that history certainly justified the Garrisonians in their insistence on splitting the movement on this issue. It was an important issue in the public life of the time and it greatly strengthened the abolitionist movement of the day.

The other issue was Sabbath observance. In a period when the country shut down on Sunday, when everybody in this country was a member of a church, the Garrisonians, these way-out people, decided

that Sunday should be regarded as any other day as far as their activity was concerned and as far as writing in denunciation of the strict Sunday observance. This sounds foolish today, but this was one of the big split issues. Some of the people, the political abolitionists, wanted to win the public on the subject just of anti-slavery and not get sidetracked on the women question, on religious questions, and so forth. I think that history has shown that the extremists at the time were correct in adopting these collateral issues as part of the program of action of their movement.

Or take the question of anti-Semitism. Is there any reason why the Marxist movement should ally itself with the Jews in opposition to the propaganda against them and the persecution against them? The Jews in France weren't part of the working class in the last century to any extent. In fact, they were identified with banking interests, with commercial interests, with the petty bourgeois. And when the Dreyfus case started, the socialist movement there had no reason whatsoever for involving itself -- I think there was a basis of anti-Semitism in the working class on which the orthodox Marxists based themselves then in refusing to intervene or to defend Dreyfus. But their arguments were, this was sidetracking. What was Dreyfus? He was a capitalist, a bourgeois, a militarist. All he wanted to do was to remain on the French general staff. Why should the Marxist movement involve itself in defense of this Jew militarist, capitalist who was reactionary in his views in regard to the socialist movement?

The point is, what's important changes, and the homosexuals themselves have put the issue of homosexuality on the public agenda, irreversibly now. It's going to be discussed. It's a great contribution to the hygiene of American life, of society, that this is going to be discussed. They are going to identify themselves and they are going to be active.

I just want to say one thing. It will also present us possibly with some problems in the party. One experience with homosexual comrades or with homosexuals, is that there are some who are sort of one-issue people. That is, they will identify and ally themselves with our movement because it advances their beliefs and their organization and there will be a tendency, I'm sure, if we have a large number of homosexuals in the party, there'll be a tendency for some of them to raise the issue in the party, to proselytize as it were, on the basis that homosexuality is a superior form of emotional and sexual relationship, and that other people should be won over to this superior form of human relationship. I think that would be a problem for us in the party. We would have to soon arrive at a position whereby this matter of sexual preference, along with other matters of taste, habit, way of life, of party people, became something which was not a valid party discussion, for formation of factions, so forth and so on.

CHARLES SCHEER: George covered most of what I wanted to cover and did a lot better job than I could have done. One thing we've observed always, is that when we correct a position there's a tendency to overcorrect. Listening to Frank and Evelyn, one would almost get the impression that we're almost ready to go into a massive recruiting effort for homosexuals and I think let's try not to overcorrect something, just correct it about like the document that was put out from the Political Committee.

*That is an
amendment
here*

On the one other point that strikes me, I think one of the reasons why this came to the surface wasn't just entirely the gay liberation movement. I think it's the activity of lesbians within the women's liberation and the sympathy that has developed on the strength of this. And I think one thing -- I don't suppose it's a big point, maybe it's a little bit of paternalism behind it on my part -- but there is a difference. I mean the male and the female homosexuality is not identical. We're living in a capitalist society where a woman is persecuted, in many cases made the butt of male brutality, rape and so on. Just the differences in the position of women in society makes for differences on this level as well.

ED SHAW: I too want to address myself to the remarks that Nat made although I feel a little odd about it because there's not really a proper point on the agenda. The same issue was raised in the political report and probably the discussion should have taken place there. But at the same time, I'm more or less a contemporary of Nat's in the party and I feel I understand some of the things that he fears.

We had sort of evolved a policy in the party, at least in recent years, in which homosexuals were not allowed to be members of the party. I say evolved because I don't think that there ever was any official position ever taken on the question one way or the other. It just sort of became an official position. To my knowledge, the first time it was ever officially stated was at the last plenum in the organization report when the question of drug use and homosexuality were described as proscribed for people being brought into the party. I tried to think a little about it at the time, especially since it was my job to give a report to the New York branch on the plenum, and I included that in my report and there was some discussion at that branch meeting

and there was some embarrassment which I noted and which I felt too, and as more people asked me about the policy, the more embarrassed I became in attempting to legitimately explain it. Comrades, when you become embarrassed in trying to explain a position of the party it's time to take a new look at that position and stop and think if it's a wrong position, if you're wrong, if the party is wrong, and review the entire question.

I too had actually believed that it was the case that homosexuals were not allowed in the party at the time, until I started to review it, really. What occurred to me was that it wasn't even true at the time. It wasn't a position which was a matter of fact. There had been homosexuals in the party who had been expelled and not too long ago either. But there was always a very good reason for expelling them aside from the fact that they were homosexuals and we had made an error in allowing ourselves to begin to use the fact that they were homosexuals to help expel them rather than the real reason that they should have been expelled. I think that that's the case, and an evolution toward a very dangerous practice developed in the party.

At the same time I realized this, I know that I began to remember and it came home to me that there were comrades currently in the party, and had been comrades in the party before, whom, I at least had been convinced were homosexuals, and hadn't even had the faintest feeling that they should be expelled from the party. The two things were so separate: the comrades who shouldn't be in the party and who were homosexuals, I thought it was all right to expel them because they were homosexuals; the comrades who I thought were homosexuals who were in the party and who were good comrades; I didn't think that was a reason to even consider expelling them. I never even thought about it one way or the other until I started to look at the question in a much more thorough way.

So I think that it wasn't even really true. Of course there's no real way to enforce it in the first place unless you wanted to go around and ask everybody to sign a form regarding their sexual attitudes when they join the party and maybe sign the form once a year to make sure that they hadn't changed.

I think that the young comrades were the ones who were responsible for pressing us to reconsider this whole question and particularly party comrades and others in the youth who were more closely in touch with the current situation, the current mores, atmosphere and everything else. If any comrade, any member of the party, lets their sexual feelings or practices become an obsession with them, they probably won't make very good comrades. They won't be material for the revolutionary party. Many of us older comrades have tended to feel that homosexuality per se was an obsession with people. You couldn't have a homosexual, for example, who wouldn't be obsessed with his or her sexual preference or sex life. So that we stereotyped. Any heterosexual who is obsessed with that form of sex activity would also be very dangerous to the party and would probably get involved with things that would lead to their expulsion. It's no difficulty to imagine what sort of things anyone might do. It's a healthy change in the party. I'm really relieved that it's happened because it keeps me from being embarrassed about a position of the party and up until that point and currently there's nothing about the party that I feel embarrassed about and I think it should remain that way.

JEAN TUSSEY: George referred to some of the considerations that he thought had been involved in the past and some of the attitudes about homosexuals in relation to the party. One that he mentioned but didn't dwell on as much was concern with the image of the party. If I can take that just one step further I think that possibly Nat is concerned about that and some comrades may have been, not only in general but in particular with the image of the party with workers. What kind of attitude, what kind of problems it might or might not create for us to be involved with a public image of defense of the gay liberation movement and collaboration with it in connection to our work with the shops and in the unions. In my experience at work, I think I've been more concerned than the rest of the workers have been concerned about the question of homosexuality in the past, partly I was concerned about the considerations that the party had in the past under different conditions and in a different period where many of the workers who actually lived and worked with the reality of the situation every day were much less concerned.

CLIFTON DEBERRY: I do not think that the question here is turning the party into a defense committee for homosexuality, that's not the intent. We are building the revolutionary party that's going to lead the American revolution. Like it or not, when sections of the population go into action, we must seek to understand it, analyze it, and seek to give some conscious direction to it. That's what we're in business for.

From the point of view of homosexuality, we have a constitution. We have criteria for membership in the party, that hasn't changed. I don't believe it will change. But that's not in question. But this live movement exists. We don't know anything about it. How do we find out about it? We can't do it by osmosis. We've got to have some relationship with it, some understanding of it. You can't do it unless you relate to it, participate in it or follow what it's doing through its press. There's no other way to do it.

If out of that movement people decide that they want to join the Socialist Workers Party or become a revolutionary they have every right to do it. If we check back into the Cuban revolution, we will find out that homosexuals participated in the making of the Cuban Revolution. So that's not the issue here.

I feel that the youth report is one of optimism, one of growth and a perspective of expansion. But I think the last convention of the YSA pointed out many many things. The YSA is recognized as the most serious youth group in the country, by their attitude, by their approach, and one point made in the New York Times, about how they were clean-cut and shaven, which tells you that they take themselves seriously. The fact that the leadership has demonstrated its ability to lead and how it has conducted itself in the activities that the YSA and the party have been engaged in over the past period and it has been a hectic one. And I believe this stands as a verification of the ability and the understanding of our young comrades to deal with situations as they come up, not to react to them because I think one of the big problems that the older comrades have, there are certain things that have been drummed into us over the years and we have certain prejudices that we haven't overcome, and when we sit up here and talk about it, it's like talking about "workers work." The attitude of workers toward homosexuality and homosexuals. I think we have to realize we're seeing something that we've never seen before. The problem has been before that homosexuals have sort of sat on the side and did things sort of inconspicuously. Today they stand up and say "I'm a homosexual" period. Here I am. You can see me, you can take my picture. I'll give you my name, address, phone number, everything. I work here and this is it." So what are you going to say?

I believe the point Evelyn made is quite true. Whether you like them or not, damn it, they're taking a position and letting you know they're not ashamed of what they are. They're human beings and that's the way they want to be treated. And we can't do any less. If we understand that they're products of the society that we're trying to change. We're not demanding that they change and be pure. We don't have a criteria for membership in the party other than believing in the basic ideas of the party. As long as someone conducts themselves along

the lines laid out by the constitution of the party, we have no problem and they will have no problem. And when we had situations that have come up in the past, the leadership has the responsibility and obligation to make sure that the energy of the party is not distorted. The convention elects a leadership and assigns them that task.

This is what's new. These changing attitudes, and the problem is that young people don't have the hang-ups that the older generation has. When I was on a tour during the campaign upstate last year, I was scheduled to speak the same night that the gay liberation was having a session. So everybody went to the gay liberation session. So after nobody showed up for our meeting, I decided to go over there too and sit in and learn something. So what were they discussing? They were discussing the problems that they had and young people, young students were sitting there listening, not criticizing, not snickering, not picking or joking, but seriously sitting and listening to these people explain what their situation is and what they want to do about it. So in that sense they demanded respect and I recall the demonstration that they held here in New York that was attacked by the police. They interviewed one of the leaders of that movement on television that night and he presented his position as one that we certainly would have carried out and have said exactly the same thing if it had been a demonstration that we had led that had been attacked by the police. A very principled stand. So I think that we have to get away from stereotyping.

We must understand that this is a live movement of people, of human beings who want to be recognized as human beings, who have talent and who can make contributions to the movement. We're in the business to build the revolutionary party that's going to lead the revolutionary movement and we're not going to change that, just to cater to situations that individuals may have.

I would like to reiterate this final point. The YSA, and I found this also to be the case in the tour upstate, the young people who have heard about the YSA, who were on some form of dope, I heard a young man tell me, he said "I want to join the YSA, but I've got this problem. I can't join because I'm caught up in this thing. If I can shake this, I'm going to join the YSA." If I'm not mistaken, that young person has joined the YSA and he doesn't have that habit because the YSA has established certain norms which demand young people be serious and I don't think that that's going to change. That's going to apply to every young person who comes into or who comes around the movement or whether they're homosexuals or whatever their situation happened to be. I don't think that's going to change, just as the norms of the party are not going to change.

We're dealing in changing times. We've got to understand this in fundamental terms and learn to deal with it and relate to it and give some conscious direction to it. Because maybe it's a possibility that some of these people, in the course of understanding why they're in the situation they're in, they might decide to change it and come over to the revolutionary movement. We have that responsibility too.

I think it's good for someone to raise the point of a need for caution but I think that we have to keep it within the context of our history of the movement and particularly the history of the YSA which to me is certainly a demonstration of young revolutionaries and young Trotskyists who know how to conduct themselves from the point of view of never losing sight of the clear perspective of building a revolutionary movement and bringing people in, not on the terms they want to come in, but on the basis of adhering to the basic principles upon which the YSA is built. I think the young comrades have demonstrated this. So I think it's all right to be cautious, but not in the sense of going overboard because we have the demonstration in life of the ability and the capacity of the leadership of the youth and of the party in dealing with situations that may come up which may endanger the image or the prestige of the party or the YSA.

UNCORRECTED TRANSCRIPT OF SUMMARY OF YOUTH REPORT BY FRANK BOEHM

I want to try to clarify a couple of things first. One is that comrades should not feel that this report has developed a political line for our movement concerning the gay liberation movement. What the report attempts to point out is that the stage where we are at, as Dee and a number of other comrades put it, is that we want to probe this movement and find out more about it and there are certain concrete ways we can do that, some of which have been begun in branches and locals around the country -- in Los Angeles, here in New York and other places -- so that we can find out what we don't know about the gay liberation movement and that's quite a bit because we have had up until the YSA convention almost no contact with the gay liberation movement. So we don't know what the thinking is in the gay liberation movement. If we had comrades to send into the movement, if we had made that decision that we wanted to consciously begin sending people into the movement, we wouldn't know where to send them. We want to find out things about the movement first. That's where we're at at this point. Neither in the Political Committee nor in the NEC has there been the necessary kind of discussion to develop a political line nor has there been the preparation in the National Committee of the party through documents and memos about the thinking going on about this movement. We still have to do that. That's a question that still has to be taken up.

The other thing that I want to mention is that some comrades spoke about what we don't want to do now is begin a massive recruitment drive to recruit homosexuals to the party or to the YSA.

We are on one big massive recruitment drive. That is, we want to recruit everyone who becomes a Trotskyist, whether they happen to be from the gay liberation movement, the antiwar movement, from the feminist movement, Black or Chicano militants or whatever. So I think that it's a little bit of a dangerous concept to say that on the one hand that what this probing implies is that we're going on a massive recruitment drive of homosexuals. We don't go on a massive recruitment drive for any particular movement, we try to recruit everyone who becomes a Trotskyist in the course of their political development.

There's a couple of other things that were brought up in the discussion also around this particular question that I would like to go into. First I think that it's important to understand the dynamics of the movement. It seems to me that there are two particular aspects to the dynamics of the gay liberation movement. One was shown in Albany this weekend, is the ability of this movement to move into political action, and that's what it is, it's not, as some comrades implied, an apolitical movement. It's a very political movement. Just the fact that as someone pointed out, that you cannot win the kind of demands or win the kind of equality that this movement is seeking under capitalism, but only in a revolutionary society, points out that this is very much of a political movement and the dynamics of the movement are such that it has an ability to draw masses of people into political action who otherwise would be, as the gay liberation movement puts it, in the closet and would remain in the closet trying to hide and suppress their homosexuality and go through the personal psychological torture

which this society imposes upon homosexuals. And to remember again that this is not at all small groupings in our society, but by conservative estimates it's huge. It's 20 million and that does not even include the other segments of Kinsey's study where there are the different levels. That is, the 20 million is an estimate of practicing homosexuals in this society. But there are other levels also, including the 50% category of American males, which would come out to more than 50 million, who according to Kinsey, if this society was not so repressive in relation to homosexuals, would be gay. That's dynamite for the movement.

I think that saying that having gay people in our movement is a barrier to recruiting workers is in contradiction to one of the main points of the political resolution. That is precisely the effect that this current radicalization has not just on students, but very very importantly on workers themselves. That is, it may be very true that the most backward views on this question, the most prejudiced is among the working class. But it is also true that the working class, as was pointed out by speaker after speaker yesterday, is being affected by this current radicalization. Their ideas are changing. Their prejudices are changing and, as Jack pointed out in his report, millions of workers are gay also. So I think that it's a mistake to say that workers will not be affected by the radicalization, that it will be a barrier to recruiting to the party or the YSA to recruit gay people.

I originally had in my report under that section a sentence that said that this movement was unprecedented, which it is, but also that it was never written about or such a movement was not foreseen by Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky, which was pointed out to me that that is incorrect, that there was quite a bit written not only about that but about other kinds of oppression that people face in this society through the family because they are women and so forth.

So, it is very much a political movement, I think, and the demands that were raised in Albany were political demands. The thrust of the movement was brought out when they chanted "Justice, Justice, Justice" which they cannot receive in this society, points to it as a political movement.

One thing on what Evelyn said. In terms of this kind of probing of the gay liberation movement being done under the direction of the local. That is absolutely correct and that is the way that it has to be done. Our probing this movement and our involving resources to do that sort of work depends on the priorities in the branches and locals. However, we have to be clear, that should we recruit, and we will I think -- and this is the case in some locals around the country, some leading activists in the gay liberation movement who are very close to the YSA, could probably be recruited -- if we do recruit such activists, we don't want to preclude their participation and their activity in the gay liberation movement.

One point which Charlie raised that I think is true is that lesbians do face a double oppression, not only as women but as lesbians also. That they are very active in the women's liberation movement and that that is one of the best ways that we can gain the kind of information and do the kind of probing that we feel it is important to do, and that is through the women's liberation movement. I just want to reiterate again also that the building of the gay liberation task force for April 24 is another very important way that this can be done.

XXX

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
April 30, 1971

TO ALL FINANCIAL DIRECTORS AND BRANCH ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

April 1971 Financial Notes

The most recent leg of the party financial tour has yielded some experiences that should be shared with all the party branches.

The financing of regional work is an area where many branches and YSA locals are having problems. The orientation of the Ohio comrades may be one that would help out in your region.

In trying to come to grips with how to spread the financial responsibility for regional work among all the locals, branches and at-largers without having a disproportionate burden fall on the local and branch in the regional center (which is the case in most regions), they came up with a proposal that was agreed to by all comrades in the region and which has been working out well this spring. That is, they presented the monthly regional budget to the comrades and each local and at-larger agreed to contribute a fixed monthly lump sum from their area to cover these expenses. Each local or at-large area is responsible for raising the monthly quota and sending it to the regional committee. The Cleveland party branch meets its share of the regional expenses by paying for the regional phone and office supplies each month.

Another aspect of regional finances that is working well in the Illinois area is the arrangement the regional committee has made on honoraria for speakers from the region. If a local in the region sets up a meeting for an honorarium for one of these speakers, the sum is shared between the regional committee and the local which set up the meeting. In the case of honoraria obtained by at-large areas, enough is set aside to pay the at-larger's fund drive pledge and the rest comes to the Chicago YSA for their fund drive (source of the speakers in this case).

The Michigan region has resolved the problem of jurisdiction for honoraria for regional speakers by agreeing to have the Detroit local solicit honoraria within the Detroit vicinity while the regional committee goes after speaking engagements in the areas outside of Detroit.

Many regional committees are working now to line up speaking engagements and other fund-raising activities for the fall 1971 school term. Progress on this bodes well for self-financing regional work in the fall. In the Michigan region, for example, comrades have promoted the branch tape library and have tentative agreement from professors on two campuses in the region to rent some of our tape series for \$100 a shot in the fall!

* * *

All financial directors should make sure to read the Organization Report to the National Committee Plenum and The Sustainer System and the Finances of Branch Departments, Financial Report to the National Committee Plenum in the new Internal Information Bulletin, No. 1 in 1971. These two reports lay out the major financial goals of the party for the coming months and some of the ways in which we hope to tune up the financial functioning of branch departments.

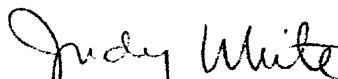
* * *

We have begun making modest progress on the major financial campaign mapped out by the national committee at its recent plenum. In March 5 branches -- Austin, New York, Portland, Seattle and Twin Cities -- were the only ones that kept current with their financial obligations to the national office, The Militant and the ISR. In April 6 branches reached this goal. They are Chicago, New York, Portland, San Diego, Twin Cities and Washington, D.C. The branches of the month are New York, Portland and Twin Cities who have stayed current with their obligations for two months running.

In addition, a number of branches made progress on moving toward our goal of keeping current. They are Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver and San Francisco. Remember, letting obligations mount to any one of these departments hurts our national financial functioning.

Information on branch status with Pathfinder obligations will be sent out separately when it is ready.

Comradely,



Judy White
National Financial Director

SUPPLEMENT TO APRIL 1971 FINANCIAL NOTES

Status with Pathfinder

<u>Branch</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>
Atlanta	current*	current
Austin	current	current*
Boston	current*	current*
Chicago	fell behind	current
Cleveland	fell behind	current*
Denver	fell behind	current*
Detroit	current*	current
Houston	current	current*
Los Angeles	current	fell behind
New York	current*	current*
Oakland-Berkeley	fell behind	fell behind
Philadelphia	current	current*
Portland	current	current
San Diego	fell behind	current*
San Francisco	fell behind	current*
Seattle	current	current*
Twin Cities	fell behind	current*
Washington, D.C.	current*	current*

* also paid some arrears

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April 26, 1971

Jack Barnes, Organizational Secretary
Socialist Workers Party
14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 10014

Dear Comrade Barnes:

Since the pre-convention discussion period for the 1971 SWP convention will be opening soon we, as at-large members of the SWP, are requesting permission from the P.C. to conduct pre-convention discussion among ourselves and to be represented by one delegate at the coming convention.

We had planned on functioning in the Milwaukee branch but since the perspective for the branch has been delayed we are, therefore, requesting the above alternative. All of us will be transferring out of Madison and Milwaukee, as suggested by Joel Britton, before the end of the summer but probably not until after Oberlin.

We recognize that there probably is no precedent for our request, with the possible exception of some of the Maritime comrades on board ships during the 1945-1946 period, hence we are not sure that our request is a correct procedure but would nonetheless appreciate having the request presented for consideration by the P.C.

Comradely yours,
s/John Barzman
Martha Quinn
Patrick Quinn
John Van Hyning
Jim Wysocki
SWP At-largers
Madison/Milwaukee

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3861 Montevista Road
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44121
April 26, 1971

Jack Barnes
National Organization Secretary
New York, New York

Dear Comrade Barnes,

In the forthcoming pre-convention discussion in the branches, we (the authors of "For a Proletarian Orientation") would like to present an argument in favor of our document to any branch that would like to hear us. Thus we intend to write to the organizers of the various branches to tell them that we are willing to speak on our document.

Unless we hear otherwise from you, we assume that this is correct procedure during a pre-convention discussion.

Comradely,
s/Barbara Gregorich

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Arnowitz

295 Huntington Ave.
Boston, Mass. 02115
April 27, 1971

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR

Dear Gus,

I received your suggestions on the two points suggested for inclusion in the summer school syllabusses today.

For the second or third year in a row this comes after the summer school has already been discussed and decided upon by the branch that I have been in. The middle of April is too late in my opinion for the branches to be beginning a discussion of this matter. In order to motivate people coming in from the region we have to have the information in their hands by this time so they can make plans (financial and otherwise) to come to the regional centers. Of course one can, and we have, motivated them as much as possible to come in for the (abstract) summer school but it helps a lot if you have the concrete subject matter to excite them with. That's a chronic gripe that I have had for several years.

The second point that I want to raise is one of the specific subject matters that is suggested, namely 1.) "A study of the basic dynamics of the current radicalization..." You say this is to be carried out "in correlation with preparations for the party convention...", but it seems to me that this question and the lack of clarity within our party is at the heart of the differences that are raised in the McCann et.al. document and that anywhere that such a syllabus is implemented where there are any supporters of this position the summer school will inevitably become a part of the pre-convention discussion without the proper safeguards for a free and full discussion of the issues in an organized fashion. I might add that to a lesser extent this is also true about the study of revolutionary socialist electoral policy. In Boston, both these matters will be a part of the pre-convention discussion and that, in my opinion is how they should be organized, not as part of a summer school.

Comradely,

s/Dave Wulp, Boston organizer

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
May 7, 1971

Dave Wulp
Boston

Dear Dave,

Your criticism about the lateness of the communication about the summer schools is well taken. This is something that we should improve upon.

As far as the content of the summer schools overlapping with the pre-convention discussion, this is something that can never be avoided during a convention year. If the summer school is not to be vague and abstract, it must take up discussion of the central ideas that are already included in the party's program. In this regard, the proposals for the summer school this year are not out of line. They only include subjects that have already been discussed and decided upon at previous conventions of the party. It is the duty of the party educational department to plan education of the party membership on these basic political points.

Any time a convention comes along, it means that all aspects of the party's program are up for discussion, including policies that have been previously decided upon. It does not follow from this that the summer school must refrain from taking up previously decided issues, no more than it means we should avoid forums on these subjects during pre-convention periods.

Comrades who want to re-open these questions during the pre-convention period have a perfect right to do so, but only through the proper channels of internal discussion: pre-convention discussion bulletins, branch pre-convention discussion, and the convention itself. Public forums or educational classes are not the proper arena for such internal discussion.

If a particular branch feels that the pre-convention discussion on a given subject will be so thorough that it is unnecessary to take up this subject in the summer school too, then that is a perfectly good reason for taking up other subjects in the summer school. But if it feels that educational classes on some aspect of previously decided upon party policy will inevitably become transformed into an unauthorized pre-convention discussion period, then a different question is involved: the right of the party to regulate its internal functioning. The educational classes are not the form for pre-convention discussion, and the party has every right to enforce the conduct of all its members in this regard.

Comradely,

Gus Horowitz

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295 Huntington Ave.
Boston, Mass. 02115
April 28, 1971

NEW YORK
Jack Barnes

Dear Comrade Barnes,

I am sorry for the brief delay in answering your informational request. I was asked to take and accepted an assignment in Washington D.C. in preparation for April 24. As a result, I never received your letter until April 27, when I returned.

By now you will have received the minutes of the April 13, and probably the April 20, branch meetings. In looking at my copy of the April 13, minutes, I find there was no mention of the motion which Comrade McCann presented that he be allowed to speak to "amplify" his remarks on the political report (which had been given on April 6) -- simply the notation that during the educational portion of the meeting, the anti-war plenum report was given. On April 20, five days after Comrade McCann sent his letter to you, but before I had any knowledge of it, those minutes were read to the branch, with Comrade McCann in attendance, and they were accepted as read.

Since there is no information in the minutes, let me indicate what happened. On April 6, I presented an outline report to the branch of the political report and discussion which had taken place at the plenum. After my presentation, several comrades asked questions or expressed their views on the report including Comrade McCann. In Boston, unless otherwise stipulated, we have an automatic five minute limit on all discussion. This rule was in force for the discussion. Of course, comrades can always ask for extensions, and almost without exception they are granted. Comrade McCann was the second speaker after the conclusion of the report. He did not ask for an extension in order to "conclude" his remarks. The hour was not late. The discussion went on for a good forty minutes after the conclusion of Comrade McCann's remarks.

On April 13, Comrade McCann came to me just as the branch meeting was beginning. He said he had done some research during the week and had some quotations to back up and "amplify" his remarks of the preceding week. Furthermore, he felt that he should speak before the anti-war report was given. I reminded him that, as I had told the branch the week before, the anti-war report was conjunctural -- aimed totally at preparing the party for April 24 -- and that I felt it was necessary for the branch to have the information it contained in order to put into context the actions we had been taking locally in the anti-war movement up to this point. I also reminded him that the pre-convention discussion was scheduled to begin officially in less than three weeks and that he would have

ample time to present his views to the branch at that time. He was told that, for those reasons, the agenda for the educational section of the branch meeting would begin with the anti-war report and that it would not include the opportunity for him to "amplify" his remarks, but that he could present a motion to the branch that he be allowed to speak just before the presentation of the antiwar report. At that time Comrade McCann did present such a motion, and the branch rejected it.

In his letter, Comrade McCann refers to a Boston branch decision which was "reversed by the N.O." Later, he mentions, "The discussion of the plenum reports which the N.O. ruled permissible last winter." Again he is factually inaccurate. Neither the P.C. nor any other national body reversed any Boston branch decision. There was also no ruling by any national body of the party regarding post plenum report discussion.

What Comrade McCann may have been referring to was a discussion in the Boston branch regarding post plenum report "discussion". A motion passed by the Boston branch at the time of the 1970 plenum reports emphasized the informational nature of the plenum reports leaving the impression that only questions could be asked during the discussion period following the report. The next week, the branch passed a second motion clarifying the intent of the first by stating that although line discussion is inappropriate after plenum reports, comrades are free to make any comment they wish as well as to ask questions during the discussion period.

As to the question raised in Comrade McCann's letter of closing plenum reports by "accepting or approving" them, the branch did and should have done neither of those two things because these are reports of the deliberations and decisions of a higher body than the branch and are, when reported to the branch, basically informational in nature. To say the branch accepts or approves a plenum report implies that it can reject or disapprove such a report as well. This would, of course, reduce our party to a federation of branches and cut across our Leninist conception of a centralized vanguard party. After plenum reports are given, comrades are free to ask questions and make comments, but it is clear that these reports cannot be used as a pretext for initiating a line discussion on political differences. It is unfortunate and ironic that this incident has taken place so close to the beginning of the pre-convention discussion which is the place to raise political differences.

Comradely,
s/Dave Wulp, Boston

cc: P. Camejo
L. Trainor

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4420 Superior Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44103
April 29, 1971

Jack Barnes
SWP NO

Dear Comrade Barnes,

This is to inform you that at a meeting of the Cleveland branch on April 27, during a discussion of the scheduling of the pre-convention discussions, Comrades Gregorich and Passen declared their document "For a Proletarian Orientation" to be a counter resolution to the National Committee Draft Political Resolution "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization."

Comrades Gregorich and Passen requested, and were granted, time to present the line of their resolution to the branch at the same meeting as the presentation of the National Committee Draft Resolution.

Comradely,
s/Bruce Marcus

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N. Y. 10014

April 30, 1971

Pat Jordan

Dear Pat,

We have received no reply to or acknowledgment of our communication to you of February 8, 1971. It contained the motion adopted by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on February 5, 1971; copies of your correspondence including an undated letter to the Political Bureau of the Socialist Workers Party, your letters of September 26, 1970 and October 12, 1970; my correspondence to you of September 14, 1970 and October 6, 1970; the statement to the National Committee of the International Marxist Group which has presented to the Political Committee on November 28, 1970 by Alan Harris; and the Memorandum on Correspondence Relating to London Book Service by Joseph Hansen dated January 20, 1971.

We know that letters going both ways may have been lost during the strike.

Did you receive this communication?

Comradely,
s/Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary

cc: Ernest

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N. Y. 10014

May 1, 1971

John Barzman
Martha Quinn
Patrick Quinn
John Van Hyning
Jim Wysocki

Dear Comrades,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of April 26, 1971 which you request be presented to the Political Committee. I will place it on the agenda of the next Political Committee meeting.

Comradely,
s/Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary

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14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 10014

May 3, 1971

CLEVELAND

Barbara Gregorich

Dear Comrade Gregorich,

It is unusual for the authors of an article submitted to the pre-convention discussion bulletin to ask the national office what the correct procedure is to inform the branches that spokespersons for their article are available. This request in your letter of April 26 and the character of your co-authored document, raises several questions that must be clarified.

Does this mean that the authors consider the document "For A Proletarian Orientation" a counter-resolution to the political resolution submitted to the pre-convention discussion by the National Committee? Do the authors consider themselves part of a tendency or a faction? Is the platform of the tendency or faction the document "For a Proletarian Orientation?"

Comradely,

Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary

cc: Bill Massey - Oakland-Berkeley
John McCann - Boston
Phil Passen - Cleveland

3861 Montevista Road
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44121
May 7, 1971

Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary
New York, New York

Dear Comrade Barnes,

In regard to your letter of 5-3-71, we do not consider it "unusual" to ask the national office "what the correct procedure is." The history of the SWP is fraught with examples of comrades who had political differences with the party leadership but who did not proceed correctly in presenting their differences. It seems to us that the splits, expulsions, cliques, unprincipled combinations, etc., in the party's history clearly point to the necessity of anybody with political differences to proceed correctly. Political differences must be discussed, argued, and voted on as such -- those with political differences must proceed correctly in order to keep the discussion on the political differences, not on incorrect organizational procedures.

While the party has "how to" articles on Militant sales, branch finances, press conferences, etc., we do not have any such compiled information on how to proceed with political differences. Yet the questions of which path the party shall take, which program the party shall have, which tasks the party shall set for itself are the most important of all questions. It is the over-riding importance of these questions that heightens the necessity of proceeding correctly in presenting political differences. Because we want to proceed correctly and because there are no clear examples or instructions on how to do so, we must, when we are uncertain, ask somebody how to proceed. It does not strike us as "unusual" that we end up asking the national office. It does strike us as strange, however, that instead of receiving an answer, we receive a series of questions.

In regard to the first of your three questions, we, the authors of "For a Proletarian Orientation," consider our document an alternative political line to the NC's political resolution. In her letter of 3-16-71 Comrade Gregorich said that we view our document as "a clear alternative to present party policy." We feel that the line presented in our document should be accepted by the party. Since this is a different political line than that in the NC's political resolution, we feel that comrades cannot vote for both of these documents at the same time. If this is what you mean by the term "counter-resolution," then we consider our document a counter-resolution.

Your second question is: "Do the authors consider themselves part of a tendency or faction?" When Comrade Gregorich wrote to you on 8-19-70, informing you of a forthcoming document on the question of sending comrades into the industrial proletariat, you responded (9-21-70): "Whether or not your views on the subject are a valid basis for the formation of an organized tendency will be determined

5-7-71

in the course of the discussion itself." (our emphasis) Discussion is, at this point, less than seven days old. Moreover, we have not yet heard what the party leadership has to say to our call for a proletarian orientation.

It is, in our opinion, most likely that the discussion will reveal that a tendency should be formed. However, if and when we issue a call for the formation of a tendency, we shall issue it through the normal channels of pre-convention discussion, not in secret.

Let us assure you, once again, as Comrade Gregorich did in her letter of 10-4-70, that we are not a faction and do not intend to proceed in a factional manner. Why do you insist upon dragging the term "faction" into our correspondence? Such continual implications on the part of one in your position can only harm the party. Every time you publish correspondence in which you imply we might be a faction you indirectly encourage the readers of that correspondence to judge us on what we might be rather than on our political ideas. In an answer to Pivert, Trotsky wrote: "Patience and loyalty toward the opposition were among the most important traits of Lenin's leadership." And, "From the standpoint of Bolshevik ideas on party democracy I would consider it an outright scandal to accuse an opponent, who happened to be in the minority, of employing 'factional' methods, instead of engaging in discussion with him over the gist of the question." (our emphasis)

In regard to your last question, if and when a call for the formation of a tendency is issued, the tendency's platform might be around one single document ("For a Proletarian Orientation") or around several documents -- this is part and parcel of "letting the discussion decide."

We hope we have answered your questions. We would appreciate a quick response to our original question since we would like to write to the branches as soon as possible.

If you have published your letter of 5-3-71, we would like you to publish this reply.

Comradely,

s/Barbara Gregorich
Bill Massey
John McCann
Phil Passen

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

May 7, 1971

BOSTON
John McCann

Dear Comrade McCann,

There is nothing in your letter of April 15, Dave Wulp's letter of April 28, or the Boston branch minutes to indicate that the Boston branch was out of order in rejecting the motion you described making at its April 13 meeting.

It is not our practice to restrict in any way the critical character of a comrades remarks during a branch discussion of a report of a National Committee plenum. But neither is it incumbent on a branch to organize extensive discussion under any given report on the plenum's decisions, especially when the branch pre-convention discussion which will fully air the disputed political questions is so near.

I am confident there will be a full and democratic pre-convention discussion in the Boston branch. I am equally confident the branch leadership will organize the discussion in such a way that you will have ample opportunity to present fully your views on the disputed political questions before the party.

Comradely,

s/Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary

cc: P. Camejo
L. Trainor
D. Wulp

enc: copy of Dave Wulp letter of April 28, 1971.

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14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 10014
May 8, 1971

John Barzman
Martha Quinn
Patrick Quinn
John Van Hynning
Jim Wysocki

Dear Comrades,

A national convention of the Socialist Workers Party is the highest governing body of the Party and its decisions are binding upon the entire membership. The convention is delegated from the branches which are the basic units of the party. The pre-convention discussion bulletin is open to all members, including at-large members. All party members in good standing may attend the convention as visitors.

We do not understand the analogy between yourselves and comrades working in the maritime industry. All comrades working in the maritime industry are members of a branch of the party. There is a provision in the convention call for absentee balloting by branch members who because of occupational necessity are absent from the branch meeting at which voting on political resolutions and the election of delegates is held.

Since all of you comrades were admitted to the party prior to the date of the convention call, April 19, 1971, you would have the right to vote on the political resolution before the party, and vote and stand for delegate, in any branch you transfer to prior to the convention. As you know from your discussions with Comrade Britton we urge each of you to transfer to a branch to take advantage of the summer school and the organized pre-convention discussion.

If any of you are unable to do this it would be valuable to arrange to attend as an observer as much as possible of the pre-convention discussion of the Chicago branch, which is the branch nearest Madison. I am sending a copy of this correspondence to the Chicago organizer, Pearl Chertov. If you would drop her a note I am sure she would send you a copy of the Chicago branch pre-convention discussion schedule.

Comradely,
s/Jack Barnes
Organization Secretary
for the Political Committee

cc: Chicago Branch organizer - Pearl Chertov