



Discussion Bulletin

Published by
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

Vol. 29, No. 21
July, 1971

14 Charles Lane, New York, N. Y. 10014

CONTENTS

BUILDING TRADE UNION PARTICIPATION IN THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT— THE GAINS THE PARTY CAN MAKE , by Rachel Towne, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local and Ron Wolin, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local	3
SOME CRITICISM OF A PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION'S ATTITUDE ON THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT , by Mary Henderson, Oakland/Berkeley Branch	6
LENIN VERSUS CAGLE , by Tony Thomas, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local	8
FOR DEVELOPING A PROGRAM FOR THE ECOLOGY MOVEMENT , by Wesley Weinhold, Seattle Branch	13
BUILDING A PROLETARIAN PARTY: PAST AND PRESENT , by Brian Williams, Oakland/Berkeley Branch	14
PRISONERS AND THE NEW RADICALIZATION , by Joe Johnson, Denver Branch	16
PRINCIPLED POLITICS AND THE PRESENT PARTY DISCUSSION , by Gordon Fox, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local	20
SOME OPEN REMARKS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY , by Tom Leonard, Houston Branch	22
SOME NOTES ON IMPLEMENTING OUR WORK IN THE UNIONS , by Tom Leonard, Houston Branch	23

CORRECTION

Discussion Bulletin, Volume 29, Number 12, June, 1971
The first paragraph on page eight, second column, should read:

Homosexuality, like heterosexuality, brings joy and it brings sorrows. It is no better and no worse than heterosexuality. It just is.

BUILDING TRADE UNION PARTICIPATION IN THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT— THE GAINS THE PARTY CAN MAKE

by Rachel Towne, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local
and Ron Wolin, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local

I. Introduction

April 24th represented a major step forward for the antiwar movement. For the first time, thousands of rank and file union members in trade union contingents participated in a mass antiwar demonstration. Hundreds of union officials endorsed the demonstration, many more than for any previous demonstration. In addition, thousands of union members marched individually, as did thousands of organized and unemployed workers of all ages. This "new constituency" of working people was reported in all press coverage of the demonstration. *The New York Times*, the *N.Y. Daily News*, the *N.Y. Post*, as well as the radical press and many union papers, reported this changed composition. Clearly a qualitatively broader section of the population, not previously involved, is being attracted to the actions of the organized antiwar movement.

In New York we saw this changed character of the antiwar movement continue in the May 5th Moratorium, where there were several major labor speakers as well as rank and file participation. This was also true of the May 15th GI-Civilian Solidarity Day. At the NPAC convention, held in New York July 2-4, there were over 200 people who registered as unionists from 37 international unions.

As the antiwar sentiment in the country grows, as the domestic crisis, caused primarily by the war, with inflation, unemployment, reduction of city services, continues to deepen, there is every reason to believe that even more working people will be drawn into the antiwar movement, especially if we and the rest of the antiwar movement continue our efforts to involve them.

Thousands of young workers are now radicalizing on the question of the war in Southeast Asia. While many young workers are influenced by and even radicalized by the other liberation struggles today, the women's liberation movement, Third World struggles and the gay movement, the antiwar movement is by far the largest of these struggles. Public sentiment against the war is shared by 3/4's of the population, a much greater amount of support than the other struggles command, at least to date. The April 24th demonstrations actively involved almost a million people. Thousands of young workers are now being drawn into the antiwar movement and thousands more will follow. Among these young people the SWP will be able to recruit young workers to the party. With them we have a much greater opportunity to reach young workers than at any time in the recent past.

In *For a Proletarian Orientation* the authors state, "An adaptation to the union bureaucrats is most apparent in our work in the antiwar movement. Practically the entire effort of the party to involve the labor movement in the antiwar movement has been in securing the support and endorsement of union bureaucrats for various actions . . . The *Militant* often ascribes the bureaucrats' support to the antiwar movement to pressure from the ranks. This pressure, in most cases does not exist. If it did, there would obviously be large union contingents in antiwar demonstrations and the rank and file would be involved in building the antiwar movement. The fact is the rank and file must still cross the bridge between opposing the war (which they do) and acting against the war (which they don't). When the bureaucrats for their own reasons pro-

vide trains and/or buses and mobilize their rank and file for a march on Washington, this is not a rank and file action, it is an action of the tops." (emphasis in original)

These statements show little understanding of the antiwar movement or the labor movement today. The *F.P.O.* is so busy attacking the party and the labor bureaucrats that they completely overlook the question of how to organize working people in the antiwar movement. Apparently they feel it can only be done from inside basic industry.

If their political line were the line of the party apparently nothing we did as part of the NYPAC Trade Union Committee would have taken place. There would have been much less, *not more*, labor participation in the 24th.

In New York (the only area this discussion bulletin deals with) NYPAC found many ways of organizing labor to participate in the April 24th march and was successful in getting thousands of unionists there in contingents, plus thousands of others as individuals, as we will show. We will also take up the other questions raised in the above quotes from the *F.P.O.*

II. Endorsements of Trade Union Officials

As NYPAC began organizing for the 24th, staff members realized that there was greater potential for obtaining the endorsements of union officials and mobilizing union members than ever before. A person with a background in the labor movement was put on the staff to do this full time.

In the beginning of March when a full time staff member for the labor movement came on the staff, NYPAC had a mailing list of about 30 union officials. Most of them had supported various progressive causes over the years including the antiwar movement.

NYPAC approached a local labor official who was against the war and asked to meet with him to discuss mobilizing N.Y. area unions for the 24th. He agreed to a meeting and offered to have a labor breakfast meeting to discuss the coming Spring Offensive. This breakfast gave NYPAC the opportunity to speak to about 40 local union officials about the coming April 24 march and to suggest ways they could be involved, such as endorsing the action and making transportation reservations for themselves and their members.

At the breakfast meeting a sub-committee was formed that drew up the text of a leaflet for rank and file members to be distributed by interested unions and by NYPAC. The sub-committee, which included unionists as well as NYPAC staffers, decided to use this same text as the basis for a labor ad in the *Daily News*.

NYPAC mailed copies of the text to the labor mailing list as well as those who had been at the labor breakfast with a cover letter asking if they would sign the labor ad, asking for financial contributions for the ad, asking them how many leaflets they wanted and encouraging them to participate in the 24th. Everyone was then called and sent a letter and the response was good. Union officials obtained endorsements for the ad and leaflet, also.

The names of the 40 endorsers who were on the leaflet were obtained in this way. NYPAC was able to get 100,000 copies of the leaflet printed at no cost by a local union. The leaflet had the text on one side the endorsers and a coupon on the other. The text was a clear call to

the 24th, explained how the war affects working people, why they should participate in the 24th and demanded the war end *now!*

A copy of this leaflet with a cover letter saying it was available in volume, asking for endorsers on the ad was sent by NYPAC to a second mailing of over 200 local officials whose internationals had taken positions against the war, as well as to a few others known to be liberal on the war or other issues. NYPAC was not able to contact all of these people due to lack of time and personnel but did call many of the most promising ones and received some more endorsements and leaflet orders.

Two important endorsements and some good publicity came directly as a result of the intervention of a comrade who is active in his union as Chairman of the Political Action Committee and as a delegate to the Delegate Assembly. He was able to get his local to endorse the 24th and then to submit a joint resolution with another local in the District Council asking its endorsement. The resolution did not pass, but the 24th was brought to the attention of the delegates, literature from NYPAC was distributed and working relationships established with some of the people involved in the discussion. Both of these locals now have representatives on the NYPAC steering committee, participated in the 24th and have worked with NYPAC in later actions. The comrade involved was instrumental in establishing working relationships with both unions through continued personal contact as a trade unionist. He was recently recruited to the SWP primarily through the antiwar movement.

NYPAC was approached by a dissident group in the UFT who asked that leaflets on the 24th be sent to its members. NYPAC asked several teachers who had been working with NYPAC to help do this. At least two other teachers' groups within the UFT have taken positions against the war and NYPAC did pass out leaflets to one of their meetings, but could have done more with more forces.

III. Reaching the Rank and File

NYPAC had orders from unions for 40,000 copies of the trade union leaflet within two days of its appearance. They were delivered promptly. NYPAC immediately began to leaflet major N.Y. work areas such as the garment center and Foley Square (a major center of public employees), subway stops during rush hour and large plants and offices. This was continued on a regular basis until the 24th.

NYPAC people went to at least ten union meetings, distributed at two large auto plants (one in New Jersey and one in Tarrytown), and kept up a daily barrage of leaflets into the major work areas in NYC. NYPAC was asked to come to two meetings of the Social Service Employees Union, and set up literature tables, which was done. Both of these meetings had over 4,000 people as they were in the middle of negotiations.

Many rank and file union members came into the NYPAC office for leaflets to distribute on their own. Some of them were people who came around NYPAC as individuals, not necessarily as union members. Some had heard general publicity, had friends in unions NYPAC had leafleted, or were comrades in unions. The International Socialists took a whole carton of leaflets (3,000).

Prior to the "official" printed leaflet, NYPAC had several trade union leaflets that were mimeographed. Unfortunately, none of these appeared in Spanish. A high percent-

age of the work force in N.Y. is Spanish speaking and literature directed to them *has* to be bilingual. For the NPAC convention there was a bilingual leaflet and there will be such leaflets for future actions.

The labor ad appeared in the *Daily News* on April 20th, later than originally scheduled but still early enough to be effective. The ad had almost ninety names on it, was a strong call for the 24th and included a coupon with NYPAC's return address and transportation information.

The ad was a full page, less one column. It cost \$3,500. NYPAC collected over \$2,000 for it from about a dozen unions in amounts ranging from \$25 to \$1,000. NYPAC underwrote the difference.

The *Daily News* has a circulation of two million and is the most widely read paper by working people in the N.Y. area. The labor ad was the first antiwar ad the *Daily News* has ever accepted. The *News* gave the 24th very sympathetic coverage, in fact better than the more liberal *Times*. We feel the ad was a factor in this better coverage. The ad was also the first antiwar labor ad to appear in the New York area.

The ad was a tremendous amount of work and there were problems with it in many ways, from money to the text to the technical work, but it was worth it all in terms of political gain. Besides the long term gains of education and participation on the 24th by readers of the ad (which are hard to estimate), there were the many good contacts made in the labor movement through the work of getting the ad together. Through the ad NYPAC began to meet people, mostly in secondary positions, who would work with us closely, with the antiwar movement, give the movement more contacts and really feel some commitment to help build the antiwar movement. Most of these people are now on the NYPAC or NPAC steering committee and have continued to work closely.

Several unions in the New York area put out their own leaflets for the 24th and distributed them to their workers. Also, several had articles in their papers.

One union asked the Trade Union Committee of NYPAC to provide a speaker at a meeting and of course one was sent. Requests were also received for at least six union speakers for other rallies, mostly on campuses. NYPAC was able to fill all of these except one which came at the last minute.

IV. April 24th — What was the Labor Participation?

The NYPAC Trade Union Committee contacted by phone the unions most likely to send delegations to Washington. By the time they were called they had had several contacts with NYPAC between the breakfast meeting, phone calls about the ad and leaflet and had received several letters. Each union discussed their plans with the Executive Board or various people in the union and gave their reservations based on that.

From the New York area NYPAC had information on 6,500 union members going to Washington as parts of delegations. This includes 2,500 from Local 1199, Hospital and Drug Union, 800 from Local 1199 in outlying areas, 1,200 from District 65, Distributive Workers, plus 30 buses chartered (not all through NYPAC) by a number of unions in numbers from one to six each. These unions included the Bakers; Bedding, Curtain and Drapery Workers; several AFSCME locals; Fur, Leather and Machine Workers; I.U.E.; Amalgamated Clothing Workers; U.E.; and the UAW. Some of these unions reserved space on the NYPAC trains instead of going by bus. In addi-

tion, two unions that publicized the 24th through rank and file groups or officially did not have formal contingents but undoubtedly sent many members. These were the United Federation of Teachers and the Social Service Employees Union. Also, both New Jersey and Long Island had antiwar groups working at mobilizing labor and sent some representation. A conservative estimate of the total number of union members basically mobilized by NYPAC's work is about 10,000.

The trade union participation in the 24th received extensive coverage in the media. While the Trade Union Committee of NYPAC sent out several press releases and its representatives were interviewed several times, most of the coverage came from the demonstration itself. All the major N.Y.C. newspapers noted the large number of union contingents appearing in a mass antiwar demonstration for the first time. The radical press also reported it. Most of the unions participating had major articles on it. These include the Meatcutters, 1199, District 65, The SSEU, and The Amalgamated Clothing Workers.

While most of the mobilization was done by unions that are considered "radical" in the labor movement, there was significant participation from other unions, including many in the AFL-CIO, such as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE). This is extremely important as it represents a broadening of the radicalization in the country. Many union officials are reluctant to become involved in anything that involves only "radical" unionists and unions outside the AFL-CIO. NYPAC seeks to involve AFL-CIO unions and their representatives as much as possible. A speakers platform or an endorsement list dominated by trade union officials outside the federation tends to scare off many officials.

After April 24th NYPAC had a labor mailing list of about 300 union officials and rank and file members, all of whom had received several letters from NYPAC. NYPAC now has the names of many union officials who can be counted on to work with NYPAC and help get support from other local officials. NYPAC was able to get labor speakers for the May 5th Moratorium rally and the May 15 GI-Civilian Solidarity Day fairly easily and to get some rank and file participation. It seems clear that in New York, NYPAC is *the* coalition for labor. This was publically stated by the president of a UAW local here at a large antiwar meeting in Brooklyn when he said that, "NYPAC has labor."

In spite of all the CP's trade union contacts, they have not been able to draw union support into PCPJ because of the nature of their program. Union officials in this period cannot sell civil disobedience to their members, even if they wanted to. Also, while many of them are ready to move on the question of the war, they are not interested in endorsing the multitude of demands presented on many other issues by PCPJ. Any official who tried to push actions like Mayday would be seriously discredited among his membership. What rank and file workers want is what NPAC is organizing: large, peaceful, orderly demonstrations against the war. Any official who wants to bring his rank and file out against the war and the vast majority of rank and filers interested in participating can only come to the massive demonstrations planned by NPAC.

It is hard to calculate the actual number of working people who responded to the *Daily News* ad, the thou-

sands of leaflets NYPAC and the unions distributed, and the general publicity put out by NYPAC and came to Washington as a result. Besides having by far the largest number of union members there in formal contingents of any antiwar demonstration to date, the general composition of the crowd included more working people than ever before. Undoubtedly many of them belonged to unions and had responded to the material

Another aspect of mobilizing union members is the large number of Third World workers and women who are involved. Many of the "antiwar" unions have large Third world and female memberships. This is especially true in New York City where Local 1199 and District 65 between the two of them brought over 4,000 members and a high percentage, certainly over half, were Black or Spanish speaking.

V. Recommendations for Future Trade Union Antiwar Work

Since a recent Harris Poll shows 73 percent of the population opposed to the war, and another one showed that 64 percent of organized workers wanted out of Vietnam in contrast to 61 percent of the general population, it is especially important that NPAC make every effort to reach all working people, both organized and unorganized workers. It is our job to explain the real nature of the war and why they should participate in mass demonstrations against the war. It is especially important to relate the war to the present urban crisis which affects and concerns working people very deeply and is largely caused by the war. While the horrors of the devastation of Southeast Asia affect workers, it is primarily around the growing domestic problems which result from the war that more and more of them are being *forced* to think seriously about this conflict thousands of miles away. We must continually point out the connection between the war and inflation, unemployment, rising taxes, deteriorating city services, job freezes, wage freezes, and so on. It is around this type of propaganda that greater numbers of workers will be brought into the organized antiwar movement.

This type of propaganda shows working people that the antiwar movement understands and is interested in their problems and *wants* them to be involved. Working people are not only the most victimized by the war, but they can be the key factor in ending it because of their economic weight and their numbers.

Many union officials have reasons to mobilize their members other than ending the war. While there is certainly real antiwar sentiment in the ranks of most unions today, antiwar feelings are just one of many issues causing unrest among the ranks of labor. Many union officials decide to mobilize their ranks on the question of the war because they feel it is "safer," the membership is easier to control and less likely to lead to further internal "problems" for the bureaucrats than issues more obviously connected with the job, such as unemployment. The example of some unions mobilizing against the war tends to put pressure on others who do not.

Many union officials are interested in drawing broader and more liberal forces into the Democratic Party and in giving it a more liberal image. With the coming 1972 presidential election this process will be exacerbated. The more successful the antiwar movement is in involving unionists in massive, independent antiwar actions, the harder it will be for the officials to derail rank and file participation.

Since there are few rank and file formations for the antiwar movement to work with, it is necessary to work with the elected officials and through the present structures of the unions. It is still the bureaucrats who are in the position to decide if union members will be mobilized or not. Because of this, it is necessary for the antiwar movement to maintain good relationships with them and in fact to develop good working relationships wherever possible. To the extent that rank and file antiwar groups or other groups exist that will work with us, the antiwar movement should do so. But we should never give the appearance of siding against the bureaucrats on any question except the war. The antiwar movement should not allow itself to be pulled into any internal union disputes. This will alienate not only the officials involved, but other unions as well. This can be a real practical problem as, for example, in the UFT in NYC where there are three rank and file groups opposed to the war, and at least two of these and others challenged the president of the union, Albert Shanker, in the last union election. Shanker has no position on the war, and very bad positions on some other questions, such as community control, and *as a party* the SWP would prefer many of the opposition groups to win the election. But it would be a grave mistake for NYPAC to take such a position.

Regardless of the motivation of union officials in mobilizing their members, once the rank and file is out on the street in an independent, mass demonstration a political lesson takes place. They see their own strength, their allies and they begin to have confidence in their power *as workers*. This is especially true of workers who participate in union contingents. The sight of thousands of union members marching against the war does a lot to legitimize the antiwar movement among other union members and among unorganized workers also. Next time it will be easier to involve them.

VI. The Gains for the SWP from Trade Union Antiwar Work

Through the participation of some comrades in trade union antiwar work a lot was learned about the local labor movement. Some contacts for the party were made

among rank and file workers and lower level officials. This goes a long way to damage the CP and to a lesser extent the SP, in the labor movement, especially among the younger officials.

The experience of April 24th, as well as the Trade Union Workshop at the NPAC convention, July 2-4, indicates that there are many union officials willing to work with NYPAC and that it is possible to mobilize large numbers of union members. Our experience shows that far from resenting the role of the organized antiwar movement in attempting to reach workers, many antiwar union officials and conscious rank and filers *look to us* for structure and direction. This is a tremendous opportunity and we must make every effort to take advantage of it.

It is important that wherever possible, viable Trade Union Task Forces function in conjunction with the local Peace Action Coalitions. They should involve local union officials and rank and filers and include any comrades who belong to unions who are in a position to participate.

In some branches sub-committees of antiwar fractions can be set up of comrades in unions or in job situations where they can do antiwar work. The exact form of these sub-committees should depend on the local situation.

Some of these comrades may be in a position to help set up antiwar caucuses within their unions and should be encouraged to do so, working closely with the branch antiwar fraction and branch leadership and the Trade Union Task Force. Any such antiwar caucuses would greatly strengthen the Trade Union Task Force and also provide many contacts for our party.

These suggestions will make it possible to mobilize greater numbers of union members and unorganized workers in the future. It will also put us in touch with the most conscious elements of young workers now being radicalized around the question of the war. The antiwar movement is the largest, broadest movement in this country and by fully taking advantage of the unprecedented organizing opportunities it provides, we can be assured of reaching a growing number of young workers with our ideas.

July 22, 1971

SOME CRITICISMS OF A PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION TENDENCY'S ATTITUDE ON THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Mary Henderson, Oakland/Berkeley Branch

The main task of the Socialist Workers Party is to construct a combat organization of the working class which will lead the working class to victory in the coming American revolution. To do this we encompass militant movements which arise that will challenge the capitalist system, such as the antiwar movement, the Black and Chicano movements, and the women's liberation movement. We build these movements as effectively as possible so as to carry out the fight against the capitalists.

The authors of "For a Proletarian Orientation," however, reject the party's way of building a vanguard party. They want to take all our forces out of the existing movements of today—the antiwar, the nationalist, and the women's liberation movements—and bury them all in the trade unions. A place where there is virtually no recruitment possibilities *today*. If we were to take all our forces out of these already existing movements and enter the trade unions en mass, the party would not go forward in its development, but would stagnate.

This attitude of the minority shows up very clearly in the women's liberation struggle. They do not agree with this mass independent movement and try in every way possible to undercut it, as is clearly shown in three of the minority documents that have come out.

The counter resolution, "For a Proletarian Orientation," scarcely deals with the women's liberation struggle at all. It feels that it is unimportant. One of the three demands, that of free abortion on demand, no forced sterilization, is mentioned only once, and that only in passing. While criticising the PC program the minority states:

"This program of demands (PC political resolution) must be expanded to include support to the struggle of national minorities for liberation and immediate withdrawal of troops from Indochina. It must also include the demands for equal pay for equal work; free, community controlled child care centers; and free abortions on demand, no forced sterilization." (Vol 29, #2, p. 33).

What they fail to see is that there is a *whole* document

on demands around the women's liberation struggle. The other two demands are raised only once under the women's liberation section of this minority document.

Instead, the authors are too busy making statements such as: "Trade union work is not just a task for male comrades."; "We must promote working class 'sisterhood' by organizing, educating, and leading the struggle of the most oppressed sectors of our sisters who work for their daily bread."; and "The organizing of women factory workers in the South and other areas is not just a man's job—it is most of all a revolutionary woman's task." (vol. 29, #2, p. 31)

What do these quotes reveal? The main point the minority makes is that we should enter the factories in the South in order to carry out our tasks in the women's liberation movement. This thinking flows from the fact that no matter where we are, we must above all be in the trade unions. Also they think that the party believes that only male comrades should be in the unions organizing women. The party has a whole history of women working in unions, doing political work. The minority is too busy taking pot shots at the party to step back and look at this history.

The minority, in a later document, challenges the party's tactical decision to build the women's liberation movement around the demand to repeal all abortion laws. Why is this, you might ask? Because, repeal all abortion laws is "reformist"; it does not challenge the capitalist system. They totally disregard the fact that you might not be able to build as much support around the demand of free abortion, whereas it is being proven today that the demand, repeal all abortion laws, has the greatest attraction for a growing number of women.

Why is mass action so important? Upon winning a large number of people around a specific demand, these people will then realize what a great weight they have in challenging the system if they move in a mass. Take for example what would happen if we were to win the demand of repealing all abortion laws. This would prove to those who struggled for such a demand that their massive weight carries greatly in making decisions. This process then leads the people already struggling into thinking, "If we can win a specific demand by mass actions just think what we could do with challenging the system if we were to organize on a massive scale."

We most certainly *have not* given up the demand for free abortion on demand as is charged! We still put forth this demand, and will continue to do so, but not in an agitational way. While calling for repeal all abortion laws, we at the same time state, "no forced sterilization, no contraception laws—Abortion: a woman's right to choose." We see that we can build a broad mass movement around this slogan challenging unjust legislation existing in many states, which was made by the capitalist class who determined that the state could control a woman's body. Around this issue many women will radicalize and begin thinking that they should have no legal restrictions on their own bodies. This will lead them to realize that not only should they have no legal restrictions, but they should also have no financial restriction, thereby raising the demand of free abortion on demand and challenging the capitalist state.

Just as we have put forth "Repeal all abortion laws" which the minority considers reformist, we have also had

a campaign to rally support around the Equal Rights Amendment. So far the minority has not said a word about the ERA. Perhaps they think it too is reformist? But there are demands that we have put forth which are reformist. The fight for increased wages can be called "reformist." So can the shorter work week, and the escalator clause. As marxists we know that the demands in themselves are not the decisive factor, but that these demands teach the masses their own strength, and can certainly be a motivating factor toward moving the masses toward challenging the capitalist system.

The proposed Equal Rights Amendment reads: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." As well as putting forth this amendment the party also has the position that there is no contradiction between the ERA and maintenance and extension of the protective laws already in existence. The party feels that women should fight for both.

At the same time that the party puts forth these demands it is not fooled for one second into thinking that legislation alone will do the job. We know who makes the laws and why they are made! We have know illusions on that score, but we certainly are going to utilize movements around legislation in order to radicalize and build a broader mass women's liberation movement wherever possible.

It is interesting that the minority has not raised the Equal Rights Amendment, particularly since they feel that abortion is not the main issue which will draw women into the struggle. In the later two documents they feel that equal pay for equal work is the most important, and that free 24-hour community controlled child care centers is next important as it is necessary to free those women who work. Why not abortion? Doesn't that free a woman to work? Why is it then that women have not demonstrated en mass around equal pay for equal work? Is it because the ERA is reformist, or is it because women today *are* moving on the abortion demand rather than the demand of equal pay for equal work. Sure there have been many claims filed for job discrimination on the basis of sex, but these have been individual cases. There were no mass movements around these cases.

The minority fails to see the potency of the abortion issue, and at the same time belittles the intelligence of those who need it most. The Gregorich-Passen document, in a polemic with Feeley who says there must be more education around child care, states:

"The fact is that women must also be educated around the abortion question—many women, especially those from the working class still believe that abortion is murder, still believe that if a woman gets pregnant she must 'pay for it' by having a child." (vol. 29, #15, p. 22)

I think comrades that you are in a deep dark closet somewhere. Who is it that suffers most from the abortion laws today? Working women! Third World women! These women know all about the abortion problems. They live them. It is the Catholic church that thinks it is murder, and the organizations that have sprung up around it. Why is it that organizations such as Birthright and others which have taken out newspaper ads, held anti-abortion demonstrations, and continue to distribute anti-abortion literature feel the need to conduct such a campaign? Because they see their basic beliefs threatened!

The minority charges the party with dropping all the

issues around the women's liberation struggle except for the one on abortion. This is not so. The political committee has put forth a draft resolution entitled "Toward a Mass Feminist Movement" which clearly shows how false this is. There are several key demands put forth under the following subjects: The Right to Control One's Own Body; Freedom from Domestic Slavery; Economic Freedom; Equal Education Opportunities; Women Prisoners; Imperialist War; and Women of Oppressed Nationalities. For those comrades who have missed these demands and feel that the party has abandoned all demands except the one

on abortion, you should read pages 9 and 10 of the document (vol. 29, #4) which details them. The question of abortion is a tactical question.

The minority clearly shows in its documents that it can not tell the difference between a tactical decision which would build the struggle of the mass feminist movement, based on the current radicalization, and our longer range objective of leading this movement to carrying out its anti capitalist task.

July 16, 1971

LENIN VERSUS CAGLE

By Tony Thomas, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

In his epic article *On Trade Union Work* (Vol. 29 No. 8 Discussion Bulletin) Comrade Tom Cagle raises differences with the party's position on Black nationalism. Most of his arguments are familiar ones raised by the Workers League from whom he directly quotes in several sections. Articles in the party press and our literature on the Black struggle especially *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*, dispose of most of the arguments raised by Cagle's article.

In this article, I would like to dispose of a number of distortions of Lenin which Cagle makes. This is not so much for the sake of arguing with Cagle since his position is an open one of support to the line of the Workers League and its cothinkers. I would like to utilize Cagle's arguments to show that Lenin's position on the national was exactly the same as that of the SWP in regard to Cagle's three main points: 1) that Lenin held that the bourgeois-democratic revolution was successfully completed in the US and thus Lenin held that support to the right of nations to self-determination of nations and the national liberation struggles of oppressed peoples within the U.S. did not apply; 2) Cagle's distortions of Lenin on the "bourgeois" character of Black nationalism; 3) Cagle's charge that the theory of cultural-national autonomy put forward by Otto Bauer before World War I is similar to our position of support of the demands now being raised by Blacks, Puerto Ricans and Chicanos for community control.

These charges are often made by would-be Leninists. They utilize the lack of exposure to Lenin's full works on the national question amongst radicals, and the fact that Lenin's position on the national question developed and expanded, to paint Lenin as an opponent of the national movements of the oppressed. I have even heard a few comrades state that Lenin's position on these questions were irrelevant to the current nationalist radicalization going on in the U.S. In actuality, a close examination of Lenin's full position leads to a validation of the current course of our party in the national struggles, the clearest proof we have retained our Leninist proletarian orientation.

I THE U.S. BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION AND LENIN

Comrade Cagle states in his first article: "As far as nationalism in the United States is concerned, Lenin's assessment here was that the bourgeois democratic revolution was completed long ago and therefore saw no validity whatsoever to the right of self-determination of nations

within such countries, only for the workers movement to defend this right in the colonial sphere, especially where their own imperialist bourgeoisie was concerned, South East Asia etc."

This position—which is not found anywhere in any of Lenin's works either on the national question or the United States—projects a political position on the national question which Lenin polemicized with for years. Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Radek felt that the demand for self-determination for oppressed nations only applied in the colonial areas and not in Europe or other places where the bourgeois-democratic revolution had taken place. They also denied that this right applied after the socialist revolution. Lenin's polemic with that point of view makes up the main body of his writings on the national question.

In the *Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, Lenin states "In this respect, countries must be divided into three main types.

"First, the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the *United States*. In these countries the bourgeois-progressive national movements came to an end long ago. *Every one of these 'great' nations oppresses other nations both in the colonies and within its own country.* The tasks of the proletariat of these ruling nations are the same as those in England in the eighteenth century in relation to Ireland." (page 133, V. I. Lenin, *Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, emphasis added.)

It is clear that Lenin saw the completion of the bourgeois revolution only in regard to the power of the dominant bourgeoisie of these countries and not in regard to other nations, classes or peoples. For those still oppressed by the bourgeoisie that completed *its* bourgeois revolution, support to struggle against that oppression and the right to self-determination, equality or autonomy still prevailed.

Similarly in his *Draft Theses on National and Colonial Questions* prepared for and approved by the Second Congress of the Communist International Lenin states: "all Communist parties should render direct aid to the revolutionary movements among the dependent and underprivileged nations (for example, Ireland, the *American Negroes*)." (page 148 Vol. 31 Lenin's *Collected Works*, emphasis added)

Cagle is guilty of looking at the question of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the U.S. in a vague classless fashion. For him the completion of the bourgeois-

democratic revolution means that all bourgeois-democratic rights have been won for all classes and all nations. As Leninists we know that the bourgeoisie allows only those rights that it is forced to give as a result of struggle with the masses.

By concretizing this question in class terms we can come to a conclusion on this subject closer to Lenin and farther away from Cagle and Wohlforth: 1) the American bourgeoisie gained complete power through the Civil War and American Revolution; 2) Without a progressive potentiality this bourgeoisie chose to oppress the Black, Chicano, Native American, Puerto Rican and other peoples within this country, denying them basic bourgeois-democratic rights; 3) as proletarian revolutionists it is our duty to support the demands and movements raised by these oppressed peoples for bourgeois-democratic rights won by the U. S. bourgeoisie at least one hundred years ago.

Cagle's arguments on this question are similar theoretically to the Stalinist attempt to portray Lenin as a Menshevik who thought that the bourgeoisie could solve all problems of democracy during the imperialist epoch. While Lenin's early positions on many questions raised the possibility of such a solution to certain democratic questions, his writings on the national and general democratic questions after World War One, coincide with the Theory of Permanent Revolution.

Contrary to Cagle, Lenin held that the democratic and proletarian tasks of the revolution in both industrial and non-industrial countries were combined, and that the consolidation of capitalist power under imperialism meant deepening attacks on democratic rights rather than an end of the need for such struggles.

In an article entitled *the Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Self-Determination of Nations* written in October 1915, Lenin strongly attacked Karl Radek (writing under the pen name Parabellum) who then shared Cagle's view that imperialism made the struggle for self-determination by nationalities within the borders of advanced countries superfluous.

"Furthermore," Lenin said, "imperialism means that capitalism has outgrown the framework of national states; it means that national oppression has been extended and heightened on a new historical foundation. Hence, it follows that, despite Parabellum, we must link the revolutionary struggle for socialism with a revolutionary programme on the national question.

"From what Parabellum says, it appears that, in the name of socialist revolution, he scornfully rejects a consistently revolutionary programme in the sphere of democracy. He is wrong to do so. The proletariat cannot be victorious except through democracy, i. e., by giving full effect to democracy and by linking with each step of its democratic demands formulated in the most resolute terms. It is absurd to *contrapose* the socialist revolution and the revolutionary struggle against capitalism to a single problem of democracy, in this case, the national question. We must combine the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary programme and tactics for all democratic demands: a republic, a militia, the popular election of officials, equal rights for women, the self-determination of nations, etc. While capitalism exists, these demands—all of them—can only be accomplished as an exception, and even then in an incomplete and distorted form. Basing our-

selves on the democracy already achieved, and exposing its incompleteness under capitalism, we demand the overthrow of capitalism, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, as a necessary basis both for the abolition of the poverty of the masses and for the complete and all-round institution of all democratic reforms. Some of these reforms will be started before the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, others in the course of that overthrow, and still others after it. The social revolution is not a single battle, but a period covering a series of battles over all sorts of problems of economic and democratic reform, which are consummated only by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie." (Lenin, *Col. Works*, Vol. 21 page 408. emphasis in original.)

For these reasons the SWP has characterized the coming American revolution as a combined revolution, joining the tasks of the democratic revolution left ungained—especially the national liberation of oppressed nationalities—with the proletarian struggle for socialism. On this score it is the current position of the party and not Cagle and the Workers League that stand with Lenin.

II BLACK "BOURGEOIS NATIONALISM" EXPOSED

Cagle charges that in articles written by myself on the national question "all of Lenin's references to nationalism as being bourgeois so as to continue his [T. T.'s] fraudulent frame of reference to nationalism, as a classless generality something that Lenin makes explicitly clear throughout all of his works on the national question is that he could not consider nationalism to be anything but bourgeois."

Cagle has already demonstrated his familiarity with "all of his works on the national question" in his previous statements about the bourgeois revolution in the U. S. His knowledge seems to stem from Wohlforth's pamphlet *Black Nationalism and Marxist Theory* from which this entire section of Cagle's document is directly taken. It is necessary to graze in the green pastures of Lenin, not in Wohlforth's "Marxism-chapping" book to discern Lenin's real attitude on this subject.

The Right of Nations to Self-Determination was Lenin's first major work on the question of self-determination, written in the spring of 1914. He had written *Critical Remarks on the National Question* dealing with cultural-national autonomy and "national culture" earlier in the winter of 1913, but had deferred the question of self-determination to the later article.

As such this article, written just before Lenin began to comprehend the ideas of the Theory of Permanent Revolution, represent the earliest form of Lenin's views on the national question. This is why Wohlforth, the Stalinists, Cagle and others of that ilk are fond of chopping quotations out of its context to attack Black nationalism. Nevertheless, the context of this article, if objectively viewed, runs against the thrust of Cagle's views.

In this article he refers to the nationalism of the oppressed as bourgeois in two senses.

First he saw the national-democratic movement and its demands as products of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. In this sense he did not oppose these demands, but saw the proletariat as the staunchest fighters for these demands. Thus he wrote in his article *The Cadets and "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination"*: "All general democratic demands are bourgeois-democratic demands;

but only the anarchists and opportunists can deduce from this that it is not the business of the proletariat to back these demands in the most consistent manner possible." (page 526, *Col. Works of Lenin* Vol. 19, emphasis added.)

Secondly he characterized the specific national movements led by the national capitalists of oppressed nations as bourgeois. It was this concrete type of nationalism that Lenin dealt with in his article *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*.

As we shall see later, Lenin in future works, differentiated these national movements from other types of national movements not based on the bourgeoisie. However, even within this context, Lenin's attitude on nationalism supports the current position of our party.

In this article Lenin stated that the growth of the national movement took place in the process of the consolidation of capitalism and that afterwards progressive bourgeois-democratic and national movements die down. This is a framework he later chose to rework. He felt that multinational states largely existed in countries with poor capitalist development or indirectly colonial areas.

He spoke throughout the article on how the demand for self-determination and/or equality for the oppressed nations was justified as a means of expanding capitalism. At that time, Lenin felt that the expansion of capitalism was necessary to the completion of the democratic tasks and the preparation of the socialist revolution in colonial or "backward" countries:

"Those who stand by democratic principles, i. e., who insist that questions of state be decided by the mass of the population, know very well that there is a 'tremendous distance' between what the politicians prate about and what the people decide. From their daily experience the masses know perfectly well the value of geographical and economic ties and the advantages of a big market and a big state. They will, therefore, resort to secession only when national oppression and national friction make joint life absolutely intolerable and hinder any and all economic intercourse. In that case the interests of capitalist development and of the freedom of class struggle will be served by secession." (page 423 Vol. 20 *Col. Works of Lenin*, emphasis added.)

Lenin had the added necessity to concentrate on the national capitalists in this article since this was the specific character of the national movements the Russian Marxists and the Polish Marxists with whom he was polemicalizing faced in their party work. He emphasized getting down to concretes because Luxemburg and others he was arguing with were unnecessarily abstract.

Lenin pointed out that the struggle on the part of the national capitalists and the movement supporting them against their oppressors has a progressive content. He states: "The bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support." (*op. cit.* 412 emphasis in original)

At the same time he realized the specific class nature of the nationalism of the capitalists. He pointed out that one of the basic tendencies of this bourgeois nationalism is to get the bourgeoisie into a position in which it can oppress and exploit other nationalities and classes.

This was a particular problem in the Eastern Europe

of Lenin's time. Borders shifted back and forth over the centuries, turning oppressed nations into oppressors, oppressor into oppressed. The states conquering each other were rarely homogeneous national states, but were most often multinational states made up of oppressor and oppressed.

In many areas formerly oppressing people maintained many privileges and superior economic positions that allowed them to continue certain aspects of the oppression of subject peoples even while they themselves were oppressed by other nations. Thus the Russians oppressed the Poles, the Poles the Ukrainians within Poland, and all oppressed the Jews.

It is not surprising that the national movements led by the capitalists of that period in Eastern Europe were permeated with the spirit of return to oppressing other nations. Thus Lenin states:

"The working class supports the bourgeoisie only in order to secure national peace (which the bourgeoisie cannot bring about completely and which can be achieved only with complete democracy), in order to secure equal rights and to create the best conditions for the class struggle . . . What every bourgeoisie is out for in the national question is either privileges for its own nation, or exceptional advantages for it; this is called being 'practical'. The proletariat is opposed to all privileges, to all exclusiveness." (*op. cit.* pages 409-410 emphasis in original)

It was this type of dynamic that Lenin described as bourgeois nationalism. It is of this he speaks when he stated "we strictly distinguish it [support to nationalism of the bourgeoisie against the oppressors, T. T.] from the tendency towards national exclusiveness; we fight against the tendency of the Polish bourgeoisie to oppress the Jews etc, etc."

This is the spirit of the bourgeois nationalism that Cagle-Wohlforth attempt to identify with Black nationalism. Cagle is distorting Lenin by claiming that Lenin viewed nationalism as a vague immutable category regardless of the specific stage of social development and the class forces involved. Cagle must prove that a Black bourgeoisie exists, that its class interests are involved in Black nationalism and that its central thrust is in the direction of oppressing non-Blacks on a national basis. He must also prove that this thrust outweighs the combined proletarian and national-democratic character of the struggle of Blacks. He does not do this because he does not look at the question in a materialist or dialectical fashion.

Lenin further developed his analysis in the article *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* to explain that the tendency of the national bourgeoisie is not in the direction of the most consistent pursuit of national-democratic tasks, but in the direction of compromise against the interests of the national struggle with the oppressor. He contrasts the attempts by the national capitalists to make themselves look "practical" and "feasible" to the principled democratic position on the question of self-determination that proletarian revolutionists must take.

Furthermore, Lenin pointed out that those who see the principal danger as the national bourgeoisie of oppressed nations and in such fear renounce the national struggle and its demands, leave openings for concessions to the

nationalism of the oppressor:

"Carried away by the struggle against nationalism in Poland, Rosa Luxemburg has forgotten the nationalism of the Great Russians, although it is *this* nationalism that is the most formidable at the present time. It is a nationalism that is more feudal than bourgeois, and is the principal obstacle to democracy and to the proletarian struggle. The bourgeois nationalism of *any* oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed *against* oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support. At the same time we strictly distinguish it from the tendency towards national exclusiveness; we fight against the tendency of the Polish bourgeois to oppress the Jews, etc. etc." (*op. cit.* page 412 emphasis in the original.)

I repeat this last quote because Cagle-Wohlforth charge that I have ripped it out of context. Putting it into its proper context, makes it very clear that Wohlforth-Cagle, not the SWP, stand against Lenin.

In his analysis of the 1916 Irish Rebellion, Lenin expanded on the writings on the national movement in *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*. Karl Radek attributed the movement's defeat to the "purely . . . petty-bourgeois" character of nationalism in Ireland. He attacked the rebellion as a putsch in the same style that Cagle attacked the ghetto rebellions.

In his article *The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up*, Lenin attacks this viewpoint.

Lenin pointed out that the Irish nationalist movement was not only a movement of the radical petty bourgeoisie but also of "a section of the workers after a long period of mass agitation, demonstrations, suppression of papers etc."

He castigated Radek for rejecting the Irish movement on these grounds. He stated: "To imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without the movement of the non-class conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against the oppression of the landlords, the church, the monarchy, the foreign nations, etc. — to imagine this means *repudiating social revolution*. Only those who imagine that in one place an army will line up and say, 'we are for socialism' and in another place another army will say, 'we are for imperialism,' and that will be the social revolution, only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic opinion could vilify the Irish Rebellion . . .

"The socialist revolution in Europe *cannot be anything* else than an outburst on the part of all oppressed and discontented elements. Sections of the petty-bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will inevitably participate in it — without such participation *mass struggle is impossible* without it *no* revolution is possible — and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But *objectively*, they will attack *capital*, and the class conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a heterogeneous and discordant, motley and outwardly incohesive, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, to capture power, to seize the banks, to expropriate the trusts (hated by all,

though for different reasons) and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism..."

Lenin continued to point out that the national struggle in advanced countries of his time would have greater impact than that of the colonies.

"The struggle of oppressed nations in *Europe*, a struggle capable of going to the lengths of insurrection and street fighting, of breaking down the iron discipline in the army and martial law, will 'sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe' infinitely more than a much more developed rebellion in a remote colony . . .

"The General Staffs in the present war assiduously strive to utilize all national and revolutionary movements in the camp of their enemy. . . . We would be very poor revolutionaries if, in the great proletarian war for emancipation and socialism, we did not know how to utilize *every* popular movement against each *separate* disaster caused by imperialism and extend the crisis. If, on the one hand we were to declare and to repeat in a thousand keys that we are 'opposed' to all national oppression, and, on the other hand, we were to describe the heroic revolt of the most mobile and intelligent section of certain classes in an oppressed nation against its oppressors as a 'putsch,' we would be sinking to the stupid level of the Kautskyists [whom Lenin called at that time social-chauvinists]."

By repudiating the tremendous revolutionary force of Black nationalism Cagle-Wohlforth are "*repudiating social revolution*" in the U. S. and are thus ineligible to lead the workers of this country to socialism. Once again it is our party's position on Black nationalism that stands with Lenin, not Cagle-Wohlforth.

In his *Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions*, Lenin stated "that all Communist parties must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movements in these countries [oppressed nations, T. T.] and that the duty of rendering the most active assistance rest primarily with the workers of the country the backward nation is colonially or financially dependent on." (Col. Works, Vol. 31, page 149)

Later, in his report to the Second World Congress of the Comintern on these theses, Lenin clarified these statements.

He said he did not mean capitalist-run movements such as those he attacked in the *Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, but national movements based on the proletariat and other oppressed classes. He based this on the differentiation between two types of national movements, because of the complicity between imperialism and the national capitalists. He called for the substitution of national-revolutionary for the term bourgeois-democratic so as to make this differentiation more clear in discussing these non-capitalist-led movements.

"There has been a certain *rapprochement* between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that of the colonies, so that very often — perhaps even in most cases — the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries, while it does support the national movement, is in full accord with the imperialist bourgeoisie i.e., joins forces with it against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes. This was irrefutably proved in the commis-

sion, and we decided that the only correct attitude was to take this distinction into account and, in nearly all cases, substitute the term 'national-revolutionary' for the term 'bourgeois-democratic'. The significance of this change is that we, as Communists should and will support bourgeois-liberation movements in the colonies, only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organizing in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited." (page 242 *op. cit.*)

Needless to say, Lenin did not counterpose support and participation in the organizations of these movements to the construction of the Communist parties or other class organizations in either the working class of the oppressed nations or of the oppressor nations, but as a strategy toward building them.

Again, Cagle's position that Lenin opposed intervention into and support to the national movements of the oppressed is a pure and simple distortion.

III CULTURAL NATIONAL AUTONOMY

Cagle states that the party's support to the democratic demands of oppressed nationalities in this country for control over their communities, and our party's support to partial demands aimed at this goal such as Black control of the schools, police etc., is the same as the theory of cultural-national autonomy which Lenin opposed.

Cagle writes, "Lenin adamantly and completely opposed autonomy in cultural matters, control of schools, community, police etc. which he held meant support for the bourgeois aspirations of the oppressed nationalities and led to divisions not unity of the working class."

This is a complete distortion of the dispute on cultural-national autonomy. Here is how Trotsky described it:

"In the sphere of theory, the Austrian Social-Democracy, in the persons of Otto Bauer and Karl Renner, considered nationality independent of territory, economy and class, transforming it into a species of abstraction limited by so-called 'national character'. In the field of national policy, as for that matter in all other fields, it did not venture beyond a corrective of the status quo. Fearing the very thought of dismembering the monarchy, the Austrian Social-Democracy strove to adapt its national program to the borders of the patchwork state. The program of so-called 'national cultural autonomy' required that the citizens of one and the same nationality, irrespective of their dispersal over the territory of Austria-Hungary, and irrespective of the administrative divisions of the state, should be united, on the basis of purely personal attributes, into one community for the solution of their 'cultural' tasks (the theater, the church, the school, and the like.). That program was artificial and utopian, in so far as it attempted to separate culture from territory and economy in a society torn apart by social contradictions; it was at the same time reactionary, in so far as it led to a forced disunion into various nationalities of the workers of one and the same state, undermining their class strength.

"Lenin's position was the direct opposite. Regarding nationality as unseverably connected with territory, economy and class structure, he refused at the same time to

regard the historical state, the borders of which cut across the living body of nations, as a sacrosanct and inviolate category. He demanded the recognition of the right of secession and independent existence for each portion of the state. In so far as the various nationalities, voluntarily or through force of necessity, coexist within the borders of one state, their cultural interests must find the highest possible satisfaction within the framework of the broadest regional (and consequently territorial) autonomy, including statutory guarantee of the rights of each minority. At the same time, Lenin deemed it the incontrovertible duty of all workers of a given state, irrespective of nationality, to unite in one and the same class organization." (*Stalin*, by Trotsky, page 152-3)

Bauer proposed cultural autonomy as a diversion to prevent the nationalism of the oppressed from breaking up the power of his own oppressing bourgeoisie either through self-determination or political and territorial autonomy. Lenin counterposed political autonomy — full community control over all aspects of the community's life.

Lenin held that by formally dividing all nationalities without regard to the differentiation between oppressed and oppressor, cultural national autonomy altered very little of the material aspects of national oppression. It also, by making this formal division of all individuals, precluded those nationalities who wanted to opt for assimilation into other nations. He likened this forced separation dictated by the oppressor to racial segregation in the U. S. which he claimed was the sole instance of the implementation of cultural-national autonomy. (See *Critical Remarks on the National Question* page 37 vol. 20 collected works.)

Lenin felt that the granting of national autonomy to areas populated by national minorities was necessary. "Obviously, one cannot conceive of a modern, truly democratic state that did not grant such autonomy to every region having any appreciably distinct economic and social features, populations of a specific national composition, etc." (*op cit.* page 47.)

Lenin did not only apply this to big regions with millions, or even hundreds of thousands of inhabitants but for regions of much smaller populations and of the smallest area. This position was counterposed to that of the Russian Jewish Bundists who were the Russian supporters of cultural-national autonomy. "Why national areas with populations, not only of half a million, but even of 50,000, should not be able to enjoy autonomy; why such areas should not be able to unite in the most diverse ways with neighboring areas of different dimensions into a single autonomous 'territory' if that is convenient or necessary for economic intercourse — these things remain the secret of the Bundist Medem." (*op cit* page 49)

This figure of 50,000 is of great practical use to us when we figure that 50 U. S. cities have African-American populations of over 48,000 according to the 1970 census — which was notorious for not counting the whole of the Black community. Moreover 25 of these cities had Black populations of over 100,000 and 1/3 of all U. S. Blacks live in 15 of these cities.

Thus the Bolsheviks called for "wide autonomy and fully democratic local self-government, with the boundaries of the self-governing and autonomous regions determined by the local inhabitants themselves on the basis of their

economic and social conditions, national makeup of populations etc." (*Resolutions of the 1913 Conference of the C. C. of the R. S. D. L. P. — Col. Works of Lenin Vol. 19 page 427-8.*)

In 1914 Lenin prepared a bill to be submitted to the Duma to reorganize Russia into such autonomous regions. This was to be done under the basis of a census conducted by "commissions elected by the local population on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage by secret ballot with proportional representation; national minorities too small (under proportional representation) to elect one commission member shall elect a commission member with consultative vote.

". . . Areas with specific geographical, living or economic conditions or a special national composition of the population shall have the right to form autonomous re-

gions with autonomous regional Diets."

These national communities were to have complete governmental control in these areas. As in the census, national minorities even too small to qualify under these procedures were to be given added representation. (*Bill on the Equality of Nations and the Safeguarding of the Rights of National Minorities, page 281 Vol. 20, Lenin's Col. works.*)

Once again we see our call for community control corresponds to Lenin's policy just as Cagle-Wohlforth's line on this question if anything is closer to cultural-national-autonomy than Lenin.

The fact that our party has preserved and developed such a Leninist position on the national struggles in this country is one of the surest signs that we have retained our proletarian orientation.

July 22, 1971

FOR DEVELOPING A PROGRAM FOR THE ECOLOGY MOVEMENT

By Wesley Weinhold, Seattle Branch

The ecology movement today is mired in the swamp of its own lack of a program for action and its lack of an understanding of the roots of environmental destruction. Sweeping generalizations and utopian solutions abound and divert the energies of thousands of activists concerned with ecology into fruitless individual actions, alternative life-styles and even reactionary anti-human and anti-technological positions.

However, these same thousands of ecology activists are very concerned with the problems posed by capitalist destruction of the environment and are willing to struggle against capitalist society to end that destruction. In addition, almost every student and youth considers ecology to be a very important question, although they do not see how to combat pollution, improve the quality of life, and build a healthy society. These people form a potential base for struggles against capitalist polluters and certainly for recruitment to a socialist perspective which can accomplish these things.

It is the responsibility of the Party to exercise leadership in this movement. We have already begun in developing programs in local areas, such as the Minnesota election campaign leaflet, in propaganda interventions on Earth Day, 1970, (making that a very hot day for many bourgeois politicians who had hoped to reap political hay by equating ecology with apple pie and motherhood) and in developing polemics against the errors of some of our opponents in the ecology movement.

However, there exist still some deficiencies in our orientation to the ecology movement. Hayden Perry indicated in his contribution ways of strengthening our polemic against the ZPGers who see "population problems" as the cause rather than the effect of the problems of capitalist society. Our current major pamphlet on the question—Hansen's "The 'Population Explosion'"—largely misses the point of the current ZPG activists and, more importantly, does not seriously answer the questions of many young people who are concerned about problems of overcrowding in the cities, luxurious waste by consumers in advanced industrial societies, destruction of wilderness areas, proliferation of concrete, etc. A single pamphlet on population cannot perhaps fully deal with each of these related questions, but should at least take these people's

concern for population limitation seriously, as a concern motivated by humanistic feelings, and not dismiss it simply as a reactionary, anti-human position. Re-writing the pamphlet along the lines suggested by Hayden Perry in his document would improve our polemic with the ZPGers.

The ZPGers at this time are not the primary obstacle in the ecology movement to a correct analysis of the problem and a correct program for solving it. Ralph Nader with his reformist approach and faith in capitalism's ability to reform itself is even more dangerous and must also be combatted. Nader attacks the big corporations for their neglect of human safety and health, but does so in the context of acceptance of the continued existence of capitalism. Although he plays a progressive role in bringing to the attention of the American people the crimes of corporate capitalism, his action is devoted to lobbying and public pressure campaigns to correct abuses. One of his latest programs is the establishment of campus research institutes staffed by students to suggest legislation on environmental abuses. While there is nothing wrong with research on ecology and environment, the result of Nader's activities is to draw youth away from active struggle and involve them in reformist attempts to reason with capitalist legislators.

We can intervene here with a program for mass actions and with analyses of capitalism's necessity for profit—which makes necessary their neglect of any factors, such as pollution control, re-cycling, resource conservation, and the development of more efficient ways of doing things, that are not profitable.

Many of "Nader's Raiders" are willing to go into direct conflict with the industrial giants to fight pollution, unsafe products, etc. We can reach these people with our program for the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a planned socialist economy. But, to reach them, we must develop and carry into practice a program for action.

Obviously, we do not have the cadre or the resources to take a major orientation toward organizing ecology actions. The ecology movement is currently disorganized and somewhat demoralized and it would not now be fruitful to intervene massively on a national scale. However, it is feasible and desirable to carry out a probe of the

scale of that now being carried out toward the gay movement.

I propose that the Party should 1) update the population pamphlet and re-issue it; 2) issue pamphlets and *Militant* articles on ecology, including such pamphlets as an analysis of capitalism's role in fouling things up, an analysis of the difficulties of the workers' states in fighting pollution, a polemic on our opponents in ecology, especially Ralph Nader, a suggested program for fighting capitalist rape of the environment, etc; 3) in particular local cases where a struggle against a polluter already exists, approach local ecology groups with proposals for united mass actions and picket lines around transitional demands; 4) lend vocal support to minor anti-pollution actions, such as petitions; 5) use our campaigns to call attention to abuses of the environment, educating our candidates so that they can discourse intelligently and not retreat into platitudes.

Finally, our *Militant* articles often seem to take a nega-

tive approach to ecology—pointing out well the problems that exist, but not pointing to possible socialist solutions. The impression that can be gained is that we are, if not anti-technological, at least ignorant of technology. As an example, in the past year there have been articles and brief notes in the *Militant* attacking fossil fuel power plants, nuclear power plants and hydroelectric power plants. We leave the impression inadvertently that we are opposed to electric power production *per se*. We have not in any of these articles indicated how a socialist society might produce electric power. We could, for instance, indicate possible development of fusion power, applying technology to improve the thermal efficiency of atomic power plants and the ability of socialist planning to take total ecological impact into account. In order to attract young ecology activists, we have to go beyond merely criticizing and provide positive alternatives.

July 22, 1971

BUILDING A PROLETARIAN PARTY: PAST AND PRESENT

By Brian Williams, Oakland/Berkeley Branch

The Gregorich document starts with the proposition that the "Proletarian Orientation" grouping is attempting to bring the party back in line with the proletarian traditions from which they claim we have strayed. This contribution is designed to show that it is the National Committee resolution which embodies and is carrying out the proletarian orientation of our party, and that the "Proletarian Orientation" grouping is repeating some of the same errors that oppositionists within our party have raised before.

The strategy of building a proletarian party has been our major task since the inception of the Trotskyist movement, and remains so today. An examination of the internal disputes within our party in 1936 during the time of the "French Turn," named after the decision of the French Trotskyists to enter the Socialist Party, will help shed some light on the current political dispute.

The 1930's were a period of radicalization. First students, intellectuals, farmers, and then workers began participating in anti-capitalist activities. During the mid-thirties the working class began to move outside the organized unions of the AFL. The rise of the CIO as a social movement was the highpoint of this period of radicalization.

The Trotskyists at this time had a very small organization of cadre. In 1934 we fused with the Musteites to form the Workers Party. The Workers Party had difficulty recruiting because the vanguard workers were looking to the Socialist Party, which was a bigger party. The deepening radicalization of the 1930's began to revitalize the Socialist Party, as a new layer of radicalizing youth joined the left wing of YPSL. The leadership of our party recognized that the split developing between the right and left wings of the Socialist Party offered us an important opportunity to gain new recruits to the Trotskyist movement by entering the Socialist Party.

A factional dispute developed between the leaders of the party—led by Cannon and Shachtman, who favored entry into the Socialist Party, and the block of Muste and the sectarian Oehlerites. The Oehlerites opposed in principle the dissolution of the Workers Party into the So-

cialist Party. They argued that if we joined the Socialist Party we would be bolstering up the Social Democracy and diving new credit to the Scheidemanns who killed Lievknicht and Luxemburg. They raised the cry that our fusion into this reformist and counterrevolutionary organization would destroy our revolutionary program. The Oehlerites were organizational fetishists. They hid their political disagreements behind organizational questions, such as the terrible bureaucratism and lack of democracy in the Trotskyist movement. The Oehlerites failed to understand that politics is superior to organizational questions. Organizational questions are important only insofar as they serve a political line. Independently they have no merit whatsoever.

Harsh requirements were imposed on the Trotskyists by the Socialist Party leadership. They had to give up their newspaper and inter as individuals rather than as a body. The Trotskyist leadership recognized that having a correct program in the Workers Party was not enough. We had to take advantage of the surging class struggle and recruit vanguard workers to the revolutionary party.

At a time when the second big upsurge of the CIO was to bring the labor movement to one of its highest points of mass militancy in the Spring of 1936, we recognized that our central revolutionary task was to enter the Socialist Party and win over the best of the young students and workers to revolutionary socialism. The mass work we carried out during this period was done through the form of the Socialist Party.

The results of entry into the Socialist Party clearly showed that this tactical approach was correct. In one year's work in the Socialist Party we more than doubled our forces. We dealt blows to both of our major opponents—the Communist Party and Socialist Party. Our timely entry into the Socialist Party permitted the best of the Socialist Party youth to be won to revolutionary socialism rather than having them come under the influence of the Stalinists. Our work in the Socialist Party, which resulted in our expulsion in 1937,

finished off the Socialist Party as a radical force.

The sectarians during this period, with their policy of abstention, had gained nothing. They charged that we doubled our membership at the expense of our program. But we had come out with the same program that we had taken in—the program of the Fourth International.

The current political disagreement within our party is also fundamentally rooted in conflicting views of how to build the revolutionary party. The minority raises the categorical slogan of bringing the program to the working class by colonizing the factories, without explaining how this would be a more effective party building tactic than leading the mass movements on the campus in this period. The minority fails to grasp the characteristics of the current crisis of capitalism and the radicalization which flows from it. The Post WW II period has been the beginning of neo-capitalism, in which accelerated technological change has tended to make the proletariat increasingly homogeneous and has been instrumental in modifying the levels of education. This period has led to a universal student revolt, which results from the process of proletarianization of intellectual labor. Students are not workers but a social layer in transition. Regardless of their social origins, the students form a homogeneous social layer. The transitional severance of the bonds of a specific social class, combined with the access to knowledge which universities provide, give the students a sharper and quicker consciousness than the individual workers of the ills of capitalist society. Students have been in the vanguard of anticapitalist struggles as represented through the developing antiwar, women's liberation and Third World movements. The present minority is following the same path as did the ultra-left sectarian Oehlerites by advocating that the party adopt an abstentionist line in the building of the mass movements.

Similar to the 1930's, the present radicalization is taking place outside of the bureaucratized trade unions. However, just as the rise of the CIO in the 1930's revitalized the unions as instruments of social struggle, the current independent mass movements will propel the workers into anticapitalist activities and play a role in revitalizing the trade unions. The minority counterposes "going to the working class" to building these mass movements; they do not understand that it is through these mass movements that we will reach the working class and recruit to the party.

Our Party is currently participating in the leadership of two of the biggest mass movements that this country has seen—the antiwar and women's liberation movements. This fact can be illustrated by the successful NPAC Conference which just took place and the historic National Abortion Conference which is coming up next week. Our work among the students in initiating the antiwar marches, the Black Universities, La Raza Unida Party, women's liberation groups, has helped us to build a larger revolutionary party, and significantly weaken our major opponent—the Communist Party. Thus the gains that the revolutionary Party has made by turning to the youth radicalization are even more significant than the gains resulting from entryism into the Socialist Party.

Comrade Ralph Levitt, in his presentation of the minority resolution, repeatedly referred to our work among

the students as a shortcut to building the party. He also stated that the social composition of the party is destroying the working class program of our party. A similar charge was thrown at our party by the Oehlerites when we took our program into the Socialist Party. Both of Levitt's accusations base their criticism of the Party on the social origins of its members rather than its political program. Membership in our Party is based on agreement with our political program. We do not care what the social origins of our members are as long as they are willing to devote their lives to building the revolutionary party. Cannon's characterization of the Oehlerites as supporters of petty-bourgeois politics flowed from their lack of clarity on an alternative program. The present minority grouping uses the same tactic by attempting to smuggle a program through behind organizational doubts, without presenting a clear alternative analysis of and perspective for the antiwar, women's and Third World movements. Burnham and the petty-bourgeois opposition of 1940 were not petty-bourgeois because they were intellectuals, but because they failed to integrate themselves into the revolutionary life of our party. Burnham viewed the revolutionary party as a part time avocation which was similar to how the functionaries of the Socialist Party viewed their party. The minority has failed to put forward an alternative political program to the NC draft Political Resolution, and they are thus following the same irresponsible course as the Oehlerites as well as the Shachtmanites. Cannon points this out in *History of American Trotskyism* in his chapter on the Left Opposition: (p. 41)

One who takes upon himself the responsibility of calling workers to join a party on the basis of a program to which they are to devote their time, their energy, their means and even their lives, has to take a very serious attitude toward the party. He cannot, in good conscience, call for the overthrow of one program until he has elaborated a new one. Dissatisfaction, doubts, are not a program. You cannot organize people on such a basis. One of the strongest condemnations Trotsky leveled at Shachtman in the early days of our dispute on the Russian question in 1939 was this, that Shachtman, who began nursing doubts as to the correctness of our old program without having in his mind any clear idea of a new one, went through the party irresponsibly expressing his doubts. Trotsky said, a party cannot stand still. You cannot make a program out of doubts. A serious and responsible revolutionist cannot disturb a party merely because he has become dissatisfied with this, that or the other thing. He must wait until he is prepared to propose concretely a different program, or another party.

The minority grouping asserts that the increasingly "petty-bourgeois" composition of the party is threatening to change our political program. IT IS INCUMBENT UPON THE SUPPORTERS OF THE "Proletarian Orientation" DOCUMENT TO EXPLAIN CONCRETELY AND IN WRITTEN FORM WHAT ASPECTS OF OUR APPROACH TO AND WORK WITHIN THE ANTIWAR, WOMEN'S LIBERATION, CHICANO AND BLACK LIBERATION, MOVEMENTS THEY DISAGREE WITH. Comrade Lauren Charous in his document states that the party leadership only attacks our opponents for going to the working class without attacking their program

(Vol. 29, No. 9, p. 13), Comrade Charous fails to give us his viewpoint of how his analysis of our opponents' program differs from that put forward in the NC draft Political Resolution. Isn't abstention from the mass movements which are being led by students on the campuses, part of the program of our opponents? Do the comrades of the minority agree or disagree with this sectarian abstentionism from these anti-capitalist movements?

The minority is caught within the web of organizational fetishism over how to build a working class party. They fail to understand that the development of a transitional program for the student movement in the "Worldwide Youth Radicalization" document is a concrete application of the transitional program applied to one aspect of the current stage of the class struggle.

In his presentation of the minority document Comrade Levitt stated that workers will be uncomfortable in the student milieu of the party. This statement expresses a misconception of where the working class is at. Politicalized workers are moving around the same anticapitalist activities in which the students are involved. These include

the antiwar movement, Black and Chicano liberation, and women's liberation. Some workers are supporting, and the most class conscious workers are active in building these movements. The argument that workers are primarily interested in trade union struggles, and that as soon as the workers start moving in their unions, the other movements will disappear or become subordinated to the struggle, is a misunderstanding of the current radicalization and an underestimation of the strength of the independent thrust of the mass movements. At the bottom of the classification of antiwar, nationalist, women's and gay movements as just student movements is an expression of the lack of confidence in the workers to make a socialist revolution. The supporters of the National Committee resolution believe that workers will move around more than economic issues. Their ability to support and give leadership to these anticapitalist political movements which are taking form today will be essential if they are going to carry out a successful social revolution which will end all forms of economic, social, and cultural oppression.

July 8, 1971

PRISONERS AND THE NEW RADICALIZATION

Joe Johnson, Denver Branch

The National Committee Draft Political Resolution (Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization) analyzes briefly the prison revolts that are taking place and presents as part of the developing radicalization. The purpose of this document is to go into more detail; presenting some of the ideas coming from the prisoners' struggles and to give concrete suggestions on how the Socialist Workers Party can relate itself to this area of radicalization.

The extent and depth of the prisoners revolts is beyond anything known before in history. It is not just the revolts in The Tombs in New York, Folsom or San Quentin but revolts, near revolts and repressed revolts which are taking place repeatedly in practically every prison, penitentiary, reform school, brig, stockade and city jail in every area of the United States. (It must be remembered that one of the first jobs of any warden is to hush up any trouble within his jurisdiction. Thus only a small part of the revolts ever get know.) This prison struggle is worldwide in scope. A few months ago a large prison in Canada was taken over for more than a week. The prisoners' revolts are developing in the deformed workers states, in the colonial nations as well as the advanced capitalist nations. Prisoners' revolts are an important component of the world revolution.

Very large numbers of people are involved in the prison system in the United States. There are over 200,000 prisoners with a sentence of over a year. Over two and one half million people went through the American prison system, either city, state or federal in 1970. With the increased radicalization the sheer number of people introduced to the American prison system will increase dramatically. For example, the number of women who are going to prison increased by over 200% last year. The number of ex-cons is unknown but it reaches into the 10's of millions.

It is not merely the extent of the prison revolt but also its profound nature that is important. The new qualitative leap in the development of the prison revolt is more difficult to pin point than its increased size but it is extremely

important to do so.

Prisoners' revolts are not new and have happened regularly with the development of class society. In the past there were prisoners' uprisings when the conditions became absolutely intolerable. For example, in the 40's inmates in some Southern prisons would put one of their legs on a rock and then hit it as hard as possible with a 20 lb. hammer to mutilate themselves. They did this to protest the inhuman conditions they had to work under, just as slaves in the pre-Civil War period used to mutilate themselves or commit suicide.

Now, however, the prisoners' revolts are not developing only in the most oppressive prisons of the South but everywhere and with a leadership growing out of struggles in the more "liberal, progressive" institutions of the North and far West. And the manner and the extent of the revolts are different than in the past. A series of strikes throughout the prison system has emerged as a major form of struggle recently. For instance, prisoners will make a few pennies an hour working in the prison factory. In many prisons recently they have gone on strike for higher wages. In addition, prison strikes have raised the demand for a better parole system. Prison revolts are no longer only a reaction against the most inhuman conditions but a general high political level revolt against the whole penal system and justice in the United States.

From interviews, personal experience, and wide reading, all evidence points to the fact that before 1960 the great majority of prisoners (with many notable exceptions) had a much more backward understanding of why they were institutionalized and the nature of our society than they now do. In general they felt they were *personally* oppressed by the system or that they deserved their incarceration. Many felt they were criminals but they were unjustly getting the wrong kind of punishment for their crime or were being punished with a longer than necessary sentence. There is a definite analogy here to women, gays, African-American movements.

A good example of the new consciousness, though only one of many, is the following quote from an interview

with Katara who was in jail for two years as a member of the "New York 21." New York City Jail—May 1971:

"The brothers' consciousness in jail has risen to such a level that when you used to have jail outbreaks, it used to be for more commissary or more candy or stay out to watch TV later. But now the brothers' political consciousness has risen to the level when they're not asking for commissary or TV anymore, they're asking for their rights as human beings.

"So now the brothers in jail are starting to unite. Starting to say, if you try to jack him up, you're going to have to jack me up too. The morale in the prisons now is beautiful. It used to be that when a dude came into prison, he'd rap with the other men about how to rob a bank better, or how to make a connection with dope and get bailed out. But now when a brother rolls in on loitering or some other small charge, the brothers will start rapping about politics to him, about Angela Davis's trial, about the 21 trial, about Bobby and Ahmed Evans. And it's not just the political prisoners now that are fighting to get political literature into jail. Everybody now leaves there with a higher level of political consciousness."

The understanding is widespread now that the system is at fault and that themselves as prisoners are being oppressed racially and/or on a class basis. The prisoners themselves are putting demands on the system and are beginning to understand that the problems do not flow from some personal failure on their part, but rather a failure on the whole social system. Before the wish to be "rehabilitated" into "normal society" was an accepted goal by most in the prison population. Now however a total rejection of any "rehabilitation" is becoming more and more widespread. Just as at one time African-Americans accepted the idea of integrating into white society and now increasingly reject integration into an oppressive racist society, so , at an accelerated pace, are prisoners totally rejecting U. S. society. The two forms of consciousness are *directly* related. In general, the prison walls have not stopped the flood of revolutionary ideas. The turbulent waters of revolt are rising within as well as without the prisons, and perhaps a little faster within!

Before going any further, let us state an important fact about prisons and the revolt developint there. It is the working classes who go to prison, who commit what the society calls "crimes"—crimes against property, the draft, "sex crimes", drug crimes. The working class is behind the bars of the prisons in this country. You will not find capitalists or even their toadies in prison. Let me give an example that will point this out. A few years ago executives of the Westinghouse company were tried and convicted of stealing from the people with seven *billion* dollars of fixing pricing. They were sentenced to 30 days. Even that extremely short sentence was considered a "victory" because it was the first time in the seventy year history of the Sherman anti-trust act that (despite the fact that they had robbed the people of billions of dollars) any official of big business had ever gone to jail for *any* length of time. Recently, a man in Dallas got a *one thousand* year sentence for stealing \$73.10! The prisons, jails, penitentiaries, brigs, "reform" schools, and stockades of the United States are reserved for the working class. Almost every person in jail is a member of the working class.

It is not jsut workers who are in prison but in particular

it is workers from oppressed nationalities. Most prisons, jails etc. are 40 to 50% African-American and/or Chicano. In Denver, for example, in the Lookout Mountain School for Boys (a reformatory) 63% of the prisoners are Chicano.

There is a direct living connection between the prisoner's struggle and the national struggle: Blacks, Chicanos, Native Americans—all of the oppressed nationalities—serve hundreds of thousands of years time and are hung, gassed, electricuted, shot and driven insane in the prisons of capitalist America.

Many of the thoughts and concepts of black nationalism came directly from the prisons themselves. Prison experience is an important part of the African-American experience and all the oppressed minorities, and of the working class as a whole. It is no accident that Malcolm X gained and developed many of his ideas and his basic education in prison. Its an aspect of the prison experience that a person has time to think, to read and to discuss. The prisoner, if fortunately in a large penitentiary, can know and work with some of the best and most perceptive people in America. There are many underground systems for communication and education in the prisons. This underground system is on a relatively high political level and deals with the problems of Black prisoners, the Black community, etc. in a more thorough way than the prisoner had access to on the streets. The Autobiography of Malcolm X and the biographies of other nationalist thinkers show that there has been a continual dialogue between those African-American prisoners and the African-American struggle on the streets. Much of the development of the black nationalist analysis of society has come from that dialogue. This dynamic has not finished with Malcolm X. Every new wave of African-American nationalists in prison starts where Malcolm X's prison consciousness left off and develops the ideas and powerful thrust of black nationalism even further. The same dynamic is developing among Chicano prisoners.

In the magazine *El Pocho Che*, Vol 1, #3, there is an excellent detailed analysis of the Chicano excellent detailed analysis of the Chicano experience in prison. Written by prisoners themselves it gives an account of the prison strikes and demands raised by the Chicano prisoners in those strikes. Particularly important is the Folsom prisoners' manifesto of demands and their anti-repression platform. These and other demands will be taken up in the last part of this document.

Every area of radicalization—youth, gays, the national-ist struggle, the antiwar movement—has its connection with the prison revolt. New organizations within and without the prisons spring up every day. The Third National Chicano Liberation Conference had a pinta (jail) workshop to discuss the rising movement among Raza prionsers and decide "to support the establishment of a union for Chicanos and Chicanas in Las Pintas". The pinta workshop called for educational conferences inside prisons and demonstrations "in support of the struggle of the pintos and pintas on Sept. 24, '71." In the state of Washington, gay prisoners are organizing to oppose their special prison oppression and for the first time ex-cons are organizing. Sympathy and increased understanding of prisoners is becoming more evident. Even Nixon is calling for prison reform, while, with his usual double dealing, calling for longer sentences. Both straight reforms and ultra-left formulations and programs are being raised. Reformism is the most prevalent approach at this time.

The ultraleft approach is by and large, at this stage, one of abstention from the struggle coupled with a call for the liberation of this or that prominent political prisoner.

Next we will examine the various areas of radicalization with respect to the prison revolt and consider the most important demands put forward in the various areas. We need to remember that the living struggle is still developing rapidly and the demands are also in a state of development. Some of the demands have a definite transitional character, others can easily be granted by capitalism, and still others tend to develop into full scale attacks on capitalist society.

It is not possible because of the rapidly changing nature of the prison revolt to develop a full program of transitional demands for all areas of the prison revolt at this time. That will only be done as the struggle unfolds.

Women

Women in the past have been so institutionalized in the home and the family that it was not necessary for the state to imprison many of them in a separate place. Most women in the past were jailed for "sex offenses". The double standard applied to prostitution forced women into jail. Or was the situation in the recent past "houses" served as jails for women? The notorious "crimes" of Seattle being an example. Other women were jailed for killing their husbands and other members of the family, seeing no other way out of the prison of the home. A large percentage of the men and women in jail for murder are there because they killed a member of their family.

This situation is changing with the developing disintegration of the family. As a result, women are going to prison in greater and greater numbers, and they are going for a broader range of crimes than before.

Women have always been particularly oppressed in jails. Often little prisons are made for women inside the big prison. These little prisons are therefore especially severe—far out of proportion to the length of sentence of women prisoners or their "crimes". Women usually and particularly in city jails do not have adequate facilities. The concept that women are inferior is basic to capitalist society and it is the basis for the common practice of making women wards of the state and treating them with brutal paternalism by the state. This is especially true of young women. In Buffalo city jail where I was waiting transfer, there was a young woman kept in a wire cage. She was seventeen years old and she had committed no crime at all. Some friends of hers had taken her riding in a car they had stolen. She was not tried or even accused of stealing the car but she was sent to a "girls' school" without benefit of a trial and was made to stay there until she was twenty-one. The man who stole the car went to trial later and was sentenced to one year. She got four years—he got one year. The rationale was that the school would "help her". But the history of such "schools" and all logic indicate that it will hurt her. This type of situation is common for women. Because of her break from her "proper place" she is subjected to special punishment, including longer terms, exposure to unchecked brutality—including sexual assault, vicious paternalism, and inadequate facilities. Prisons, like the home, are dominated by male rulers. Women are captured by men, their attorneys are men, the judge is a man, the majority of jurors are men and the institution she goes to has, with only one exception, a man at the top—and, of course,

the "law" she "breaks" was made by a man. Within the prison she will find that the rules are made by men and are particularly brutal to her.

Some of the demands put forward by women are: The right to bear children in a regular hospital rather than in prison; abolition of all special laws against prostitutes; an end to state paternalism and unequal sentences and abolition of all special legal penalties for women; the right to regular extended conjugal visits; and, a full review of all trials, sentences and fines of women to be conducted by their peers.

YOUTH

The majority of prisoners are young. Youth in general have a harder time in prison and are treated to harsher sentences and do harder time because of their youth.

One digression must be made at this point to deal with the pseudonyms used for prisons. Prison reform movements have developed during and as a result of each period of radicalization. Often the reforms have gone no further than to change the name of jail or prison to reform school, boys' school, girls' school, training school, correctional institution, reformatory etc. etc. Just a week ago a criminologist seriously put forward once again the idea that changing the name of prisons would be a great help. Also, each governmental unit tends to name the prison under its control differently. Thus, there are many different names for what is essentially the same thing. The names of prisons do not indicate with any assurance what the reality is like; in fact, they are formulated to produce an incorrect impression of the reality. For example, a federal penitentiary can have many advocates for the inmate over that given in a boys' school. The food in most penitentiaries can often be much better than at a boys' school, there is less crowding. The screws in the penitentiaries are often afraid of you and thus do not bother you day and night, as often is the case in the "schools", etc. etc.

As with women, the paternalism of the state is a big area of injustice. Often young people are given sentences without any trial and extremely long sentences for minor crimes. The juvenile judge can say that so and so is "unruly" or a "juvenile delinquent" and he then gives the "offender" a sentence: "one to five years or perhaps "until you are 21 years old." Quite often there is no trial and little attempt at even putting forth solid evidence—just the opinion of the judge followed by a sentence. The class and race bias in these cases is fantastic. A youth from a rich home gets off time after time with no sentence for extremely serious crimes because of his or her "youthful inexperience and good background" while the working class and minority youth is given long sentences to the "school" on any trumped-up pretext. In these "trials" young people are more disadvantaged than older workers—they seldom can afford competent legal workers and cannot find them. The jury itself is generally composed of older people who quite often are prejudiced against youth as such, in addition to their class and racial prejudices. This is true for runaways and "incorrigibles" also.

Some demands put forward are: an end to indeterminate sentences; youth should be given fair trials; 18 is now the age of voting nationally and it should be at least the age of jury responsibility. A full review of the cases of young people in so-called schools by their peers and no more sentencing to these "schools"; abolition of the "reform schools" and the creation of high-paying union jobs which are

socially-beneficial for all youth with free education up to and including universities.

Gay people

Gay people are unjustly sent to prison for the mere fact of being gay. Entrapment, harassment, and failure to give elementary police protection to gay people are an every day situation. Within prison, gay people usually can not get parole simply because they are gay. They are asked by parole boards if the: "two years here have taught not to be a queer?" If they answer truthfully "no" then they get no parole. Even in states like Illinois where being gay in itself is not a crime, parole is often not granted because an inmate is gay. Rights within the prison are quite often taken away from gays. In many joints they are not allowed to go to the exercise yard, prison movies or educational classes. Often they end up in a form of solitary confinement that goes on for years, merely because they are gay.

Gay people are organizing prison groups to protect these conditions, to demand an end to the special injustices they have to endure.

Black and Chicano nationalists

One of the most searching analyses of the system of "justice" in the U. S., from the cops to the juries, judges, trials and on to the jails, has been made by African-American and Chicano nationalists. They point out time after time that every aspect of American "justice" is permeated with racism and injustice. The answer they are increasingly putting forward can be best summarized in the concept and demand for *Community Control*.

This community control starts with the police. African-American and Chicano nationalists correctly see the police not as "servants of the people" but as invaders, an armed oppressive force in their communities—the vanguard of racist injustice. The cop can be judge, jury and executioner on the spot. In Denver a cop recently killed an African-American man with the man's own gun, after taking it from him, and thus brought racist justice by the movement of his finger on a trigger. The cop is still free after this killing. The demand of community control means that cops should be *fully* under the control of the community. The police should live in the community, be recruited directly from the community, be subject to continual direct control by the community, and be disarmed.

Community control of justice merely starts with the cops. Over the years every area of justice has been considered by African-American and Chicano nationalists.

Prisons in the United States are generally put in obscure and unaccessible parts of the country. Islands are favored places for federal prisons. Incredible and cruel rules and regulations are used to isolate prisoners, to prevent people from visiting them, and to prevent people from writing and receiving regular correspondence from prisoners. Basically these rules and regulations are used to prevent the community from knowing what is happening in prisons should be under full community control and be readily accessible to the community for visits, inspections etc.

African-Americans and Chicanos are organizing inside the prisons. This organizing must generally be done underground because of opposition by prison authorities. The

right to organize, to receive political books, pamphlets, papers like *The Militant* and political visits etc. are basic rights that are being demanded and fought for by the nationalist groups.

Prison guards are in the most cases white male racists from Southern states. The guards—like the police, the attorneys, the judges—should come from, represent and be responsible to the community and the prisoners.

Political Prisoners

The number of political prisoners is rising in the United States as the government passes and enforces more cases of purely "political crimes". It is only a matter of time before this class of political prisoners will include our own comrades as it has in the past. While we should not fall into the trap of only giving consideration to strictly political prisoners, forgetting that in one way or another all prisoners are treated unjustly, it's nevertheless our duty to continuously raise the demand of freedom for political prisoners. Within the prisons we must struggle for no special restriction on political prisoners.

Antiwar Movement

The antiwar movement, because of our vigorous intervention, is taking up the slogan that GI's are citizen soldiers and thus raising the demand that all the rights that should apply to civilian prisoners should also apply to GI's. Defense of army prisoners is becoming more and more an important arena of work as the revolt in the army deepens.

Large numbers of young men have gone into exile or into prisons rather than go into the army. While our position on "draft evasion" is correct, the demand for full amnesty for "draft evaders" is a humane and just demand that is becoming important with the strength of the antiwar movement and we should give full support to it.

Medical

The demand for humane treatment is a strong constant demand that arises from within the prison revolt. Chicanos in the Southwest have protested the medical work done on Tijerina. They do not trust the prison doctors and given the history of the medical profession in prison, this can be understood. Tom Murton, past Commissioner of the Arkansas Dept. of Correction, in the May-June *Humanist* presents an indictment of prison doctors that is devastating. He meticulously documents charges against present day prison doctors that show an inhumanity only equalled in concentration camps. For example, a Dr. Rollins, in the 1960's invented an electrical torture machine for use at the Arkansas Penitentiary. A Dr. Austin R. Stough, by bleeding inmates and then selling their blood and using them for medical experiments in testing new drugs, made a recorded income in 1966 of \$150,000.00 and \$500,000.00 in 1967. Recorded deaths from this programs were one in Oklahoma, one in Arkansas and four in Alabama. The AMA has taken no action against either of these doctors and in general is uninterested in humane medical treatment for prisoners.

The Socialist Workers Party can play an extremely important role in all the various arenas of the prison revolt. As the only political party that has an understanding of nationalism we can fully embrace the demands nationalists make with respect to the prison revolt. The slogan we put forward for *Community Control of The*

Black and Brown Communities is directly related to the prisoners' revolt and is the proper slogan in general.

The Militant now gives good coverage to major prisoners struggles but with our deepening penetration of the mass movements that coverage can be expanded greatly. This coverage is of the utmost importance. Sympathetic, informed publicity is needed, appreciated, and of decisive importance. Publicity about the conditions of the prisons is what is demanded by the prisoners time after time during a blow up. We must as well get our press into the prisons. They want to read it and have a right to read it and we need them to read it. Our books and pamphlets need to be in the prisons also.

We are playing an important role in helping the prison struggle in our election campaigns. In 1970, our candidates went into the prisons, talked to the prisoners, came out and voiced their demands and told the world about the conditions there. This prison electoral work is of extreme importance and should be increased, organized nationally and developed fully for our 1972 campaign. In the most definite and concrete manner we should take this struggle as our own. Comrades will find prisons everywhere in this nation and will find organizations of prisoners in every part of this country. A possible major campaign issue for the '72 elections will be the death sentence. The killing of a large number of prisoners is being stopped until the constitutionality of various questions about the death penalty can be settled by the Supreme Court. But the Court may decide these questions at its next session. Capitalists are never given the death sentence, they are not killed; it is the workers, women, youth and the national minorities who are killed. The death sentence is a real weapon in the hands of the ruling

class and they will need it more and more in the future. However, the developing radicalization means that we can make the death sentence a major point in our election campaign and hopefully develop a mass struggle against it. Even during the period of Caryl Chessman in the early 60's a good size struggle was developed. Now far more people are radicalized and understand the political role of the death sentence and can be expected to struggle against it. Most of the prisoners awaiting death are African-American, Chicano or Native American.

Within the prisons themselves, the prisoners have certain demands which are basic to being a prisoner: the right to be treated as human beings; the right to organize within the prison; the right to socially useful work at trade union wages (not pennies an hour and slave conditions) under trade union conditions; the right to humane medical treatment; a nonracist, nonsexist, nonclass discriminatory parole system made up of their peers; the right to be considered human, not an ex-con after you get out; the destruction of all records of the prisoner and an end to police, business and governmental harassment and prejudice; the right to full educational opportunities within prison and to speak your native language; all sentences and trials to be reviewed; an absolute end to prison torture in any form. In general the prisoners are struggling for their rights as human beings. They are saying that: "no matter what the laws passed by a rotten society that we may have broken we remain humans and as an aspect of our humanity we *demand* humane treatment. No torture, no strip cells, no holes, no thousand year sentences. We *demand* not to be judged by anyone but our peers; we *demand* to be treated as humans and not as animals as we are now!"

July 17, 1971

PRINCIPLED POLITICS AND THE PRESENT PARTY DISCUSSION by Gordon Fox, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

A party functioning with Leninist norms is one which affords its membership the greatest possible democracy in decision making, and, at the same time, acts as a united force in the external political arena. Disagreement and discussion are entirely consistent with democratic centralism—indeed these are half of the dialectical concept of democratic centralism. At the same time, honesty and loyalty are expected of each and every member and grouping within the party. Acceptance of these concepts is a prerequisite to membership in the Socialist Workers Party.

The Gregorich tendency has offered us an excellent example of anti-Leninist practices; perhaps by examining the methods used by the present minority it will be possible to reach a better understanding of Leninism. Comrade Phil Passen, in his presentation to the Brooklyn branch, stated that comrades should not assume that the minority is dishonest simply because they did not clearly define in "For A Proletarian Orientation" their attitudes on the burning political questions of the day: rather, the party membership, according to Comrade Passen, should assume exactly the opposite—that the Gregorich tendency supports the present party positions on everything unless they explicitly state otherwise. Let it be said at the outset that the very fact that Comrade Passen was forced to raise the question of his tendency's political honesty is in itself significant. If many comrades in many branches have raised this question, there are two possible mean-

ings: either the party membership is ossified to the point that it immediately suspects anything and everything, or Comrades Gregorich, Massey, McCann, and Passen have given serious reason to indicate their political dishonesty.

It is indicative of an unserious attitude towards the party on the part of the Gregorich tendency that they have not stated their political views to any significant extent. Beyond giving lip service to the various mass movements, they have offered virtually no political analysis of the current objective situation. How can they be considered a serious oppositional tendency if they have offered no analysis of the world or national political situations, much less of the current mass movements? The only thing provided to the party in "For A Proletarian Orientation"—which comrades will remember is to be considered as a political resolution which will guide the party in all areas of work until the next convention—is an enormous number of quotations, mostly out of context, and the repetition ad nauseum of formulae presented as universal truths of the great Marxists.

The only analysis other than that of texts provided in this amazing document is scarcely worthy of the name. Such "analysis" consists of slanders and innuendoes leveled against the mass movements. No analysis is provided of the women's liberation movement, for example, other than the utterly slanderous comment about the mythical bra-burnings. No analysis of the family, no historical

analysis of the current movement, no projections — nothing! And to add insult to injury, they then proceed to write another document, the essence of which is an attack on the national abortion campaign. The authors of this "Political" counter-resolution then come to the party and ask it to approve this list of quotations, slanders and abstract schemas as its political resolution!

The same treatment is given the other mass movements. The gay liberation movement? Petty bourgeois, don't you see, comrades? It doesn't fit in with our schema. The anti-war movement? It should go into the factories. Beyond this — nothing. This is indeed an apt characterization of the entire document, in which emptiness is exceeded only by rigidity and formalism. Beyond the formula of "root ourselves in the working class" Gregorich et al have told us nothing. This formula cannot reflect anything but a short-cut through the current dynamic of the new radicalization. Ask the minority a question and the answer is guaranteed: whatever is not proceeding according to their schema is because the party is bureaucratized and is not "rooted" in the trade unions. Their answer to everything seems to be: "get a job." But this is too simple, too easy. They have decided upon a rigid schema of how the radicalization should proceed, in a linear direction, and have concluded that the key task is to simply root ourselves in the industrial proletariat. Unfortunately for the minority, however, the radicalization is proceeding in a completely different manner — and they are left high and dry.

"But we do support the mass movements, we support everything the party does, except . . ." we hear the minority proclaiming. First, it must be noted that this is not stated in their counter-resolution, which is supposed to guide the party until the next convention. What would the *Militant* print about the gay liberation movement, about women's liberation, about the Chicano struggle, about any of the mass struggles, were this resolution adopted? It would be unable to print anything, because the party would no longer have a line on these struggles. This demonstrates either a lack of understanding of party traditions and organization, or, on the other hand, a desire to hide the authors' political views in order to build a broad anti-leadership clique around a "minimum" program of opposition to the "party regime." In either case the document would best have remained unwritten, and in either case the results are clear. Comrades Gregorich, Massey, McCann, and Passen have assembled around themselves a heterogeneous grouping including everyone in the party with any sort of gripe, anti-leadership feelings, or political differences. I do not doubt that the authors of this document have definite political ideas; on the contrary, a year in the Cleveland branch convinces me otherwise. However, they have provided us with an apolitical document. They have refused to state their views, desiring to build a clique around themselves and their "minimum program." How else explain the fact that their supporters include nationalists and anti-nationalists, feminists and anti-feminists, not to mention those who have echoed the Wohlforthites in anathematizing the party and the International for its supposed Pabloism? Comrades Cagle and Perez have clearly attacked nationalism in their discussion articles, while the four Brooklyn comrades and the counter-resolution authors have supported it. Innumerable such contradictions could be listed. Why did the authors not provide any analysis? Can there be any

other answer than the desire to build a broad anti-leadership clique based not on politics but on personal gripes? Can the "Proletarian Orientation" tendency actually be referred to as any other than an unprincipled combination, a petty-bourgeois clique? The irony, of course, is that in saying the last rites over the party for being petty-bourgeois, the minority has formed into the time-tested organizational form of the petty-bourgeoisie, the clique based purely on opposition to leadership, in the grand style of Abern.

The Socialist Workers Party has never functioned on the basis of gripe circles or anti-leadership combinations. These are by their very nature alien to Leninism in that they impede the functioning of the party and cloud the political clarity of the party. Although Gregorich, Massey, McCann and Passen all have definite political ideas, they have refused to inform the party of these and fight for their ideas within the party. They have thus shown a contemptuous attitude to the party. But they have by the same token shown contempt for their politics. They have hidden their politics and chosen to fight the leadership through use of a clique.

The minority has informed us of their politics only if one accepts broad generalities as being politics. Further, individual spokespersons for the minority constantly contradict one another on such fundamental questions as nationalism, feminism, etc., etc. The minority has, however, failed to answer any of the burning questions of the day such as how to relate to the mass movements or what strategy should the party follow in the current political scene. Furthermore, they have ignored the international questions. Comrades of the minority, what do you think about the discussion on the Middle East, about the Latin American question, the Chinese question? What is the current situation in the Vietnamese revolution? What is occurring now in Cuba? Do you support or oppose the party line on these vital questions? It is from our analysis of the world political situation that we analyze the American situation: the Gregorich tendency has refused to formulate an analysis of the world situation. How could they, when this would mean the very destruction of their meagre clique? They share no common viewpoints — how can they say anything? Again, they are based not on politics but on personality. If an attempt were made to answer the above *questo*

above questions, the whole tendency would fall apart at the seams. What the authors hope to gain from an apolitical grouping is impossible to guess: in any case, history has shown that such cliques always lose. The "Proletarian Orientation" tendency is an unprincipled, petty-bourgeois clique based on common opposition to the leadership and common fear of the mass movements. As a tendency, that is all they represent. Those individuals who represent more than that apparently do not care to defend their ideas seriously.

The overwhelming majority of the party, however, is not accepting the invitation to capitulate to pressure and retreat from the current struggles. Those who are the most rooted in the new radicalization are continuing to build the mass movements. The party's answer to the sectarian clique will, I think, be clear: a renewed effort to build the mass movements, based on the perspectives outlined in the NC draft resolution.

July 19, 1971

SOME OPEN REMARKS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY
by Tom Leonard, Houston Branch

For more than a year the question of homosexuality has been emerging in the SWP to a point where it is now a matter of day to day concern and discussion among comrades.

It has reached a point where comrades in some cases are tending to polarize around the question of sexual preference. In the process, prejudice and intolerance have grown up on both sides. One of the reasons for this is that the discussion has been more private than public in character. It seems that most comrades are either afraid or unable to take a clear stand. For my part, I believe this discussion belongs out in the open, orally and literally.

I do not believe that the party can legislate the question of sexual preference out of existence. I think that comrades have a right to be anti-homosexual, to be anti-heterosexual, to be anti-bisexual and to be able to work out this exceedingly personal preference on an individual basis without coercion or intimidation from any quarter. In effect, I advocate and support the right of comrades, as well as individuals in society as a whole, to determine their own sexual preferences. My only concern is to assure that the personal preferences of comrades do not translate themselves into a criteria for weighing the political value of party members. It is precisely in the transition from personal preferences to political convictions that the question of prejudice tends to arise.

I do not believe that comrades' role in the party should be determined by their individual sexual preferences.

I think it is extremely important, in connection with the above, that we learn to deal with the question of homosexuality, not only from a personal, but also from a political point of view. I don't think there is anyone in our movement who denies the right of individuals to be homosexual and I know that this consciousness extends to and includes the right of homosexuals, en masse, to full economic, social and political rights. In this sense, the Political Resolution clearly and correctly defines gay liberation as a struggle for democratic demands.

On the other hand, I think there can be a good deal of difference on both the origins and historical weight of homosexuality. However, I disagree, for example, with the concept being raised by some comrades that we should use the same criteria to evaluate the gay liberation movement as we use in regard to the Black, Chicano and women's liberation movements.

The gay liberation movement is a multi-national, multi-sex and multi-class social formation. It is therefore ex-

tremely important that we make a sharp differentiation between the democratic rights of the gay movement and the political viewpoints that arise out of it. I do not believe that everything that homosexuals say or do is progressive solely on the basis that they are an oppressed sector of our society and are therefore above criticism.

In connection with this latter point, I want to raise the question of the probe of the gay liberation movement that the party is currently engaged in. I think it is very unclear in the minds of many comrades as to just what this probe means. At times it takes the form of attempting to seriously analyze the number and social weight of the forces involved in gay liberation. At other times, it takes the form of intervention with a point of view that is impossible to distinguish from the demands raised by the gay liberation movement itself. I think everybody understands, or should, that it is difficult to intervene effectively in a movement without a clear political perspective of what you intend to accomplish. On the other hand, it is extremely important to intervene in new movements as they arise before we have worked out a full program. But, in no case, do I feel that the party should take an uncritical attitude toward a movement that we are in the process of analyzing, especially since this is going to be a recurrent problem in the period ahead.

In the recent period, in my opinion, some of the articles that have appeared in *The Militant* have gone beyond the framework of the probe as projected by the Political Committee. I think it would have been much more preferable to circulate internally much of the material on this question that has been published in *The Militant*, precisely because there is lack of clarity on the scope, social impact and political importance of this movement.

On the other hand, the probe has had the affect of minimizing aspects of secrecy, guilt, or need for behind-the-scenes discussion which have led to incidents of bitterness and recrimination. Despite this, however, the question of sexual preference is a highly explosive one, and will be for some time to come.

The duration of the probe we are conducting in the gay liberation movement is as indefinite as the political clarity we need on this question. It is my belief that the party should take a clear-cut stand at the Convention on this movement and define precisely what we intend to do about it. I am convinced that we have enough information.

July 22, 1971

SOME NOTES ON IMPLEMENTING OUR WORK IN THE UNIONS
by Tom Leonard, Houston Branch

The Political Committee Draft Political Resolution is one of the best resolutions that I am familiar with in the history of our movement. Its all-sidedness clearly articulates the political direction of class and social forces in motion at the present time. Just as important is the fact that the resolution, by its implications, assumes for the party the responsibility of winning hegemony in the current radicalization. By its very nature, it imposes tasks on the party that are not merely academic but practical in character.

We are no longer the left critics of other parties. We share the center of the historical stage. I think it's important that the comrades recognize the magnitude of the burden that this places on the party in both a theoretical and practical way. In a certain sense, the history of American Trotskyism, with a few notable exceptions, has been one of clarifying the issues rather than in being in the position of decisively determining the leadership and direction of mass movements. This imposes a responsibility on the party, despite its small size, far out of proportion with anything we've ever had to contend with. I don't think anyone will have any difficulty in recognizing the validity of the statement made by Jim Cannon years ago in which he pointed out that we are a propaganda circle that has the responsibility to act like a party.

The central theme of the resolution, aside from its analysis of the major unfolding of political events, places great emphasis on the importance of cadre building, and correctly so. The question of transforming ourselves from a propaganda group acting as a party into a party of mass action is decisive for the coming American revolution.

If we were a mass party at this point there are any number of areas into which we could send comrades, including the trade union movement. The radicalization today is so deep and pervading that I don't think anyone would doubt that the party could fruitfully send comrades into literally dozens of interventions. To elaborate on Cannon's concept of a propaganda group acting as a party as it applies to the present situation, I think we would have to observe that our limited cadre, in effect and in light of the present situation, actually prevents us from acting as a party since we can't take advantage of every situation because of our limited forces. This does not prevent us, however, from acting as a party, exclusive of our ability to intervene in every situation. Under any and all circumstances, the party has to exist independent of the forms in which we intervene in the mass movement. This is a very difficult question to face in view of the openings that are available to us. Every time the possibility of an intervention arises that requires the sending of cadres into radicalizing movements, it has to be weighed against the crucial and decisive need of the party to intervene independent of these interventions.

The most fruitful area for recruiting in order to overcome the contradiction of a propaganda group acting as a party has been in the student movement. I think it would be superfluous to deny that for the next period this will remain our primary source of recruiting and that if we err on the side of intervention at the expense of the independent organizational form of the party, it will be

through the commitment of forces to this area of work. On the other hand, the propaganda work of the party cannot be relegated exclusively to this area. In other words, the Political Resolution of the SWP is not just an instrument for educating people to the fact that we are concerned with all questions, and particularly the question of the role of the working class.

One of the central weaknesses of the "Proletarian Orientation" counter-resolution is that, in essence, it counterposes the importance of the party as an independent political force to intervention in the trade union movement. More than that, it attempts to relegate or to lower the line of the party to a level where workers can deal with it on a trade union level.

It totally ignores the fact that workers are susceptible and responsive to not just the day-to-day struggle for survival and the fights they are forced to engage in, which they would be perfectly capable of doing whether there were a revolutionary party or not, but that they are concerned with and confused by the very same political questions that have affected other sections of the radicalization.

Over the last ten to fifteen years, during which our primary emphasis has been recruiting student youth, our evaluation of the class struggle has been developed in a way that would educate students to the importance of the class struggle. In recent years, however, it has become increasingly possible and even easy to sell our press and its ideas to workers. If we were to compile a record of the *Militants* that have been sold at plant gates in the last two or three years I think we would find that it would run into the thousands.

In other words, it is possible for us to disseminate our propaganda to workers with an expectation of a generally positive response. On the other hand, sales to workers have tended to break down, not because it was difficult to sell, but that the results in direct recruitment to the party have been very minimal. I think we should do everything possible to escalate the sale of the party press to workers despite the fact that we may not get significant recruitment in the immediate period.

To my mind the question of colonizing the unions depends on a consistent propaganda offensive directed toward workers in the process of which we will recruit out of and into the trade union movement.

The question of production workers as being the decisive factor as far as social weight in the unfolding radicalization has been raised in the current discussion and I don't think it should be seriously challenged by anyone. This fact, more than any other, validates a consistent, even though difficult, long-term perspective of propaganda activity directed toward these workers principally through the sale of the party press and pamphlets at the workplace.

The importance of this sector of the working class, however, does not negate in any way the importance of physically intervening in other strata of the working class. At this particular moment in history it is possible, as we have already learned from some experience, to intervene in sectors of the working class on a trade union level with fruitful results. The key areas where we've had some success is that area of the population newly arrived off cam-

pus, bringing with them from the campus the experiences of the radicalization occurring there.

The transformation of comrades from being student activists in the YSA to being party members forced to work for a living, has brought us unto close contact with this layer of new workers and we have done some effective work there.

This area of workers appears, and incorrectly so in my opinion, in the minds of some comrades, notably those that support the proletarian orientation, as being in conflict with our orientation towards the industrial workers. As a matter of fact, they have even raised the question of whether or not service workers, etc., are even part of the working class. They fail to recognize that the working class is not a homogenous undifferentiated mass, subject to categorical imperatives from the revolutionary party.

The working class is comprised of a variety of strata and is constantly changing in composition. One of the forms of this change in composition is the result of the continuing process of proletarianization of capitalist society. In the recent period, the newest and, at the moment, one of the most important results of this proletarianization, is the new strata of workers coming off the campuses. To my mind, this strata is a key link in the process of synthesizing the student and working class movements

that are unfolding. In this connection, I think it extremely important that we advise and counsel comrades who are moving off the campus and getting jobs to concentrate their efforts in working with these layers. These comrades should not just have the perspective of getting a job to give money to the party, as important as that is. They can do that, and at the same time, place themselves in positions where they can physically intervene in union activity and other political struggles that are emerging in this layer of new workers.

It is the only strata of the working class at this particular moment where it is possible on a large scale to work and give money to the party while at the same time having the opportunity to do political work in the form of recruitment, literature sales and union intervention around political demands that are relevant to our intervention in the antiwar, Black, Chicano and women's movements. In effect, this strata of workers represents a bridge between the radicalizing students and the industrial proletariat. In conclusion, I feel that we must keep open the lifeline of recruitment to the party through the YSA. I feel that we should also concentrate energy on a consistent propaganda offensive directed toward the working class, primarily through the sales of our press, because it is now possible to do this. I also feel that we can have a selective and fruitful intervention among that strata of young workers recently removed from the campus.

July 20, 1971