

**SPARTACIST LEAGUE****INTERNAL DISCUSSION BULLETIN**

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GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE BLACK QUESTION  
AND THE AMERICAN PROLETARIAT:  
THE NEED FOR A BLACK TRANSITIONAL ORGANIZATION RE-EXAMINED

by Richard Cramer (Chicago)

The struggle for black social equality which emerged in the Civil Rights movement of the fifties and sixties must be firmly set in the context of the labor movement of the same period. During the political reaction following the immediate postwar period, two developments consolidated the events of the thirties and forties and brought the labor movement firmly under the thumb of the bourgeoisie. The first was the purges of the left from the labor movement. This involved most notably the Stalinists but also seriously affected the Trotskyists and their ability to work in the proletariat. It was not simply the result of the manipulation on the part of the bourgeoisie of social patriotic sentiment and the atrocities of the Stalinist bureaucracy but had been prepared by the betrayals of the American Stalinists and the widespread recognition of this in the American working class. The Stalinists had already begun to lose their working-class base during the war and never succeeded in completely regaining it. Despite the fact that it reached its largest size in the upsurges following the war, the CP's base in that period was considerably more petty-bourgeois than it had been before the war. With the onset of political reaction the bourgeoisie was able to administer the final blow to the CP effectively eliminating it as a force within the proletariat. In its highly degenerated form the CP was unable to defend itself on a class basis.

The second development was the formal break on the part of the trade union bureaucracy with its previous policy of political neutrality and its attempt to mobilize the working class behind the Democratic Party. This was prepared by the widespread support the workers gave the Democrats in the thirties and represented a further consolidation of that tendency. The attempt by the labor bureaucrats to mobilize the leading sectors of the proletariat to vote as a class for the Democrats revealed deeply contradictory impulses. On the one hand it was an admission that behind the militant upsurges of the thirties and the workers' support for Roosevelt, whom they saw as embodying their interests, was a deeper historical thrust toward independent political action by the labor movement. On the other hand it was a conscious attempt to formalize support for the Democratic Party as a substitute for class political action. The fact that the bureaucrats felt compelled to make this step formally and as a group was itself an expression of a contradictory situation. Despite the hardening of the labor bureaucracy, the deep and pervasive anti-communism, and the conservatization of the layer of workers who had led the struggles of the thirties, at the purely economic level the labor movement maintained a high level of activity. In a certain sense American workers had an understanding of class interests and this created pressures for the bureaucracy to formalize its support for the Democratic Party. The memory of the victorious struggles for industrial unions was relatively fresh and militant union traditions retained some of their hold. A major upsurge during this period would have reversed the political conservatization and posed again the question of a political party of the labor movement. The fact that this did not occur and the political conservatization

went as deep as it did, was not simply a result of economic restabilization and the propaganda of the bourgeoisie but also a result of the fact that the whole period developed in the absence of a forcible class-struggle intervention into the proletariat by a revolutionary organization. The general ossification of the labor bureaucracy and a certain erosion of class-struggle union traditions has continued into the present period.

(I would like to take this opportunity to dispel a myth. The American working class was not passive during the fifties. During the height of the McCarthy reaction, 1949-54, the percentage of labor time lost through strikes was 0.44. In 1970, the biggest strike year since 1959, it was 0.37. In general the statistics show a high level of strike activity in the early fifties, a somewhat lower level in the later fifties and considerably less in the early and mid-sixties. This was reversed in the 1968-71 period when a high level of inflation set in. In order to understand this it is necessary to superimpose several things; the general response of the workers to the economic conditions of the period (Korean war inflation and the relative prosperity of the mid-sixties), the response of the trade union bureaucracy (especially important in the sharp drop in strike activity in the '72-73 period), and the gradual erosion of union traditions as the period becomes more distant from the great unionization drives of the 30's and 40's. The relatively smaller percentage of the working class organized into unions as time went on also has played a role. The reaction of the fifties had a particular political character and did not in general interfere with the workers' ability to struggle for their immediate economic interests. Nor is it possible to explain the actions of the trade union bureaucracy if one assumes a completely demoralized and intimidated labor movement in the fifties. It is also interesting to note that as with the Vietnam War, the working class was little inclined to delay its struggles during the Korean War as it had during WW II. This reflects the generally less popular character of that war.)

### The Civil Rights Movement

The roots of the Civil Rights movement and the black discontent which generated it lay in the social conditions produced by World War II. The massive social mobilization needed by the bourgeoisie in order to fight the war relied primarily on democratic illusions in the bourgeois state. These failed to take firm hold among the masses of oppressed blacks most of whom lived in the South and whose daily conditions of life made a continual lie out of government propaganda. In order to stir up loyalty toward the American government and maintain social peace the great majority of the petty-bourgeois black leadership during the war was forced to put forward the line of the "two wars." Blacks were told to fight for the interests of American imperialism abroad while struggling for racial equality at home. The social discontent and rising expectations begun during the war period eventually led to the outbreak in the fifties of the massive social struggle for black equality.

The contradictory character of the Civil Rights movement as well as the seeds of its ultimate defeat and co-optation by the Democratic

Party lay in the fact that from its outset it was completely dominated by bourgeois democratic leadership. In fact no large section of the movement ever went beyond simple bourgeois democratic demands. The movement made its most concrete gains and had as its primary arena of work the American South. The existence of legal segregation in the South meant that the movement could achieve a concrete programmatic focus while remaining firmly under the control of the bourgeois leadership. Moreover the ending of Jim Crow in the South was not a direct threat to the American bourgeoisie. The Civil Rights movement was largely able to achieve its limited aims in the South with the ending of the most blatant forms of legalized segregation. In the course of the struggle the strategy of the liberal bourgeoisie became one of democratic concessions to blacks in the hope of securing their loyalty to American bourgeois democracy and thereby warding off more militant and eventually class-oriented struggles. In fact the bourgeois class made a considerable show of the passage of the Voting Rights and Civil Rights Acts in 1964 and 1965.

The real bankruptcy of the Civil Rights movement and the reasons for its collapse were revealed in its attempt to "move North" in the early sixties. The absence of legalized segregation in the North meant that black struggle had to confront directly the position of blacks as an oppressed racial caste forcibly segregated into the bottom rungs of the American political economy. It was not simply a matter of seeking to end the legal segregation of schools and housing, but of struggling for better schools and better housing and finally higher wages to allow greater black social mobility. A fight to end racial discrimination in hiring and an end to heavy black unemployment would have eventually meant a struggle for more jobs for blacks as well as whites. A massive social struggle against racial oppression in the North as well as a continued struggle in the South would have meant that the black movement would have to confront the larger class question and this would have inevitably led to a confrontation with the fundamental basis of capitalist rule. Despite organizing a number of massive school boycotts and other demonstrations the liberal leadership of the Civil Rights movement eventually collapsed in the face of intense government pressure. It turned to a strategy of complete dependence on the Democratic Party. The aftermath produced a wave of ghetto riots in which the poorest blacks gave vent to their frustrated aspirations.

#### Black Social Advancement

Black social advancement over the last decade has come primarily as a result of the willingness of the bourgeoisie to partially accede to the vigorous and aggressive pursuit of better opportunities on the part of blacks. Wishing to prevent the militant aspirations of blacks from causing future social disruption, the bourgeoisie has consciously sought in different ways and in different sectors of the economy to allow greater integration and social advancement for blacks. Gains for blacks have come not simply as a result of collective social struggle but especially in recent years as a result of aggressive individual initiative on the part of blacks seeking better jobs and housing. There has been considerable social motion among blacks who statistically change jobs and move at a considerably high-

er rate than whites. Social advancement for a great number of blacks has meant heightened expectation on the part of many more. In part this was set off by the Civil Rights movement and the gains made in its aftermath but in a more fundamental sense is an expression of the dominant feature of black social struggle since the abolishment of slavery. Except during periods of demoralization, most notably in the early twenties and early thirties, blacks have always primarily sought a greater social role for themselves in American society thereby expressing the fact of their fundamental integration into the American political economy.

The greater role of blacks in U.S. society has included the emergence for the first time of a noticeable black petty bourgeoisie which does not simply service the black community. Most importantly however it has meant the greater integration of blacks into the proletariat and especially its leading unionized and traditionally most militant sectors. This tendency is the result of a number of factors. Among them has been the ever-increasing concentration of blacks in and around the major cities where these sectors of industry are primarily located. Younger blacks prevented by their social background from easy access to college degrees and positions in the petty bourgeoisie have sought positions in the industrial proletariat which has been their major opportunity for higher wages. In addition major industries have more readily sought to eliminate racial hiring practices as a way of increasing the extent of racial divisions in traditionally militant sectors of the work force. These tendencies are likely to continue. The gains and aspirations of blacks in these areas have not yet had the opportunity to express itself in class struggle. Inevitably the next period of major working-class upsurge will reveal these social changes in all their explosiveness. Black workers can be expected to play an even greater role in initiating and leading class struggles than would have been true in the past.

Necessarily these trends have been contradictory and very incomplete and have given rise to very contradictory manifestations. Continuing racial discrimination in large sections of the work force has occurred at the same time as proposals for "affirmative action" and preferential treatment which have sought to insure that any gains for blacks will immediately be perceived to be at the expense of whites. The continued practice of red-lining neighborhoods in major cities and disputes over school busing have gone hand in hand with the election of an increasing number of black mayors in largely black cities. One of the major motivations on the part of the bourgeoisie has been to exploit the hostile reaction of large sections of the white proletariat to the black struggle. The increasing integration of blacks into the work force and the racial transformation of major cities has meant that the race question has affected an ever-increasing number of both black and white workers in directly personal ways. The "white backlash" which set in in the sixties in the context of a conservatized labor movement which did little or nothing to support the struggles of blacks has meant that a greater and more thorough integration of blacks into the work force has had the effect of making the race issue an even more pervasive source of social division in the proletariat.

### The Black Nationalist Movement

It is in this light that an historic evaluation of the black nationalist movement must be made. The black nationalist movement grew out of the failures and frustrated hopes of the Civil Rights movement. It was a response not only to the co-optation of the movement by the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, but a revolt against joint struggle of blacks and whites which it saw as synonymous with liberal influence. The passivity of the labor movement and the hostility of white workers toward demands by blacks for equality led the great bulk of radically minded blacks to conclude that revolutionary struggle must be conducted apart from and even against the white population. At its height it was represented by the best period of the Black Panther Party which undoubtedly included among its ranks many subjectively revolutionary young blacks. The fundamentally utopian nature of the Panthers' social view was indicated by the fact that neither they nor any other section of the black nationalist movement was able to concretely formulate a real program for black struggle. Moreover it was unable to attract any sizeable following among black workers who saw their positions as a part of capitalist society and to whom the nationalist program had little to offer. The Panther membership was primarily recruited among lumpen youth who being less integrated into society were more open to nationalism. At the same time their isolation from any social group with real power combined with their ultra-militant rhetoric meant that the Panthers were especially vulnerable to state repression. In the end the movement split with one wing finding its way back to reformism and the Democratic Party while the other sought urban guerrilla warfare and was eventually eliminated through a combination of isolation and repression.

The black nationalist movement undoubtedly had widespread sympathy among many blacks and especially younger blacks. It even had a kind of vicarious authority as a result of its being a militant expression of black struggle. The fact that it found little actual base among black workers is not surprising. The black nationalist movement in its seeking of solutions to the problems of blacks outside of American society was actually profoundly contradictory to the actual aspirations and social movement of blacks during the same period. Far from seeing an escape from a predominantly white society, the majority of blacks were actually looking to improve their own position within it. That the potential for militant black struggles continued to exist was demonstrated when a wing of the nationalist movement turned its attention to organizing black workers. The experience of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit is extremely important for what it revealed about the actual state of social relations in the recent period. Within a relatively short time the LRBW, whose program embodied a confused combination of nationalist and class elements, was able to achieve something of a mass following in Detroit. With no history or connection to the traditional communist movement it was unable to formulate any effective program for class struggle. In addition it was deformed by its nationalist impulses and this eventually led it to a form of dual unionism and finally to dissipate itself in meaningless community activity. Nevertheless the LRBW had an important impact on the political climate in Detroit. Its ability to transfer to itself much of the auth-

ority of the black nationalist movement indicates the enormous impact a revolutionary party can have on black workers given sufficient history and authority in the working-class movement.

In the present period the nationalist movement as a radical left wing movement has all but disappeared. The present cultural/nationalist "pan-African," movement is more a cultural than a political movement. It has even less to offer in terms of social program than the revolutionary black nationalist movement. Its loosely organized and amorphous following barely if at all see it as a political movement. The cultural/nationalist movement is neither a proletarian nor a left response to present social conditions. Its social composition is highly petty-bourgeois with some influence in the black lumpen-proletariat. It has made almost no impact on the black industrial proletariat. In general the cultural nationalist movement represents a cultural cover for the petty-bourgeois aspirations of many young blacks as a result of the increased social weight and upward mobility of blacks in recent years. Its nationalist veneer is a defensive reflex to the continuing pervasive racism in American society. We can expect that in general thoughtful young blacks whose political impulses are in a leftward direction will find little to attract them in this movement. - unless there is another major defect for blacks and the working class as a whole - then black nationalism could be a very powerful attraction.

#### The Black Movement and the American Proletariat

Had there existed socialist traditions or general political traditions in the American proletariat, had there been any significant force advocating class unity and labor support for black equality, the entire course of development of the black struggle would have been different and the political relationship between blacks and whites in the working class would look significantly different than it does today. Despite being a very deep and thoroughgoing social movement the Civil Rights movement generated almost no directly labor-oriented struggle. The League of Revolutionary Black Workers made its appearance only at the tail end of the movement and then in the all black section of Detroit and in virtually all black plants. This situation was conditioned by the whole character of the labor movement at the time. The support of the labor bureaucracy for the Civil Rights movement was only nominal. Little was done, nor could it be expected, on the level of the rank and file to develop class unity or to win white workers to the support of equal rights for blacks as being in the interests of the whole class. A whole series of mainly craft unions worked in the opposite direction deliberately maintaining racist job-trusting out of fear of losing their privileges. Of key importance in all of this was the racism and hostility to the black struggle on the part of rank and file white workers. It meant that the black movement focused inward into largely community oriented struggles. The dominance of bourgeois democratic leadership and the final disintegration of the movement without its generating a sizeable class struggle wing was thereby assured. An interesting comparison can be made with the struggle of immigrant workers at Renault in France. Nothing of this sort ever appeared during the Civil Rights movement. It was prevented by conditions in the labor movement. Needless to say the response of white American workers would have been different than the response of the French workers who ended up supporting the struggle of the immigrant

workers in the face of a company lockout.

For two decades social struggle in the U.S. has meant largely the struggle of blacks against their racial oppression. Not only was the movement predominantly under bourgeois leadership but the bourgeoisie has had almost the complete say in how advances for blacks were to be made. On the one hand this meant the lessening of racial barriers to black advancement in certain sections of the work force. On the other hand it meant the continual use of the race issue to further inflame racial antagonisms. This has produced continuing racial discrimination, red-lining of neighborhoods, preferential hiring schemes, and the inevitable resort to racist propaganda to insure divisions in the proletariat. The absence of any social force advocating class unity has assured that gains for blacks have genuinely or been perceived to be at the expense of whites. The threat to the jobs and homes which many white workers have faced in recent years has been the sort to which a class struggle response has been impossible. This has contributed to the breaking down of class-struggle traditions and brought many white workers more firmly under the influence of racist bourgeois ideology. Many have turned to conservative politicians and even outright racists like Wallace in the hope of a solution. This political milieu has in turn affected the young generation of white workers although the attitudes are far less strongly held and can be much more easily broken down in the course of united black and white class struggle. Deep and sharp racial antagonisms are more pervasive in the American proletariat at present than ever before. This fact and its generally conservatizing effect has played an important role in limiting the response of American workers to the sharpened social crisis in the present period and facilitated the hold of the trade union bureaucracy over the class.

It was in the 1972 elections that the underlying transformation of race relations in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement was clearly revealed. The labor/Democratic Party coalition which had been a dominant part of American politics in the post WW II period was decisively broken up. While the social unrest over the Vietnam War played an important role in breaking up the electoral coalition, the single most important factor was the race issue. The inevitability of Nixon's victory was recognized early by the old guard in the Democratic Party and they virtually surrendered the nomination to McGovern who was supported by dissident elements in the party including many aspiring young black politicians. The labor bureaucracy, responding to pressures among racist white workers, also recognized the situation and the AFL-CIO broke with the Democrats and came to a position of near support for Nixon. The attempt by the UAW and other unions to mobilize support for McGovern met with little response among white workers. Blacks largely voted for McGovern or simply didn't vote. With an end to the Vietnam War in sight at the time of the elections, we correctly analyzed the overwhelming Nixon vote as being motivated primarily by the uneasiness of whites, especially in the inner cities, to the increasing penetration of blacks and other minorities into the work force and into previously all white neighborhoods.

The political situation in 1972 was clearly prepared by all that had preceded it. The first symptoms of the change were to be found in the celebrated "white backlash" that had begun in the middle six-

ties as a response to the Civil Rights movement and the ghetto riots. It was aggravated by the attempts of sections of the bourgeoisie and the liberal politicians to promote the cause of blacks while others consciously sought to whip up racist hysteria. All the while black neighborhoods in the inner cities continued to grow while blacks made certain advances into the work force. The first indication that a fundamental transformation of American politics was taking place was given by the large Wallace vote in '68 which included a heavy turnout on the part of the more racist sections of the white working class. It was further and more dramatically demonstrated by the success of Wallace in the '72 primaries especially in his victory in Michigan which included strong support from traditionally Democratic sections of the working class. All this finally culminated in the Nixon landslide.

That the basic features of this situation remain intact can be seen from the present maneuvers of the labor bureaucracy with the Democratic Party. The widespread discreditment of the government as a result of the Watergate scandal and with it the Republican Party will produce a probably landslide for the Democrats in the '74 elections. At the same time the labor bureaucracy is trying to re-establish the labor/Democratic coalition on a political basis which goes beyond the immediate effects of Watergate. In attempting to forge an alliance with the conservative bourgeois democrat and cold war liberal Jackson, Meany is revealing not only his own reactionary appetites but ~~the general political conservatization of large sections of the working class who in the last election voted for Nixon.~~ The maneuver with Wallace is significant for what it reveals on the race question.

On the one hand by offering the possibility of a Jackson/Wallace ticket Meany is seeking to assure the support of conservative white sections of the working class who voted for Nixon largely on the race question and who might again vote for the Republicans once the immediate effects of Watergate have worn off. (The longer range effects will inevitably make themselves felt in the next period of major working class upsurge. The previous general discreditment of the government will accelerate the drawing of political conclusions by the workers.) On the other hand Wallace has ostensibly "softened" his stance on the race question and even succeeded in getting endorsements of certain black politicians in the hope that the traditionally Democratic black vote might not be alienated by a Jackson/Wallace ticket. The maneuver is in the worst traditions of bourgeois politics. Even if it is successful in producing a Democratic victory in '76, it will not re-establish the labor/Democratic bloc on the old basis. Depending on the particulars of the political climate in '76 it may not even be successful. Certain Democrats have already voiced the fear that an incumbent Ford might win the '76 election.

~~The old labor/Democratic coalition consolidated in the aftermath of the struggles of the thirties was not the product of simple bourgeois political maneuvers but the result of the co-optation of a powerful class movement by the Democrats with the help of the labor bureaucrats and the Stalinists. It was a substitute for independent class political action. In voting as a bloc for the Democrats, American workers for the first time perceived to a certain extent~~

their interests collectively as a class although the result of that perception was a vote for their class enemy. In the years of conservatism and relative class peace following the war it is reasonable to expect that such expectations and perceptions on the part of the workers would erode. The old traditions if they are not reinforced lose some of their hold especially on younger generations. While some of this has undoubtedly been present, a more fundamental disruption of the black vote for the Democrats has occurred. We correctly pointed to the race question as the most important reason for this disruption in analyzing the election results in 1972. This change, accumulated over a period of time and finally consolidated, is fundamental and far-reaching in its implications. In the context of a conservative labor movement, the militant struggles of the Civil Rights movement, the ghetto riots, the deeper penetration of blacks and other minorities into jobs and neighborhoods previously dominated by whites, and this combined with the racial demagoguery of bourgeois propaganda, have broken down the partial understanding the workers had of their own interests as a class. This is especially true in the leading, unionized sectors where the Democratic vote was traditionally strongest. The perception of class interests has been to a large extent supplanted by an understanding of interests divided along racial lines. This explains why Meany & Co. can never recreate the old labor/Democratic coalition. It was the product of misled class struggle. Meany's present attempts to recreate it is simply bourgeois political maneuvering exploiting reactionary prejudices. Any success in getting labor to vote heavily Democratic on Meany's terms will be an episodic alignment. Only a revival of a widespread militant class struggle movement which directly confronts the race question will regenerate and qualitatively deepen a sense of class interests on the part of American workers.

#### UAW--Detroit Area

In no section of the working class is the present situation more clearly revealed than in the UAW and especially in the Detroit area. In many ways it epitomizes the present racial situation in the proletariat. The gradual racial transformation of the city and auto industry in the area have created one of the most inflamed racial situations in the country. Recent historic events have sharply affected the political climate in the city. Detroit had one of the country's worst race riots in 1967. The population shift in the city has been considerable in recent years. In 1970 Detroit was 44% black. Today it is 51%. It was in Detroit that the black nationalist movement saw its only working-class expression with the development of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. The LRBW had an enormous impact on the city and attracted a considerable following among black workers who thereby demonstrated their openness to explicitly revolutionary ideas. This in turn had a reaction among white workers in the outlying areas of the city and in the suburbs. It was in Detroit that the school busing issue had the biggest impact and where Wallace received a high percentage of the vote among white workers enabling him to win the Michigan primary in 1972. The UAW absolutely failed to mobilize white support for McGovern later that year.

In this light the events of last summer at Mack Avenue are not hard to understand. The black wildcats in the inner city plant were

met with a massive goon squad mobilized by the union bureaucracy among the lower level of the union bureaucrats and their close supporters from the plants in the outlying areas of the city. That the UAW could have pulled off this unprecedented strikebreaking must have meant that the goon squad found a base of at least tacit support for its actions among the racist white workers in the plants from which it was mobilized. Any other interpretation is unthinkable. The union bureaucracy including its lower ranks does not operate in a vacuum. That they felt confident that there would not have been an explosion in the UAW in Detroit over their strikebreaking tactics and the fact that they were able to mobilize such a large goon squad was a direct result of the fact that so many white workers, deeply affected by the race question in recent years, either supported or were willing to allow the crushing of what they saw as a black struggle. The fact that the UAW bureaucracy was then able to negotiate the worst contract in its history with the only opposition coming from the largely white and historically dissident skilled trades was directly aided by the sharp racial situation and the unwillingness of conservatized white workers to fight the sellout. As an extreme example of what was at work, consider the case of the white worker who has been faced with the threat of the loss of thousands of dollars in property values as the result of the threat of changing neighborhoods. It is not hard to see how he would be unwilling to launch a struggle against a settlement which will cost him several hundreds of dollars in spendable income a year. For their part, understanding the racial hostility of white auto workers and thereby sensing the lack of large scale sentiment of immediate opposition to the contract, black workers largely succumbed to demoralization during contract ratification. The strikebreaking of the union leadership would have been unthinkable in an earlier period. Even in the period of deep political reaction of the fifties, they could not have undertaken such an action with impunity. The existence of racial antagonisms as a prop of the union bureaucracy and of the bourgeois order have been demonstrated in Detroit in their clearest form. But Detroit is merely where these conditions exist in their sharpest form and have broken through the surface. The same general tendencies are present throughout the American proletariat.

#### Comparison to the 1930's

A comparison with the situation in the thirties illustrates present conditions more clearly. Whole areas of the work force had been penetrated very marginally if at all by blacks. In general therefore except for specific exceptions largely in the South, blacks played a relatively peripheral role in the industrial proletariat. The race question while being important was much less the center of concern among white workers. The desperate conditions of recently migrated blacks and their prior lack of contact with the labor movement meant that blacks had a history of being used as scabs throughout the twenties and before. Nevertheless the double oppression of black workers meant that they could play an especially important role as militants in the class struggle. The CIO in undertaking a special approach to black workers succeeded in mobilizing their support for the union movement, and insured that this in fact happened. There existed the important danger, however, that as a result of the racist attitudes of white workers, the history of blacks as scabs, the racist

practices of the existing craft unions, and the predominantly white labor movement that blacks would be turned against the union movement seeing it as something that had little to offer them. (This is not to say that they could have been turned into an explicitly right-wing force.) This point was an important source of anti-union propaganda used by the bourgeoisie and large segments of the black petty bourgeoisie. There was a widespread attempt to mobilize blacks on a racial basis against the union movement. Companies would offer special welfare plans for blacks attempting to show that they and not the unions were the real promoters of the interests of blacks. There was a wholesale movement among black ministers responding to the pressure of the bourgeoisie to influence blacks against the union movement. These attempts failed largely as a result of the careful special attention which the CIO gave to the black question.

As a result of its success in winning blacks, the leading liberal black organizations, the NAACP and the Urban League, ended up giving nominal support to the union movement. Like the other events of the thirties all of this did not happen automatically. It was the aggressive work of communist militants, largely the Communist Party which had strong influence in the union movement, around the race question which was most directly responsible for prompting the special attention which the CIO gave the black question. As in other areas the influence of a prominent social force with a class struggle program played a decisive role in seeing that the race question as it related to the union movement was resolved in the interests of that movement rather than against it.

It is without question that racial prejudices were strong among white workers in the thirties. The relatively lesser role played by blacks in the work force made crude racial stereotypes even easier to accept than today. While by no means eliminating them, the work of the union movement in mobilizing both blacks and whites in common struggle was able to achieve a certain moderating of racial prejudices and at times there existed significantly more social intercourse between blacks and whites than at present. The race question was nowhere near as pervasive in the thirties as it is today. The work-force was much more racially homogeneous and the ability of racial divisions to cripple major class struggles was thereby less.

Today conditions differ considerably. In the major class struggles of the future there will be no basis to claim that the working-class movement has little to offer blacks. As a result of the historic circumstances through which they have passed and their qualitatively deeper penetration into unionized sectors of the proletariat, black workers will play a major role in initiating them. For their numbers blacks will play a disproportionate role in future working-class struggle and supply a disproportionate number of the leading militants including members of our own party. If the bourgeoisie succeeds in inflaming racial prejudices in the course of working-class struggle this will not merely have the effect of impeding the struggle as a whole while turning blacks against the movement, it will more fundamentally paralyze the American proletariat's ability to struggle. There even exists the danger that outbreaks of struggle in militant largely black sections of the proletariat will be crushed in a wave of racial backlash with the participation of white workers. In the thirties, while the CIO paid special attention to the needs of

blacks and succeeded in overcoming many of the worst racist practices of the old AFL, the union movement did not as a whole confront directly the question of racial oppression in society. It remained simply a movement for industrial unions. The question was postponed. Today it is directly on the agenda. The next massive proletarian movement will have to confront directly and early on the question of the equal treatment of all workers regardless of race. As a question confronting the American proletariat the race problem occupies center stage. A proletarian movement which does not inscribe clearly on its banner the slogan that all workers have equal rights will not go very far.

### Black Workers and Future Class Battles

As a result of the sharpened social crisis and the distance and seeming irrelevance of the anti-communist period of the fifties, the present period has seen the increasing openness of young workers to radical ideas. Nevertheless this has not been a simple linear development. At the present time one of the obstacles to militant struggle is the fact that whole layers of young workers have not learned from the preceding generation even the basic principles of trade union struggle. Racial polarization affects this even further. Young workers tend to adopt first the ideas of the older generation to which they have the closest contact. The racist and more politically conservative milieu among white workers affects the younger generation. At present we can expect that young blacks will in general be more open to revolutionary politics than their white counterparts. The general lack of understanding of principles of class struggle is a problem with both blacks and whites. The ossified and incredibly conservatized labor bureaucracy cannot teach the lessons of the past to the new generation. It provides little to attract them. It is not uncommon for young workers to see the union as something completely separate from themselves. Contract negotiation and ratification are merely the result of company and union collaboration designed to give them what they must be forced to accept. The older generation while remembering some of the traditions of the past is itself poorly equipped to teach them to the young. Moreover there has been the complete absence for over two decades of a militant class-struggle pole of any sort in the union movement. Even a mass reformist party of the working class would be capable of transmitting to a new generation some of the lessons of the past even if in a deformed way. In short there is little to inspire or attract young workers to the union movement and many of the best potential militants participate only marginally or not at all in union affairs. Whole layers of the young generation of workers are therefore without the ability to formulate even in a simple and confused way essential elements of a class struggle program on which to challenge the bureaucrats or lead militant actions. The existence of powerfully organized industrial unions is the firm foundation upon which the future militant explosions of the leading sections of the proletariat will be based. Nevertheless the new generation of militants which will be the leading force in future class struggles must learn and assimilate the gains of the past in order to go beyond them. Only increased class struggle will revive the old traditions and generate pressures to go beyond previous gains.

The response of the working class in the past year to the heightened social crisis has been contradictory in the extreme. Social

crisis does not always generate immediate opposition, but often confusion, demoralization, and passivity. Some of this has been at work. The situation has manifested all the contradictory elements present in the American working class and its historic problems. On the one hand there are militant fighting traditions on a purely economist level. On the other there is the lack of political traditions, the absence of reds in the class, and the problem of racial divisions. In San Francisco, traditionally the most militant and class-conscious section of the American working class and where race antagonism is considerably less than in the industrial cities of the mid-west and east, the bureaucracy nearly lost its hold during the threatened city-wide general strike. In West Virginia, the miners, largely white and with the memory of their victory over the pay board in '71 fresh in their minds, responded in a militant although programmatically very narrow way to the attempts to impose gas rationing during the oil crisis. On the other hand there has been the ability of the labor bureaucracy to maintain control over most of the working class and enforce its sellouts in the context of heavy inflation, decline in living standards, and the general discrediting of the American Government. (This has been somewhat modified in recent months. The end of the period of economic readjustment following the oil shortage, the decision not to reimpose wage and price controls, and the strengthening of the dollar as a result of the relatively lesser impact of higher oil prices on the U.S. economy have reduced the pressure on the labor bureaucracy. There has also been the shaking off of some initial confusion on the part of the workers and the general realization that a high rate of inflation is here to stay. As a result we have seen a large number of relatively mild strikes which have demanded higher wage settlements than in the past although still below the level of inflation. These have largely been narrowly economic struggles in the manner traditional with the American working class.)

Rather than fracturing, the union bureaucracy has even demonstrated a certain tendency to consolidate as seen by the motion of Woodcock toward the AFL-CIO, Heany's betrayal of the farmworkers in order to join hands with Fitzsimmons, and the rumored merger of the NMU and the SIU. The present period has not seen even one significant split in the labor bureaucracy even on a local or regional level. This is hardly surprising as it took three massive strikes led by reds in the thirties before the bureaucracy split with one wing feeling compelled to lead a movement for industrial unions in order to ward off the possibility of more revolutionary developments. At the moment there is no visible alternative to the trade union leadership. Our present forces are still too small and too freshly implanted to pose this at anything more than a local level. The increase in our forces, acquired experience and authority on their part, and the possibility that we may be thrust into the leadership of important local strikes means that we may emerge in the relatively near future as a significant and visible alternative to the present leadership and thus play something of the role of the communist militants in the thirties. In general our opponents on the left are too openly capitulatory to be expected to take an independent stance over a period of time. In any case the development of the class struggle in the U.S. is likely to be both painful and deeply contradictory. Sharp and militant struggles will mix with expressions of deep conser-

vatization. In the latter case the effects of recent racial shifts and exploitation of racial antagonisms on the part of the union bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie will play a major role. A likely outcome will be explosions which overrun the trade union bureaucracy and in the wake of their defeat the beginning of searching and probing for alternatives on a large scale.

In the coming class battles black workers will play a large and leading role completely disproportionate to their numbers in the proletariat and in society as a whole. Not only does the fact of their racial oppression make them generally less susceptible to the propaganda of bourgeois democracy, but the specific course of the black struggles in recent decades has prepared them for this role. The social-patriotic propaganda during the WWII period had far less impact on blacks than whites. At the time of the Vietnam War most blacks rather readily came to a position of opposition to it. The anti-communist period of the fifties hardly penetrated the black population then in the early stages of the Civil Rights movement. As a result today black workers, with the exception of union bureaucrats, have little outright hostility to revolutionary politics. Most important however in preparing blacks for a leading role in future class struggles is the deeper penetration of blacks into all areas of American society and especially into key sectors of the proletariat. This has a profoundly contradictory effect. If on the one hand it makes the race question that much more pervasive as a source of division, it at the same time lays the basis for more firmly confronting and overcoming that division in the next period of major class struggle.

The next period of social struggle on the part of blacks must begin at the point where the Civil Rights movement left off and further take into account all the changes made since then. The larger number of blacks in the proletariat means not only greater social weight for black workers, and there is the general social perception of this, but the understanding on the part of blacks that their previous gains were won through struggle as in fact they were. This is an invaluable historic lesson. In addition the continued high degree of social motion among blacks if only on an individual basis is an indication of a continued high level of social expectation which must eventually make itself felt through class struggle. Young blacks will seek to express their social discontent through their newly acquired positions. The next period of black struggle will correspond to a period of major class struggle in which black workers will play their leading role. By being more easily won to a program of struggle for the whole class, blacks will provide a major level for activating the class around a program which will include as an indispensable part the ending of all racial oppression. Moreover, any working-class movement with a heavy black participation and leadership will have a powerfully attracting effect on the masses of poorer black workers in non-unionized jobs and among those living in poverty. They too have been influenced by the recent course of the black movement even if their only direct experience has been through frustrated aspirations. There remains a strong drive for upward mobility and a greater role in society. This insures that a strong proletarian movement with heavily black leadership will win easily the support of the great masses of blacks. Needless to say the lead-

ing role of blacks will reflect itself in the composition of our party and as we grow we can expect to make major advances in black recruitment especially in the proletariat. A large revolutionary propaganda group numbering several thousand members can expect to have a heavily black composition up to and even greater than half of its membership.

The racial transformation of American society in the past few decades marks a fundamental historic episode. The changes cannot easily be reversed either in terms of the social positions occupied by blacks or in the consciousness of the black masses. Periods of political reaction and economic downturn will take their toll disproportionately among blacks. This will at best produce a quantitative change. The reversal of these conditions will lead once again to an increase in the expectations of blacks and their struggle to regain their lost positions. While under specific conditions episodic revivals of movements for black civil rights and even nationalist movements are not impossible they will be far more transitory than the Civil Rights movement or the Garvey movement of the twenties. Even in the sixties the black nationalist movement took little hold. Today the Black Muslims, with a real membership of probably about 100,000 and with a genuine nationalist program, have little influence in shaping black opinion. The entire thrust of the social movement and goals of the great masses of blacks is in the opposite direction. The NAACP, CORE, and other Civil Rights organizations had far more influence when they were of a size comparable to the Muslims. A revolutionary party with 100,000 blacks will be a major social force. The degree of integration into American society at present assures that blacks will continue even when faced with adverse circumstances to pursue social equality with whites. Only a major crushing defeat of the proletariat on the scale of the 1934 defeat in Germany will be capable of removing blacks from their central role in the proletariat. In so doing such a defeat must necessarily smash the union movement and would mean the postponing of the revolution for a whole period. A 1905 defeat will not succeed in doing this. Militant labor struggle with heavy black leadership will inevitably bring hysterical racist propaganda in an attempt to defeat it. (At present in the Bay Area the attempt to inflame racial antagonisms, the Zebra stop and search, and the recent arrest of 14 Black Panthers are only a small taste of what is in store.) Such a defeat of a working-class movement will bring with it a greater weight of repression on black militants, even their indiscriminate murder at times and possibly pogroms on the part of rightists and police. Nevertheless short of the bourgeoisie being faced with the necessity and the ability to completely crush the labor movement most blacks will retain their positions in the economy. Indeed the bourgeoisie will have an interest in maintaining the smooth functioning of the capitalist economy and avoiding the massive social and economic disruption that the wholesale elimination of blacks from the industrial proletariat would cause.

The small number of black SL cadre in the present period has affected our work in several ways. In all of our work, on campus and especially in the unions, it has meant the relatively reduced ability to effectively intersect blacks. Consequently our work and our program have not received a completely fair test, one which is

a true indication of the present social situation in the U.S. We have been effectively cut off, for example, in our ability to intervene in the milieu which created a mass following for the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit. We must introduce an important corrective in trying to gauge the response of the labor movement to our supporters in trade unions. It is significant nonetheless that so many of the initial contacts of our trade union supporters have been black. As the number of our black comrades increases we will be more able to correctly judge the response of the proletariat to our program and insure a steady stream of black recruits. The lack of black cadre has affected us in another related and equally important way. We lack intimate contact with the most socially active section of the population in recent years. We have therefore only an indirect and somewhat abstract understanding of the social views of the great masses of blacks and the impact of recent historic events on them. A greater number of black cadre will deepen and enrich our understanding of the social conditions in the vitally important section of the proletariat. As far as future black leadership in our party, this will of course, with our present small number of blacks, present a problem. There will be a corrective however. Our first significant layer of black recruits can be expected to include exceptionally good human material who will progress rapidly.

#### Transitional Organizations

I would like to re-examine in light of the above analysis the question of a black transitional organization linked to the party. To pose the question more concretely, this organization is generally considered to mean a black section of our party, an organizational form analogous to the youth section which we already have and the women's section which we project. The black section would have a well defined organizational and political relationship to the party. It would be part of the common movement and subject to its common discipline. At the same time party members operating in such an organization would not be required to maintain party discipline and the issues under discussion in the party would be the property of the common movement including the black section. Such a relationship is absolutely required in order that a section of the party may serve its function of assisting the development of members of a particular group to the consciousness and commitment demanded of party membership. There would be an exchange of representatives between the leading bodies of the section and the party thereby giving an important democratic voice to members of the oppressed section of the class while maintaining firm party guidance. Finally the program of the section would be the full program of the party.

Any organizational form set up by the party is a response to a particular political need and is an attempt to concretely facilitate the work of the party in dealing with a specific problem. This is true of united front committees to struggle around immediate issues confronting the workers, trade union caucuses to struggle for power around a revolutionary program in the unions, and the RCY whose primary purpose is the development of young communists and the training of future generations of revolutionary leaders. A section of the party, having a definite political and organizational relation-

ship to the party, is necessary in certain cases to deal with the particular needs of a certain section of the population. This is true in the case of both the women's and youth section although the political problems involved are considerably different in both cases. In having a well defined relationship to the party the section therefore is particularly suited to deal with a certain range of political problems. We do not propose the same relationship for our trade union caucuses as we do for the RCY. Party members maintain discipline in the trade union caucus and members of the caucus who are not members of the party do not have full access to the internal life of the party. These caucus members participate in the struggle of the caucus for power in the union but differ from party members in their full understanding and commitment to the Marxist program. The party is able to maintain its leading role by virtue of the fact that the most developed militants in the caucus operate as a fraction within the caucus. The political development of caucus members is answered by proposing party membership to them rather than by opening up the life of the party to them. The caucus therefore differs considerably from a section of the party.

The general relationship of the section to the party is contained in the formulation of organizational independence but political subordination. Essential to this is the creation of an independent organizational life for the party's section. By this we hope to create a situation in which the comrades involved in the work of the section, by having their own leadership, press, and by democratically making decisions relating to their work will develop their capacity as revolutionaries and be prepared for a full future role in the party. They must therefore have full access to the internal life of the common movement. Moreover because such a section develops its own internal political life and decision-making it must be tightly politically subordinated to the party and in certain situations be guided by the party's leadership. In creating the RCY we worked out the essential political and organizational forms through which this relationship is maintained. Moreover a section by virtue of its somewhat different social composition, its intervention into certain arenas of work, and the difference in the character and tone of its propaganda can have an important impact on those who might otherwise have a more difficult time in making their way to the program of the party as a result of social barriers created by oppression in capitalist society. In undertaking this work it is clear why the program of a party section must be the full program of the party. The work of a section is not to mobilize a particular group around a portion of the party's program but to achieve the full mobilization and assimilation of a certain group into the movement led by the vanguard party. For this it requires the full party program.

#### Youth Section

In the case of a youth organization the specific working out of all of this is readily evident. Youth lack political experience and development. They are somewhat socially removed from the adult party members. In internal party life they can be easily dominated by older and more experienced comrades. Moreover the fact that they have these difficulties means there is an important question of the youth's democratic voice in the common movement. Despite the fact that the

only ongoing youth arenas in American society are the campuses and these are predominantly non-proletarian, we generally maintain our young comrades' membership in the youth organization until their party tasks necessitate their removal. This is done in the interest of their political development. It is without question that the RCY has made an enormous contribution to our movement. It has drawn our young comrades into full political participation in our movement far more easily and rapidly than if the party had simply worked the campuses in its own name. The RCY genuinely makes its own decisions, elects its own leadership nationally and locally and produces its own press with only occasional guidance from the party.

Despite all this the maintenance of a youth group is not a principled question. Under conditions of illegality we would have to liquidate our youth group. This would mean that many youth members would simply be sympathizers of the party. This would be an unfortunate necessity imposed upon us by a situation beyond our control. The entire experience of the communist movement including our own experience has shown however that when it is possible the creation of a youth section of the Leninist party can be an invaluable aid in developing young comrades and in intervening into youth arenas. It is not a question of mobilizing and assimilating the mass of student youth into our party. This predominantly petty-bourgeois strata will inevitably split under the impact of the class struggle. In what proportions of course depends on the concrete relationship of forces at a particular moment. Rather it is a question of fully integrating those youth, both on campus and in society at large, who can be won to our program into the work of our movement.

#### Women's Section

The women's section of our party is scheduled to play an enormous role in party work among women as a result of the importance of the women's question to the class struggle. Because we are still a small propaganda group and have not seen widespread class struggle, our experience has not brought us directly into contact with the important role a women's section will play in mobilizing the masses of proletarian women. Nevertheless we have important experience on the question of a women's section. The fact of all women's special oppression in capitalist society has meant historically that women's movements need not develop in the course of class struggle. Since class questions have a vital role in the conditions of life of proletarian women, such movements have not as a rule deeply involved working-class women. They have been predominantly petty-bourgeois and have hardened around a bourgeois program. The women's liberation movement which developed out of the New Left and soon consolidated around feminism is an example of this. Nevertheless while the movement existed in a fairly fluid state, it was an important arena for our intervention and one out of which we gained a good number of recruits. The fact that the New Left women's liberation movement arose specifically in response to women's oppression and was predominantly if not exclusively composed of women created difficulties in our intervening simply in the name of the party. In order to overcome these difficulties we created the Women and Revolution group which in fact, although it was never formalized, functioned as a women's section of our party. In addition the situation demanded special

propaganda which could not be adequately covered in the party's press which must reflect the entire work of the party. As a result W&R had its own press. The purpose of this press and the W&R group was not simply to propagandize or intervene only around that section of our program dealing with the women's question, but starting with an analysis of women's oppression and the presentation of our program for women, to develop its relationship to our full program and Marxist analysis. Simultaneously we sought not simply to mobilize women around that section of our program dealing with women but using our intervention on the women's question as a basis for mobilizing around our full program and recruiting to our movement. The existence of the W&R group, its press, its arenas, and its own internal life and discussion played an important role in facilitating the intervention of the party into the women's movement and recruiting women to the party. The fact of women's oppression and the deforming effects of the women's liberation milieu meant that our approach to potential women recruits was made easier through the intervention of the women's section. When the movement dried up and no longer provided an opportunity for intervention and recruitment, the W&R group was liquidated in favor of a high level propagandistic intervention through the journal.

It is not impossible that a petty-bourgeois women's movement along the lines of that of a few years ago could recur. We may very well want to reform a group such as W&R to effectively intervene in it. In addition heightened trade union activity in the context of the prevailing climate of opinion might generate a viable women's wing of the trade union movement. Such a movement would be generated by real activity at the base unlike CLUW which is simply a bureaucratic production designed to increase the existing bureaucrats' authority in the context of heightened social consciousness around the women's question. If we have a sufficient number of women trade unionists, the formation of a women's section would be a likely possibility.

The ultimate importance of a women's section goes far beyond these particular examples. The task of mobilizing the masses of proletarian women, of raising them to political life, of winning their support for the proletarian movement and of bringing many of them into the party is one of the major tasks confronting a mass proletarian party. A mass party would be in a position to create women's arenas and struggles for women's rights. The specific nature of women's oppression, their closer ties to the home, family, and the church, their more marginal participation in the work force, means that the masses of proletarian women are more backward politically, less able immediately to understand and support the revolutionary program, and capable of being used as a vehicle for reactionary pressures on the workers movement. The creation of a women's section is the best means to assist the party in meeting these specific problems. The need for a women's section flows therefore not from the need to do work around the women's question or to combat women's oppression. This is a necessity in all periods whether or not the party has a women's section. It flows rather out of the need to make a special approach to women in order to insure their revolutionary mobilization. The different social composition of a women's section, its internal life, its own press with its special approach to all

social issues relating it to the conditions of women, and its work in mobilizing women in struggle not only around the women's question but around all aspects of the party's program are the concrete ways in which the party facilitates its approach to proletarian women and their integration into the revolutionary movement. The existence of a women's section will undoubtedly mean a certain re-division of labor between it and the party as the women's section will be more directly responsible for intervening into many women's arenas. The mere existence of these arenas at various times is not the most immediate reason requiring the creation of a women's section. In many arenas the party can simply intervene directly. Rather it is to respond to the special conditions of women's oppression which demands a special propagandistic and organizational approach that the party creates a women's section.

### Trade Union Caucuses

The reason why trade union caucuses are not sections of the party is fairly clear. Trade unionists as trade unionists are not a group whose access to the party is impeded by special conditions of oppression. The trade union caucus is the arm of the party for a struggle for power in a particular union. As such it requires a full transitional program but its program need not include all the programmatic positions of the party. Caucus members who are not party members are differentiated from party members in consciousness and commitment. This differentiation is purely individual however and not social. The further development of caucus members is met by posing party membership to them. In their work in the caucus with its leading members who will be party members, non-party caucus members will be drawn into the party. This is not to say that caucus members who are youth or women will not have special problems. The caucus while it must raise the questions of special oppression in its program is not the organizational vehicle designed to directly deal with the social problems confronting a particular group.

### "Black and Red"

In order to see how the question of special organizational forms will intersect the black question, I would like to examine our most extensive public statement on the matter which is "Black and Red." An examination of the formulations made in the article will clarify the specific nature of the confusion I believe exists. In the first place the situation into which "Black and Red" was attempting to intervene was an exceptionally difficult one. The massive social movement among blacks was completely independent of the labor movement. One section of the proletariat was in the course of intense social motion while the rest remained passive and hostile. The black movement was therefore highly deformed failing to generate a class struggle wing and remaining under bourgeois and then eventually nationalist leadership. The SL was very small with an even smaller number of black cadre. The ability of revolutionaries to intervene with a significant impact was therefore virtually non-existent. In speaking about the vacuum of leadership the article is completely correct. A revolutionary leadership for the black struggle could not however have been simply a community leadership. The particular

conditions in which it existed gave to the black struggle an exaggerated community orientation. In reality the road lay in breaking out of this orientation and penetrating the labor movement. There is a tendency in the article to make simple linear projections on the basis of a deformed situation.

The article makes a call for "revolutionary ghetto organizations," sees as the incipient form of such organizations various tenant councils, and calls on them to broaden their activities including the undertaking of armed self defense of black neighborhoods. Such councils in fact would be workers committees in black neighborhoods. They would be the beginning of dual power and would have to confront a whole series of tasks which would include the organization of defense and the control of local prices, rents, and the distribution of goods. Viewed simply in isolation the mood in the black community was undoubtedly ripe at times for the creation of organs of alternative political power. The black struggle did not exist in isolation however. The general passivity of the labor movement eventually provided an absolute bloc to the straightforward development of dual power in the black community. Neighborhoods are inherently more difficult to organize than the work place where a tight system of social organization and common interests already exists. Traditionally organs of dual power in working class neighborhoods do not exist in the absence of a militant labor movement and dual power in the plants. To create and sustain them requires that they have links to other forms of working-class struggle. That the situation in the black community could have come to the brink of dual power in the sixties is an indication of the enormous discrepancy in a desire for militant struggle between black and white workers, the extent of the general hostility of the white proletariat to the black struggle, and the highly deformed character of that struggle. The immediate task confronting the black movement in the mid-sixties was for it to be used as a means of activating the entire labor movement around class struggle demands which paid specific attention to the needs of blacks. Only the decisive leadership of the labor movement could have brought to fulfillment the impulses in the black ghetto. The events since then confirm this analysis in the negative. Workers committees were never formed in the black neighborhood. In the absence of class-struggle leadership the movement spent itself in spontaneous riots. It has been followed by the active pursuit of blacks for better positions in society. In the context of the sixties, had workers committees and defense organizations ever existed in the black neighborhoods they would have undoubtedly been brutally smashed. This gives added emphasis to the need for militant class-wide struggle.

In the future the situation will look considerably different. The historic lessons of the Civil Rights movement will make themselves felt. The continually changing racial configuration of society will also contribute. A leading role will be played by young black workers with newly acquired positions in important sectors of the proletariat. From the outset therefore black struggle will mean class struggle and the labor movement will be faced with the necessity to confront directly the race question or be stopped in its tracks. The call for a "revolutionary ghetto organization" will be a meaningless abstraction. The situation will require a whole series of

class organizations depending on the state of development of the class movement and the situation it directly confronts. These will include both organizations directly dealing with the race question as well as those which in the course of their work, e.g. around unemployment, defense, will be required to give special attention to the race question. (The term "ghetto" is in itself a bad abstraction and not very useful in Marxist analysis. As applied to blacks it actually covers a whole gradient of neighborhoods, ranging from areas of squalor and high lumpenization to whole stretches of proletarian black neighborhoods, and even those neighborhoods where better paid blacks and some black petty-bourgeoisie live.)

In defining the need for a black transitional organization I believe "Black and Red" was directly influenced by the situation into which it was trying to intervene. I assume here that the black transitional organization to which it is referring is a black section of the party analogous to our women's section. In calling for this organization the article cites as the reason the "special needs and problems" of blacks. This is too abstract. In analyzing any situation and the optimum method of organizational intervention on the part of the party, the specific political character must be taken into account. "Black and Red" does not do this in sufficient detail. In addition it makes a number of specific errors.

The article states: "Because of the generations of exceptional oppression, degradation, and humiliation, Black people as a group have special needs and problems necessitating additional and special forms of struggle." Then later: "With its program of transitional struggle around the felt needs of a section of the class, the (transitional) organization mobilizes serious struggle by the largest possible number." I believe that here there is a basic confusion between two interrelated but still somewhat separate points. On the one hand there is the need of the revolutionary party to struggle around the black question. It is today the single most important immediate question facing the American proletariat. The need to struggle around it belongs to the party and the common movement as a whole whether or not the party has a black section. The second point is the question of whether or not the party needs a black section. This question boils down to whether there is the need for the particular special approach to the black masses that a black section would entail. The party's program on the black question is not the property of the black section but of the common movement. Moreover the party's program is also the program of the section whose primary task is not simply struggle around the black question but the mobilization of blacks around the whole program of the party. ("Black and Red" is also confused on this point and seems to imply that the program of the black transitional organization would be some portion of the party's program dealing with the black question.) As with the case with the woman's section the existence of a black section will mean a redivision of labor in the arenas worked by it and the party. Nevertheless the question of whether or not a black section is needed must be answered apart from the need of the party to initiate work on the black question which is pressing in any case.

Concerning the need for a transitional black organization the article states: "Such a transitional organization is necessary for

Negro workers at a time when large sections of the working class are saturated with race hatred." This is incorrect. The character of racial attitudes and their effect on the class struggle is rather complicated. The greater role of blacks in American society over the course of the last two decades has done a lot to break down crude racial stereotypes. Many racist white workers often make exceptions to their racial categorizations when speaking about black workers who work directly with them. Moreover in part racist attitudes on the part of white workers embody a healthy proletarian dislike for the lumpenproletariat. (There are also sharp antagonisms between black workers and lumpen blacks both of whom live in the same "ghetto.") While racist attitudes cannot be expected to completely disappear until after the socialist revolution, in the course of class struggle and especially with a leading role played by blacks they will be greatly reduced. The key tasks of the party on the race question are twofold. The party having both black and white cadre must come to be seen as the leadership of the class by both black and white workers. Secondly the party must win both blacks and whites to a program of class struggle which includes as a central slogan the demand that all workers be treated equally without regard to race. All other tasks on the race question including the need for a black section must be derived from the necessity of the party to meet these two goals. The existence of racist attitudes by white workers is only one of a number of considerations which determine the degree of difficulty which the party will have in appealing to blacks. It is in the final analysis a secondary consideration. Today blacks can be relatively easily won to a revolutionary program despite the pervasive racism in society.

#### The Need for a Black Section?

As I mentioned in discussing the youth and women's sections, the necessity for this particular form of organization flows from the existence of certain social barriers to the effective assimilation of certain groups into party life and in the case of women to their general mobilization in support of the proletarian revolution. In order to determine the necessity of a black section the relationship of blacks to the working-class movement must be examined concretely. The general features of the relationship of women to the working-class movement are rather constant in capitalist society although they can change quantitatively. The specific nature of women's oppression makes them more backward and creates the problem of their integration into the revolutionary movement. The youth question also remains relatively constant. Racial oppression is more complicated in that the relationship of a racially oppressed caste to the labor movement can change.

Certainly in the thirties a black section of the revolutionary party would have proved useful. As a result of their racial oppression and their rather peripheral role in the working class, blacks could have been turned against the labor movement. A black section would have directly aided the party in confronting these problems and in helping to integrate blacks into the party. Both the economic and political changes that occurred in the Civil Rights movement and afterwards have altered conditions fundamentally. Nevertheless as a

result of the deformed nature of the black movement in the previous decade, and especially since a revolutionary party was not in a position to fundamentally alter the course of the movement, a black section probably was a necessity to facilitate the intervention of the party into the movement. While episodic movements for black rights may occur, a deep and thoroughgoing Civil Rights movement will not recur despite Jesse Jackson's call for it, for precisely the reason the first one fell apart. Changes since then have only further assured this.

On the present terrain of the American working class and in view of the inevitable course of development of future class struggles, a black section will not be necessary. The fact that black workers will be more readily won to the entire class program of the party, form a large part of its membership including many of its best proletarian militants, and in general play an especially prominent role in all class struggles means that the specific problems necessitating the creation of a black section will not be present. This is not to say that the party will encounter no deformations of consciousness as a result of the particular experiences of blacks. The question concretely is whether these problems will best be met and solved through the creation of a black section. A party which is very heavily black will meet with few directly racial barriers to its further recruitment of blacks. In fact it is likely to be slandered in the bourgeois press as a largely black movement and even partially perceived to be such on the part of white workers. In addition the leading role blacks will play in class struggles will assure them full democratic participation in the party. Moreover a heavily black party can be expected to be able to appeal more easily to the masses of poorer blacks than would be expected in a racially homogeneous population. There will be problems with sections of the black lumpen-proletariat but there is little danger that they will be firmly integrated into a right-wing movement. In any situation there is the important question of the proper social intersection of the party with the working class. In the process of transforming ourselves into a considerably larger propaganda group and even into a small mass party in the course of future working-class struggles, our party must necessarily have a heavy black component or it will not accurately reflect the real conditions of American society. The question of black recruitment must be confronted directly. If we are successful in achieving the proper racial composition we will not need a black section. If we are not successful very little will help us.

The experience of the early Communist Party in the U.S. is useful in examining the question of a black section. The comparison I wish to make is with the foreign language federation rather than the black transitional organization which the CP set up in the twenties. It is certainly true that conditions among foreign workers then were considerably different than among blacks today. They were a larger percentage of the working class although no particular nationality was larger. They had a higher previous level of culture than blacks who have migrated from the South. There was no specific racial barrier to their effective assimilation which they largely achieved during the boom period of the twenties. Nevertheless they faced particular problems of discrimination and had been prepared by history

to play a leading role in the class struggles of the time. The early membership of the CP was overwhelmingly recruited from this section of the proletariat. It was perceived by native American workers to be a foreign movement and had difficulty in reaching them. While the foreign language federations were not sections of the party, they were organizations within the common movement which had an overwhelming composition of workers of their respective nationalities. Because of the especially advanced consciousness of the foreign workers the existence of the foreign language federations played a deforming role and gave rise to particular political deviations. The proper course would have been to liquidate them into the party, while making special considerations in view of language difficulties. It seems inconceivable to recommend to the early American CP, the creation of Lettish and Russian sections of the party despite the fact that these workers faced particular needs and problems.

As conditions stand now the development of the revolutionary movement in the United States is likely to encounter the deviation of black vanguardism. If blacks were less integrated into key sections of the proletariat, pervasive racism would be likely to stifle black radicalism. In view of the enormously favorable concentration of blacks in key cities and sections of the work force, blacks working class militancy will continuously be generated and the continued existence of racism and racial oppression is likely to lead certain sections of blacks to the conclusion of some sort of black exceptionalism. The League of Revolutionary Black Workers provides us with an early example of this. While a black section would not be all black, its composition would have a heavy black majority. The concentration of many of the best proletarian militants and a generally politically more advanced section of the proletariat into an independent organization within the common movement is likely to have a deforming effect. It may even lead at important moments to conflicting command centers. In short a black section would have an inordinate weight and will likely give rise to political deviations. Another alternative is that its existence would be misunderstood by the black masses who have been prepared by history to be fairly easily won to a program of revolutionary integrationism.

The example of the Arab workers in Detroit provides an example of the different sort of relationships that can exist between an oppressed racial minority and the general labor movement. The Arab workers demonstrate a fairly extreme form of a particular type of relationship. Strong barriers exist to their effective integration into the labor movement. They come from a completely different cultural background, suffer language difficulties, and often are not even citizens. Their consciousness demonstrates the corresponding deformations. On the one hand they participated almost to a man in a political strike against the UAW's buying of Israeli war bonds. This example shows the enormous revolutionary potential this oppressed group has if it can be effectively tapped by a revolutionary party. On the other hand they were the first to break a strike by black workers who walked out over the lack of a contract last fall. While Arab workers form a large proportion of the work force in certain plants, 20-25% in Dodge Main, their general perception of themselves is of being a rather peripheral part of the labor movement.

The particularly desperate conditions which they face, their rather small number in the UAW, and the racism of other workers toward them meant that they rejected the plant-wide walkout seeing it, as well as the labor movement as a whole, as having little to do with their own particular interests. These are the sort of problems which can be most effectively met by the creation of an Arab section of the revolutionary party in Detroit. Such a section is the particular organizational form best equipped to make the special approach to Arab workers which is required. It can effectively overcome the language barrier, draw them into political life, mobilize them around the party's program, and assist their integration into the party.

While the existence of a number of specially oppressed racial and ethnic groups, Arabs, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans, feeds into and overlaps with the race question in American society especially as it is seen by white workers, the particular history and conditions of each must be examined separately in determining the party's approach to work among them. They cannot be lumped together. Often sharp racial antagonisms exist in particular plants and areas between them and blacks as well as whites. It is very likely that our work will require not only the establishment of an Arab section in Detroit but a Chicano section, especially in the Southwest, and a Puerto Rican section in New York. In the last two cases these particular groups' integration into the work force on the whole is below that of blacks. For their part black workers demonstrate considerably different behavior from the Arabs in Detroit. Their whole history of a strong drive for integration and the greater integration into the proletariat which they have achieved in recent years assures them in almost every conceivable circumstance of a leading role in future class struggles.

All of this is not to say that the party's work around the black question will not necessitate special organizational forms. In the South, in other areas, and in plants where the question of racial discrimination is a major problem the party will want to set up special committees to fight discrimination. These will have the character of united fronts but will also serve to bring additional militants around the party. The party will almost certainly want to have a black commission and even a special press devoted to the needs of blacks. Racial oppression and the different experiences of blacks will create the need for additional propaganda directed toward them. All of these can exist independently of a black section. In addition almost every area of the party's work and every organization the party sets up will touch on the race question. Unemployment leagues and defense organizations will have to deal with the race issue as a result of the greater toll which unemployment and bourgeois repression will have on blacks. A black section however will not be required as a result of the enormous role which black workers are scheduled to play in the party and in the leadership of future class struggles. Only a fundamental qualitative change in the positions of blacks in the proletariat will recreate the need for the revolutionary party to have a black section.

8 July 1974

by Joseph Seymour

Despite much perceptive, quite valuable analysis, comrade Cramer's document "General Comments..." tends toward liquidationism of the black question. It presents the black question as essentially internal to the labor movement, denying the decisive importance of ~~extra-labor, generally ghetto-based struggles~~ viewing these as marginal political phenomena. ~~The negative conclusions about a black section flow logically from this conception.~~

### Black Oppression and Class Structure

The central, although implicit, concept underlying comrade Cramer's analysis is that of a hard political and social division between the black proletariat and the lumpen and petty bourgeois sections of the black population. This produces a systematic ~~underestimation of the capacity of some form of trans-class political program to influence the black proletariat. If, in fact, there existed a clear, stable political class differentiation within the black population, it raises the question as to what concretely black oppression consists of. What is the black question?~~

Comrade Cramer's encapsulation of a program against black oppression is "all workers have equal rights" or again "all workers be treated equally without regard to race." The black question is thus reduced to that of democratic rights for a section of the working class.

~~The central economic aspect of black oppression at the present time is enormously differential concentration in the reserve army of the unemployed, producing a proletarian layer broadly overlapping and interpenetrating the lumpen population. Millions of blacks hold inherently marginal, poorly paying jobs and are subject to lengthy, periodic unemployment. The black industrial proletariat has numerous and strong affiliations with the lumpen population. A typical black factory operative has a mother who is on welfare, and brother who is who is junkie and a friend who is in prison. In contrast to his white counterpart, the capacity of a black semi-skilled, unionized worker to transmit his economic status to his children is very insecure. Street gang youth are often as not the children of socially stable, black workers. The trans-class, solidarity of the "black community" has a strong objective foundation and cannot be dismissed as a passing political mood.~~

~~Much of the democratic content of the black question arises from the racist victimization of the lumpen population by the state apparatus (e.g. promiscuous police brutality, cutting welfare benefits in response to a more racist political climate). The lumpen question is inextricably bound up with racial oppression in the democratic sense of the term.~~

### Is There a Black Proletarian Consciousness?

It is so evident that there does not now exist a characteristic proletarian, as distinct from plebian, political outlook among blacks (much of comrade Cramer's analysis leads to no other con-

clusions) that I will limit myself to a few of the more important indications.

If there does exist a distinctly proletarian political outlook among black workers, how does this manifest itself? Comrade Cramer correctly observes that younger black workers are generally alienated from the unions, so that labor reformism/economism is not a characteristic outlook. Thus, a characteristically proletarian expression could only be some form of black syndicalism. Despite seemingly favorable circumstances, the past few years has not witnessed the growth of black syndicalism counterposing itself to the ghetto/lumpen "black movement." The highest expression of black proletarian radicalism, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW) did not embrace a purely workerist, point-of-production outlook. The demands for black foremen and for channeling UAW dues money into the "community" indicated that the LRBW had not broken from a trans-class "black movement" concept, but rather saw workers as the strategic (not political) vanguard of such a movement. And the contradiction between the LRBW's class and race loyalty was resolved through a split which took the proletarian wing out of the "black movement" altogether via nativist left Stalinism (the Communist League).

If a sharp political separation existed between black workers and lumpens, the Wallace-Nixon-Agnew "law and order" campaign would have found indifference, if not support, among wide sections of the black population, since it was essentially directed at lumpen youth. In fact, the mass of black working people correctly reacted to the "law and order" campaign as an intensification of general racial oppression. Police murders of black youth, pretty much regardless of what the victims actually did, polarize cities along racial lines without significant class differentiation within the black population. On the personal level, black workers are undoubtedly hostile to lumpen violence, but they do not support state suppression of the black lumpen masses.

Comrade Cramer notes the widespread sympathy among younger blacks for nationalism. Contemporary black nationalism tends to exemplify the militant as a ghetto/lumpen agitator. Angela Davis and George Jackson are far greater hero figures to young black workers than any labor movement figure. Not unrelated to this is the popular glorification of the lumpen-desperado--expounded in blackploitation movies with the characteristic super-pimp hero. Thus, to a disturbing extent, young black workers are influenced by lumpen cultural vanguardism.

Organically, the black masses tend toward a race-caste/plebian political outlook, associated either with a separatist or integrationist program generally depending upon circumstances. Given the inherently racist character of American business unionism, it is improbable that class consciousness will develop among blacks in a narrow economist form. Rather proletarian socialist consciousness can make deep inroads among black workers in the form of party loyalty. However, the process of transforming a race-caste/plebian outlook to a proletarian socialist one will necessarily be partial, uneven and most importantly reversible in the face of racist upsurges

among whites. In other words, as long as ~~white supremicisim is dominant, some form of trans-class program will be a contender for the loyalty of the black masses, the high proportion of black industrial workers notwithstanding.~~

### The Extra-Labor "Black Movement"

Comrade Cramer systematically understates the importance that extra-labor, community-centered black organizations have had on the American left. Thus, his treatment of the '30's omits any mention of the tremendous burgeoning of ghetto-based organizations around such issues as evictions, welfare and police atrocities. These organizations were predominantly CP front groups, which competed with liberal reformism of the NAACP-type on the one hand, and nationalist sects, on the other. Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man and Richard Wright's section in The God That Failed give a good picture of the CP's ghetto-based black work. The CP's solid organizational base in the black community gave it a distinct and important advantage over the Rooseveltian union bureaucracy, and unfortunately also over the Trotskyists.

Also symptomatic of comrade Cramer's tendency in this regard is his too dismissive attitude toward contemporary Pan-Africanist organizations. While in a general sense Pan-Africanism does represent a rightward development from revolutionary black nationalism, the Pan-Africanist organizations continue to interact with the ostensibly socialist left. At this spring's African Liberation Day in Washington, the effective intervention of the Black Workers Congress and Communist League succeeded in polarizing the Pan-Africanist organizations around the slogan, "black workers must lead."

Shortly thereafter, a no less significant event took place showing a similar political dynamic displaced to the right. An openly CP organized rally "against repression" in Raleigh, N.C. drew 5,000 people and induced Ralph Abernathy, who was one of the speakers, to make an anti-anti-communist declaration. Thus, there have been two recent, rather dramatic indications that the "black movement," both in its separatist/nationalist and liberal reformist wings, strongly interacts with the ostensibly socialist left.

Extra-labor, ghetto based struggles will continue to decisively affect the political consciousness of all sections of American society, particularly blacks. Failure of a revolutionary vanguard to intervene in black community-based struggles and to fight for leadership within the "black movement" will be an absolute barrier to winning over the mass of black workers, that is, to socialist revolution in this country. We cannot win over the mass of black workers solely through activities at the point-of-production and in the unions. A major obstacle to recruiting our increasing number of black trade union and also student contacts has been our relative lack of activity centered on the black question, possibly giving the false impression that we have a Debsian and/or syndicalist attitude on the black question.

### The Purpose of a Black Section

Given this racist society, blacks are pervasively distrustful

of and resistant to white political leadership. This is particularly the case when blacks are organized on a community basis rather than as workers or student activists. The formal exclusion of whites from organizations set up to fight some form of black oppression is common and is a far older and broader phenomenon than 1960's type black nationalism.

It is obvious that to do ghetto-based black work will require special forms of organization, the highest expression being the black section of the party. It is possible to substitute for a section of the party various ad hoc organizations. However, a section is qualitatively superior as a stable pole of attraction to those who come to revolutionary politics through ghetto-based struggles and the "black movement." The purpose of a black section is to fight for hegemony within the conventionally defined "black movement" which tends to be organized on a community basis in response to the extra-labor oppression of the black people.

Not all, or even most, blacks will be recruited through the black section. However, most black contacts, regardless of arena, will view the activities of the black section as a decisive test of our party's genuinely communist, and not workerist, struggle against racial oppression.

#### Concluding Summary

I. The objective economic basis of black oppression is enormously differential concentration in the reserve army of the unemployed, producing a proletarian layer broadly overlapping and interpenetrating the lumpen population.

II. Much of the democratic content of the black question derives from the racist victimization of the lumpen population by the state apparatus.

III. Organically the black masses tend toward a race-caste/plebian political outlook. The overcoming of that characteristic outlook through loyalty to a proletarian socialist party will necessarily be partial, uneven and--most importantly--in the mass, reversible.

IV. Extra-labor movement, generally ghetto-based, black struggle will continue to play a decisive role in shaping the political consciousness of all sections of American society, particularly blacks. Failure of the revolutionary vanguard to intervene in and strive for leadership in such struggles will be an absolute obstacle to winning over the mass of black workers.

V. The central purpose of a black section is to fight for hegemony within the conventionally defined "black movement" which tends to be organized on a community basis in response to the extra-labor oppression of the black people.

11 August 1974

Detroit  
13 August 1974SL PB  
New York

Dear comrades:

We had the discussion this weekend in the local on the residency-for-cops issue. There was a split in the exec (with [2 comrades] abstaining), but the majority of the local voted for the motion I put forward (see enclosed [appended]), so I feel some responsibility to lay out my arguments for the information of the PB. The vote was:

for Adrian motion: [10, plus 2 consultative]

for Steve S. motion: [7, plus 1 consultative]

abstain: [5, plus 1 consultative]

I. First, I think it is important to make clear that I think the residency issue is a secondary one. That should be obvious, but the issue has generated such heat here it is necessary to state it. Support or opposition to residency requirements for cops will not be the cutting edge of our intervention into the cop-issue in Detroit. This is to be contrasted with, for example, the weightiness which we attributed to the issue of critical support or non-support to the OCI in the 1973 elections in France. As I understand it, that was an issue which was useful both internally, in connecting a bulge in the organization, and was also very important externally, as we did not want to abstain in the French electoral arena. The issue of residency requirements does not in my mind have that kind of significance at all. Our position on the police and the prisons is a unique one--it's not just that we oppose community control, but unlike the rest of the left, we state very clearly and unambiguously that the cops can't be reformed and we insist that they are not part of the working class. It's a powerful line, and one quite exploitable in Detroit right now.

The main arguments for critical support to residency fall into two categories: it is a blow against the autonomy of the police and the issue is a referendum on racism. To give sufficient consideration to either of these arguments comrades have to keep in mind that truth is concrete. Besides being an admonition, this is something of a statement of Detroit exceptionalism, or, perhaps better put, large-urban-center exceptionalism. (I encourage comrades to read some of the clippings from the Detroit press which are in the WV file.) I do not think that at all times in all places we should give critical support to a residency requirement, because in and of itself, isolated from its context and the dynamic of the situation, it would of course not represent any gain for the working class. In this case the "gain" is not a blacker or more sensitive police force but a limitation or deflection of the cops' ability to impose their organized will.

II. So to get back to "truth is concrete." I find it useful to list some examples of situations in which we would give critical support to something which we do not call for in our program. I recognize the limitations of analogies and the imperfections of parallels, but I don't think this issue is immediately obvious and so I think some indirect argumentation is in order.

1. We give critical support to the ILA's boycott of Rhodesian goods even though, because of its ineffectiveness, it's not a tactic we would call for. In fact, were it to be a successful tactic, it could actually weaken the workers movement there by increasing unemployment. Nevertheless, the boycott is an expression of anti-racist sentiment, and to call to end it would be to bloc with the reactionaries.

2. The same criteria apply to quota hiring. We draw a line of principle at government intervention into the unions. But if the government is not involved, we might give critical support to a quota proposal, especially if our forces are weak and unable to provide more than a propagandistic alternative in a very hot situation and/or if the issue is a referendum.

3. Although we are opposed to the setting up of exclusionist academic departments and indifferent to others, we will defend, even exclusionist departments, from reactionary administration attack (with the exception of cop training).

4. We critically supported the quota system at CCNY seeing in this instance that the defense of the racist and class-biased status quo was a greater evil than preferential treatment of one section of the population, even with the possible resulting friction and divisiveness.

5. We very critically supported the civilian police review board in New York City. My understanding was that we did so not primarily because we thought it would represent even a minimal gain for the working class (i.e. we predicted it would be virtually ineffective) but that it was a line-up: for or against the police.

III. It is of course necessary to ask if this is a principled or tactical question. I feel that it is not a principled question. The RSL used to sneer at the SL's conception of principle; the RSL would have it that the SL uses principles as a barrier between itself and the masses. This is of course absurd, but what their snotty lauding of flexibility demonstrates is the Shachtmanites' failure to understand that principles do constitute a barrier of sorts--to class collaboration. For example, it would be unprincipled to call for any kind of support to a community control program. And as I said before, we would give critical support to a residency requirement not because it is a reform of the cops, but because it is a limitation on their Bonapartist appetites. This also does not mean that we are forced by the logic of our position to give critical support to the opposite of whatever the cops want, whenever they decide to make an issue of it (e.g. foot patrols vs. cars, mini-precinct stations, etc.). But this issue has ramifications beyond a simplistic knee-jerk reaction of "no" to whatever

the cops want--we don't have a position on how the state wants to run its armed fist. (Were we in a parliamentary situation we would vote "no" on everything of course).

IV. What demands have we raised with regard to the police and the prisons? We do not believe, for example, that the prisons can be reformed under capitalism; therefore we demand "Smash the Prisons." But certainly it would be ultra-left and stupid to understand this to imply that we couldn't support the demands that the Attica prisoners raised for reform. And support to their demands is not a call for "Better Prisons Under Capitalism."

We also call for disarming the cops, jailing a cop who has committed a particular atrocity, cops out of the ghetto, etc. All these are demands designed to limit the independence and military might of the police force. Also we are opposed to blacks or women being discriminated against--implementation of this will mean more black cops. Does this mean we call for more black cops? No, clearly not.

It seems then the real question to ask is: does raising critical support to residency going to build more illusions in Coleman Young than it does limit the autonomy of the cops? In the context of the other propaganda we would raise, I hope to demonstrate when I discuss the particular situation here that it would not.

V. Are there any situations in which we take a position in what is primarily a dispute among ruling class elements?

1. In some cases something a capitalist politician favors may overlap with our program, e.g., the ERA, in which case we support it, always with our accompanying propaganda.

2. A slightly more complex case is illustrated by the Boston rent control law, which the Boston SL originally took a position of abstention on because the law specifically insured "adequate" profits to the landlords. Later, they reversed their position since the rent control law actually did put some brakes on rises in rents and thus was critically supportable.

3. In WV #11 in the article on the VNL it is implied that we would give military support to the National Guard smashing the cops' strike, at least in some situations.

Now the important thing about these situations is that support to something that happens to be in a capitalist politician's program (where it overlaps ours like the ERA) or to particular legislation is not support to the politician or to his program. We do not support Young's reorganization plan, just as we are logically not forced to speak to every issue that the cops ever raise. A necessary part of the leaflet which we would put out around this issue is an attack on Young (and Fraser of the UAW, who is on Young's police board) and the call to dump the bureaucrats, build a labor party.

VI. Now to the specifics of the Detroit situation.

The context includes:

a. The defeat for the cross district Detroit busing case, which produced relief and jubilation in the suburbs. The inner city reaction is mixed; many black parents don't like busing either. Most of them who don't, don't like the vicious hassles their kids have to go through; there are a few hard nationalists who oppose busing for their own reasons (The Black Christian Nationalists--BCN--probably fall in this category.) Liberals like Young try to avoid offending anyone by saying busing wasn't adequate anyway, what the city really needs is quality education for all. Despite various things that people say, I would say that there's no question that the Supreme Court decision is seen as a setback with reactionary implications (remember, just two years ago the buses were bombed in Pontiac to prevent busing.)

b. The nationwide cop atrocities covered recently in WV, with the cops ominously seeing themselves as judge, jury and executioner.

c. The city is technically 50% black, but a recent NY Times article on busing indicated that the high school population was 70% black (I believe that excludes a small percentage of white students who attend Catholic school). What this means is that many of the whites who live in the city are over 65 and too poor or too tied to the house they finally paid off to move (our LI workers have commented on this, too). In other words, the active population of the city is well over 50% black.

d. 80% of the cops are white.

e. I assume everyone is aware that the cops are actively demonstrating against Young and Tannian (the police commissioner). I thought I had a copy of a report dealing with these demonstrations, but I don't so I'll describe them briefly. One of the earlier ones was held to protest Justin Ravitz's (famed Marxist-Leninist Detroit judge) attempt to jail a cop for brutalizing someone he arrested. A few days later I saw one downtown. As far as I know this one was not reported in the bourgeois press. It was a car caravan with signs saying things like "Fire Detroit's Red Mayor and Red Police Commissioner;" "Outlaw Communists Not Handguns;" "Jail Ravitz, Not the Police;" and others in a similar vein. Various other kinds of protest actions continue (some directed against increase in foot patrols, etc.).

f. Young's campaign was seen in primarily racial terms--if you were black, you voted for him, if you were white you voted for Nichols, the ex-police commissioner who instituted STRESS.

g. The STRESS campaign--I also assume most comrades are somewhat familiar with STRESS. It was the epitome of the kind of thing described in the last WV--something like 19 blacks were killed by the STRESS "decoy" units in a year. One of the last STRESS actions was a nationwide manhunt for three young blacks who had allegedly

shot a STRESS officer (the Hayward Brown case); there were numerous reports of illegal searches all over the cities and the various brutalities that can be imagined associated with such searches. There were several large rallies and a fairly active campaign to abolish STRESS, although we got here right at the tail end of it, so I don't know many of the details. Young has "abolished" STRESS and promised in its place 1000 more uniformed cops on the streets and mini-precinct store front stations to "serve the community."

h. There are two cop organizations. The DPOA is the bargaining unit for all the cops, but the "activists" in it are white. The SPOA has led all the protests against Young, some of which black cops have participated in (e.g. a ticket writing slow-down in protest of more foot patrols). The Guardians is a black group, which apparently includes black city workers and small businessmen. The cop section of the Guardians has demonstrated in support of Young.

i. Young has set up a police commission which does more than hear complaints from victims of cop atrocities. It has policy making and budgetary powers and recently approved the affirmative action to preferentially promote black cops. I think the most important part of this Board is that Doug Fraser, head of the Chrysler section of the UAW, is its president. (One thing we plan to have tu'ers do is raise the demand "Fraser off the board" in their union situations. Keith indicates that although the workers have few illusions in the cops, they might see an advantage to have "their" voice represented in decisions about the cops. Now Fraser is very unpopular, so there might be sympathy for the demand "Fraser off the board"--the problem is that some workers might be in favor of getting a more "representative" voice on the board, like Jordan Sims. So again it's an issue which must be accompanied by clear, sharp propaganda and explanation.)

j. I should also mention that the affirmative action recently passed by the Police Board also met with a great deal of opposition among the cops.

k. One other factor, which doesn't play any major role at this time but does exist, is the Ku Klux Klan. They were involved in the bombing of the buses in Pontiac and they do exist in places like Southfield. Also, Wallace did well in Michigan at one point.

l. There is also the recent incident reported in WV of a black family moving into a neighborhood inside the city and meeting with physical harassment of a fairly intense nature.

m. A residency requirement has been on the books for many years (I believe around 20). Last year, the DPOA took it to court (we don't yet know all the details but it appears that the DFT supported the DPOA's court case, whether or not they were actually part of it). The Michigan Supreme Court ruled that it couldn't be done through legislation, that it had to be a bargaining issue. And it will be a separate bargaining issue for each union, i.e. the DFT will bargain it separately from the cops. The DFT has postponed a struggle around the issue until next year--their negotiations be-

gin in October for a contract that will be up in the summer of '75.

This technical piece of information is important because it demonstrates concretely how defeat of residency is an actual organizational victory for the cops.

VII. Objections have been raised to critical support to a residency requirement for cops because it will affect the teachers. However, the two unions will bargain it separately, so whatever is decided for the cops will not be legally binding on the teachers. Of course, if residency for the cops is maintained, a precedent will be set which the school board will use in its negotiations with the teachers. And I suppose that Young is as determined that residency be maintained for the teachers as he is for the cops--I suspect that he determination is based not on a heartfelt desire for "involved" public employees, but rather on a heartfelt desire for a larger tax base--there is something of a move on to spruce up Detroit and make it livable (hah!). Nevertheless, I don't think it will be that difficult to make clear our differing positions on the two cases. Cops are not workers! We don't think they should be unionized and we don't hesitate to say that for fear that it will be used to weaken organizing drives for other city workers. In fact in WV #11 we criticize VNL for precisely that logic. In discussing the New York police strike the VNL, while disassociating itself from the WL's rantings about the cops, insisted that:

"The rank and file of the entire labor movement must demand that their leaderships enter into a united front and a binding commitment for a general strike in the event that either strike-breaking weapon is resorted to by the City."

In other words, for fear that reactionary legislation would be used against city workers as well as cops, VNL called for an organizational victory to the police strike.

VIII. This is not a plan for community control; if I thought it was, I would think it would be unprincipled to give critical support to it. Young himself has come out explicitly against decentralization, now that he is in office and in control of things. He does use the rhetoric of community control and undoubtedly there are illusions about it in the city, so our propaganda would have to state clearly what's wrong with it and why we are against it.

No one likes living in Detroit. It's crime-ridden, ugly, oppressive, etc. But I would contend that the cops organized refusal to do so does have racial overtones. (The press has recently covered the ludicrous spectacle of the DPOA chief, Gary Lee, sneaking out of his "wife's" house in the suburbs, while he maintains a phony residence in the city. Now he's divorcing his wife to make it all technically legal.) The cops have no qualms about shooting blacks, but will fight like hell to avoid living in the same neighborhood with them. We in general understand the cry for law and order, especially when it's raised by the cops, to have heavy racial overtones. The point is not that they'll be more "sensitized" if they live here, but that this issue has enough other ramifications

(racial and bonapartist) that it is worth it for us to take a position on it.

An interesting argument against this position was raised by comrades who insisted that the DPOA was on the defensive, not the offensive. They insist, I believe correctly, that the "abolishing" of STRESS and Young's election victory were a defeat for the cops. But while this may be a necessary modification (for Detroit) of our observation of increasing moves towards bonapartism on the part of cops around the country, it does not alter the appetites behind the cops' "actions" here. The fact that they have suffered a setback in their efforts to fulfill their appetites for bonapartism should not mean that we think it's no longer necessary to fight against this.

Comradely,

Sue A[drian]

P.S. I was not in Berkeley when the local put out the "Vote Yes But Hold Your ~~Nose~~" leaflet!

\* \* \* \*

Motion: Since the context of the dispute between Young/Tannian and the DPOA is:

*Passed  
at  
4th  
annual  
conference  
36 1/2 for  
17 1/2 against*

1. a rising attempt on the part of cops around the country to be autonomous ~~expressed~~ in a) tendency to see themselves as judge, jury and executioner; b) increasing organizational and political consciousness/esprit de corps expressed in their attempt to unionize and win bargaining rights);
2. a sharply polarized racial situation in Detroit (with busing defeated, a largely black city population surrounded by totally white suburbs, a largely white police force, that the cops refusal to live in Detroit is seen by the cops and the population as largely based on racist sentiment);
3. a residency requirement is already in effect so that a defeat of the residency requirement would be an organizational victory for the DPOA;
4. that there is not an immediate posing of community control (i.e. Young himself is opposed to decentralization although Young uses community control rhetoric);

We must give critical support to maintenance of residency seeing it as a blow against autonomy of police and as a referendum on racism, while we also raise;

No to Community Control  
Disarm the Cops

Workers Militias  
Fraser Off the Board  
Dump the bureaucrats, for a labor party, etc.

[accepted] amendment:

We are opposed to a residency requirement for the DFT [Detroit Federation of Teachers], as a higher principle is involved, i.e., intervention in and control of the unions by the state. Maintenance of residency for the police will not directly legally apply to teachers because the issue is bargained separately for each union.

\* \* \* \*

Detroit  
17 August 1974

SL PB  
New York

Dear Comrades,

Comrade Adrian suggested that I write my objections to critical support to residency requirements for police because I was a principal spokesman against that motion at our local meeting. I also feel obligated to write since I believe my motion was poorly drafted and does not adequately represent my views.

1. In essence my position is that residency requirements for police in Detroit at this time in no way intersects a working class program. They are not anti-racist or democratic measures, the motivation of people supporting them is not supportable, and support for this bourgeois program for the police is in no way a working class response to police bonapartism. Therefore, even critical support would be unprincipled. Further, even if this issue were a tactical question, it would be unwise to give critical support to residency requirements.

2. Residency requirements for the Detroit police are not anti-racist. They do not speak to the racist hiring practices that have existed in the police. This is reflected by the fact that although residency requirements have been in effect for over 20 years, only 15% of Detroit's cops are black (1972 city publication) in a city that is 43.6% non-white (1970 census). Furthermore, Mayor Young and Police Commissioner Tannian are not conducting hiring practices discriminatory against blacks. They are hiring mostly blacks and have the stated intention of creating a 50% black police force. In short, given the significant white and black communities in Detroit, the bourgeoisie could hire a police force with any racial composition it desired.

3. Residency requirements do not speak to limiting the powers and scope of the state. They are not analogous to slogans like; "Cops out of the ghetto," "Disarm the police," or "Cops and cop-training off campus."

4. Residency requirements are not a democratic demand, but a restriction on employment. There is no democratic right to be policed by someone from your community.

5. Critical support, however, can be given to a measure that does not directly advance the working class if it intersects supportable motivations. This was the case with the Ludlow amendment, school busing, and the Rhodesian boycott. This, I believe, is comrade Adrian's argument when she suggests that the issue of residency requirements for police is a "referendum on racism." While I will concede that the police opposition to residency requirements has a significant, though not exclusive, racist motivation, it is the motivation of the other side which determines whether or not to give critical support. I submit that none of the three main motivations of supporters of the residency requirements are supportable.

6. The most expressed motivation is that city employees should be taxed by the city and should spend their money in the city. This is posed as a solution to the problem of decaying cities under capitalism. This motivation is used against all city employees. It is reformist, utopian and in no way supportable.

7. The second most common motivation is that only someone from the community understands and sympathizes with the needs of the community. Therefore, only they can serve the community. Of course, there is the black nationalist variant of this. This is aimed at both teachers and police, and with regard to the police, it is utopian and reformist. It also plays on community control-type illusions. This motivation is also unsupportable.

8. The third motivation is that Mayor Young has the interests of the black community at heart and should be supported. No comment is necessary on this.

9. I submit that almost no one would motivate residency requirements in a supportable way (i.e. Blacks have as much right to any job, including cops, as anyone else). Mere division along racial lines does not mean we support either side.

10. The remaining argument is that of bonapartism. The position is that the Detroit Police Officer's Association (DPOA) represents a danger to the working class as an independent political expression for cops (which it does). Further, a victory for the police on residency requirements would be an interference in police policy-making and would strengthen Detroit police morale and the DPOA (which it would). The conclusion is that we should support politically measures taken by the bourgeoisie against the DPOA, or at least defend politically positions taken by the bourgeoisie which are attacked by the DPOA (which we should not).

11. A struggle between the government and part of the state apparatus (e.g. the police or the army) represents divisions in the bourgeoisie. The proletarian position in such a struggle could be support for democratic demands giving them a class edge, it could be military struggle against the bonapartists, it could be propaganda or agitation about the bourgeoisie's inability to defend democratic rights and the need for working class self-defense, but it cannot be political support to one side even though working class interests are tied up in the outcome. This has been our position historically both in electoral confrontations and military

confrontation (e.g. Kornilov and Franco).

12. If it is accepted that the demand, "Only Detroiters should police Detroit," is not a democratic demand, is not an anti-racist demand, and is not a partial demand relating to abolition of the police, the remaining arguments to support it are for political support to one section of the bourgeoisie represented by Young and Tannian. If the argument is that we should give critical support to residency requirements because a victory for the DPOA on this point would strengthen police morale and further police independence, then we should support each aspect of Mayor Young's Police Reorganization Program opposed by the DPOA. For example, part of Young's program already in effect is that a higher percentage of cops should walk a beat and a lower percentage cruise in cars. The police response is even more racially motivated, ("A white cop would not be safe on foot in the black community"). In fact a DPOA victory on this would be an even greater threat to the working class since it is interfering in how the policing is done, not where cops live when off-duty.

13. Because there is no basis to support residency requirements for cops in Detroit, it would be unprincipled to support them. Even if it were principled there are tactical considerations which militate against critical support.

14. If Comrade Adrian were right and there is an anti-racist polarization in Detroit for residency requirements, our orientation should be to counter that, and try to diffuse it, not critically support it. The identification of residency requirements with anti-racism would weaken our position in defending other city employees and teachers from residency requirements and union busting.

15. Residency requirements are part of a bourgeois program to make a more effective police force by building illusions in the black community as to the nature and role of the police and the state. Critical support to residency requirements would make our attacks on these illusions and on Mayor Young more difficult.

16. Residency requirements are part of a program whose thrust is to build community control-type illusions. Young's program is that police can better serve the community if:

More cops were from the community,  
 More black police are in the black community,  
 More mini-police stations are available to people in the  
 black community, and more foot patrolmen are in contact with  
 the community.

Our task is to smash these illusions and to discredit Young and whatever ORO's might support Young's program. Critical support to one aspect of this program will weaken our position in accomplishing this objective.

Bolshevik greetings,

Steven S.

P.S. To be sure that one point is clear, I do not believe that Comrade Adrian's motion or its motivation are unprincipled, but that they are based on the misconception that there is a referendum on racism. What is unprincipled, I believe, is the argument that the threat that the DPOA poses is sufficient reason to support aspects of Young's program that come under attack, whether or not those aspects coincide in any way with the needs of the working class.

MEMORANDUM ON THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT--ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE SL/US

I

1. In the past five to seven years, the renewed pressure of class struggle and inter-imperialist rivalries has significantly exacerbated the tensions within the rotten federated bloc which calls itself the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (Usec). The rapid growth of the various sections of the Usec during the first part of that period was primarily due to their varying adaptations to the petty-bourgeois student radicalization linked both to the aftermath of May '68 in France and to the Vietnam war, which was perceived as the symbol of third world revolts against colonial and imperialist domination. The current state of semi-open warfare between the International Majority of the Usec, led by the French, and the International Minority, led by the SWP, is but the other face of the Pabloites' previous "success." Faced with renewed and increased levels of class struggle in response to attempts by the bourgeoisie to make the working class bear the brunt of its economic difficulties, the petty-bourgeois, guerrillaist and student-oriented policies of the Usec could not provide any answer to the objective tasks revolutionists are today called upon to fulfill.

The Pabloites' response to the world political situation remains within the framework of their effort to find the empirically optimal "short-cut" to building a revolutionary organization: a search which is but the expression of their refusal to construct a proletarian party. The federated character of the "United" Secretariat is amply illustrated in its different international organs. The Majority has begun publishing "Inprecor," in French, English and Spanish to compete (but not polemicize) with the SWP's Intercontinental Press, which in turn has begun publishing articles in Spanish. Open splits in the Usec sections in Canada, Mexico, Australia, Peru, and Spain before the "Tenth World Congress" and in the United States and Argentina after the ban on expulsions and splits at the "World Congress" as well as de facto splits in Denmark and England and deep-going divisions which could shortly lead to open splits in Germany and Italy bear witness to the bankruptcy of the politics of the Usec and to the historical crisis of revolutionary leadership.

The Usec Majority is further divided among itself. One wing, led by Mandel and Ross (of the British IMG) and to which other historic Pabloite leaders such as Pierre Frank and Livio Maitan have thus far capitulated, favors conciliation with the SWP at all costs. Already at the "Tenth World Congress," Mandel was opposed by a wing led by the French (Jebrag) and Tariq Ali which aims at expelling the SWP, the sooner the better. Finally, in addition to the "third tendency," there are numerous elements within the IMT which tend to oppose either or both of these wings, but which have no firm and principled position (e.g. Beauvais and Matti in France). If the Usec should split (possibly over the expulsion of the Internationalist Tendency by the SWP), these different factions would no longer be held together by their scorn for the legalist SWP and further factional struggle would be likely to break out within a short period of time.

2. The split in the International Committee, between the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL) (now Workers Revolutionary Party) and the Lambert-Just led Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI), was a similar response to the urgent political problems now facing would-be revolutionists. After 1966, Healy turned sharply to the right on a series of issues (support to the Red Guards and the Arab Revolution; eulogy of Ho Chi Minh and the "eternal values of peoples' war"); after the 1971 split in the IC the SLL abandoned all pretense of an international with national sections having earned political authority in their own countries and openly asserted the principle of a series of hero-figures owing allegiance to the greatest hero since Lenin and Trotsky, Gerry Healy. The period following 1966 saw the definitive degeneration of the SLL into the political bandits they are today. However, the OCI continued to exhibit a series of centrist contradictions and oscillations in its political line.

While the OCI asserted verbally and at length its rejection of the federated nature of the IC, it refused to come to grips with Healy's degeneration, and continued to assert the SLL's viability as a Trotskyist party, at least until the SLL was rebaptized the WRP. Further, its practice consisted in futile attempts at perpetuating the kind of compromises on which the IC and the USec had been based--in particular over the issues of the POR's behavior prior to and during the 1971 coup in Bolivia and over the nature of the Cuban state. It was therefore ultimately unable to arrive at a clear political differentiation within the groups linked to it through the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI), especially the Latin American groups which support the policies of Lora's POR and which have left the OCRFI de facto, if not formally. The OCI attempted to deal exclusively administratively with the Varga affair and refused to answer explicitly the more leftish criticisms of OCI practice made by individuals or groups who eventually came to support Varga. The groups either linked to Varga or repulsed by the OCI's treatment of the Varga question also dropped away from the OCI. At present, the OCRFI can hardly be said to exist as an international grouping.

Due partly to the OCI's opposition to rightist positions of the SLL, such as its support for the Red Guards, for the Arab side in the 1967 Near East war, and its use of "the dialectic" as mystification, and to its asserted desire to drive forward the OCRFI in a way that would have meant a sharp break with the federated tradition of the IC, we patiently and persistently sought contact and discussions with the OCI. Equally important to our orientation to the OCI, it possesses a pool of cadre hardened in the struggle against Pabloism and there was reason to believe that there existed left elements in the OCI (a fact apparently confirmed since by positions published by some expelled members of the OCI who joined the Varga group). The SL therefore wrote the OCRFI and the OCI seeking discussion between our organizations, while clearly stating our sharp objective differences, both political and organizational. However, we have never received an answer to this letter, nor indeed to any of our other letters to the OCI.

The failure of any left elements within the OCI to form an

organized opposition to the leadership's capitulation to the popular front Union of the Left in the 1974 Presidential elections (at a time which coincided with the OCI's discussion period prior to its 19th Congress) have effectively resolved any contradictions within the OCI. While we must continue to orient to the OCI militants and seek to maintain organizational contact, barring unexpected developments our attitude toward the OCI will be fundamentally altered in the coming period.

3. The growth of the Spartacist League/US in the late 1960's and sharply accelerating beginning with the regroupment with the Communist Working Collective in mid-1971 enabled and required the SL/US to commit a substantial investment, both financially and in terms of cadre, to its continuing struggle to break out of national isolation. International work has absorbed a large amount of time and effort on the part of leading cadre in the SL Central Office, to the point of deforming other aspects of the SL's work. This effort was, however, absolutely necessary if the Spartacist tendency is to successfully break out of the national isolation inflicted on it after the 1966 rupture with Healy. The opportunities presented by the crises of the USec and the IC in particular had to be seized as they occurred. The opportunity for intervention in groups outside the U.S. is typically very brief. Thus, whatever possibility for a principled intervention and consequently for a regroupment with at least a significant segment of Spartacus-BL was probably squandered by Moore's clumsy effort to form a rotten bloc with them in the first six months of 1972, even though intervention was still possible after that time. If the international Spartacist tendency (IST) does not carry out a successful international regroupment policy, such groups will continue to emerge and represent further barriers to the work of authentic Trotskyist groups.

As a result of this massive effort, the Spartacist tendency internationally is now facing the prospect of transforming itself into an international organization with living member sections. But the limited numbers of small sympathizer groups of the IST are not consolidated and stabilized, the likelihood that they will stagnate or disintegrate entirely is very great. In order to achieve this stabilization, the IST as a whole and in particular the SL/US must increase the forces devoted to recruiting new forces both in the countries of the existing groups and to extending the tendency geographically. Combined with the increased weight of the SL/US, the SL/ANZ and the sympathizer groups of the IST within the class struggle of their respective national situations, only such an effort can prevent significant losses by the tendency. Thus, in some ways this transformation is akin to the process projected in the 1971 "Memorandum on the Transformation of the Spartacist League."

4. In the past period, the SL/US was able to assist central cadre in successfully rebuilding the SL/NZ, now SL/ANZ, after its near destruction by Owen Gager's political collapse. The expansion of the SL's main propaganda weapon, its press, and the increased forces directly involved in international work were instrumental in crystallizing groups and individuals sympathetic to the

Spartacist tendency in late 1973 and early 1974, primarily in Europe, but also in Canada and the Near East. During this period, the principled political struggle and evolution of the Revolutionary Workers Party in Ceylon, led by Edmund Samarakkody, brought it to political positions largely convergent with those of the Spartacist tendency, and therefore to the increasingly serious exchanges between the SL/US and the RWP.

During the process of this development, the SL struggled with centrist forces emerging from the disintegrating USec, such as the IKD/KJO and Spartacus/BL in Germany, and the Communist Tendency and the Leninist Faction of the SWP in an effort to win significant portions of them to revolutionary politics. While a certain number of valuable political cadre were won to principled Trotskyist positions during this process of clarification, the organizations which emerged from these groups continue to present a centrist barrier to the construction of revolutionary organizations in their respective countries.

5. The political work of the years following the adherence of the SL/NZ (now SL/ANZ) to the Declaration of Principles of the SL/US received a first formalization at the interim conference held in Berlin in January of 1974, which accepted the agreement made between the SL/US and the ÖBL as a principled basis for work in Germany, as well as a comparable agreement with French comrades on work toward the USec. The conference represented a major step toward the crystallization of an international Trotskyist tendency based firmly on international democratic centralism and the best practices of the Trotskyist movement historically. The continued political development of the groups and individuals present at or associated with the decisions of the Berlin conference, as well as the recruitment of new forces, laid the basis for the Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency (DOITT), adopted by the Central Committees of the SL/US and the SL/ANZ and promulgated on 6 July 1974 at the European summer camp of the Spartacist tendency. Based explicitly on a series of programmatic documents, the Declaration represents an organizational codification of the political agreements which have been reached over the past few years, at the same time that it lays the basis for further political development and organizational expansion of the international Spartacist tendency, based on its present member sections, the SL/US and the SL/ANZ, and its sympathizing groups, the ÖBL (Austrian Bolshevik-Leninists), the German Kommunistische Korrespondenz group, the Spartacist Nucleus in Israel, and the Canada Committee of the IST, the coalescing French Committee, as well as sympathizing individuals elsewhere.

6. The DOITT represented an organizational consolidation resulting from political clarification of certain key issues internationally. Just as Trotsky fought to test the practice of ostensible revolutionists against their professed agreement with the program of the Left Opposition by demanding from them a clear stance on the role of Comintern leadership in advising the Chinese CP to subordinate itself politically to Chiang Kai-Shek and in provoking the Canton uprising, on the role of the Anglo-Russian Committee in and around the British general strike of 1926, and on the

nature of the Soviet regime under Stalin, today the IST seeks to crystallize an international tendency as a step in the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International around issues which represent current analogues to the positions around which Trotsky fought for the creation of the Fourth International.

The upswing in the class struggle over the past years has resulted in a turn toward reformist workers parties globally, although the concrete forms vary considerably. In England and Australia, the election of Labour governments has served to limit the class upsurge. The formation of popular fronts--of open coalitions between bourgeois workers parties and the bourgeoisie, in particular the Allende government in Chile (1970-73) and the formation of the Union of the Left in France, beginning in 1973--has served a similar function elsewhere.

These class-collaborationist coalitions are the last resort by which the bourgeoisie (and the reformist workers parties) respond to radical increases in class militancy. As Trotsky stated, "Popular fronts on the one hand, fascism on the other, are the last political resources of Imperialism in the struggle against proletarian revolution" (Transitional Program). The promises (usually a specific written program) on which the concrete alliance with even the "shadow of the bourgeoisie" are based mean that the internal contradictions of the reformist workers parties are temporarily suppressed (though not eliminated) for the duration of the class-collaborationist coalition. Under these conditions, it is impossible for revolutionists to give electoral support to any of the workers parties in a popular front. Instead, only the demand that these parties break with the popular front (which also means that the base break with its reformist leadership) can lead to a situation in which the contradictions organic to the bourgeois workers parties can again be exploited by revolutionists.

A second concrete programmatic test by which ostensibly revolutionary organizations can be measured is their willingness to break definitively from the federated bloc concept common to the USec and the former IC, and to reassert the vital immediate necessity of forming an internationally democratic centralist organization. Experience has shown that enforced or unavoidable national isolation will eventually lead to national deviations from, and ultimately to the renunciation of, the revolutionary program due to the social pressures exerted on an isolated organization. Neither the plaintive excuse that "conditions are not ripe" nor misplaced protests against "Cominternism"--excessive centralism as practiced by Pablo prior to the split in 1952-53--can disguise repudiation of internationalism. A prime example of such degeneration is the ex-Trotskyist SWP which had played a leading role in the initiation of the International Committee in 1953, only to rejoin the Pabloites organizationally and politically in 1963. It is for this reason that the Declaration for Organizing an International Trotskyist Tendency placed central stress on the need for international democratic centralism.

Critical examination of the history of the world Trotskyist movement must also lead to the conclusion that the Fourth Interna-

tional as an organization was destroyed by the Pabloist split in 1952-53, and must be re-created, or in the slogan of the SL/US, revolutionists must call "For the Rebirth of the Fourth International." While elements of historical continuity with the program of the Fourth International existed in some fragmented instances and in the struggle against Pabloism, it must be recognized that any substantive claim to "be" or "represent" the continuity of the Fourth International is obviated in its essence by the fact that the groups which formed the IC, above all the SLL and the OCI, failed both to carry the fight against Pablo and Pabloism through to its conclusion at the 1954 world congress and failed from the outset to struggle systematically for programmatic homogenization of the IC, that is, for authentic international democratic centralism.

7. The tasks and perspectives of the SL/US in relation to the IST are based both on the analyses contained in the previous declarations and agreements made among organizations supporting the IST as well as on the main documents preparatory to the coming national Conference of the SL/US. The present memorandum takes the analyses presented in those documents as its starting point.

## II

8. At the present time, the IST has two essential concrete and immediate political tasks if it is to carry forward the struggle to respond adequately to the crisis of revolutionary leadership by leading the political battles prerequisite to forming the world party capable of leading the proletariat in a victorious socialist revolution. While it is clear that the world party of socialism, the Fourth International, must ultimately politically discredit and destroy the Stalinists (including the Maoist variety) and other reformists and revisionists, the level of forces at our disposal at the present time dictates that we orient primarily toward the ostensibly Trotskyist movement.

Recognizing that the path toward the re-creation of the Fourth International is "difficult, long and, above all, uneven" (DOITT), we must struggle simultaneously against the USec, the primary source of revisionist liquidationism in the ostensibly Trotskyist movement, and for the consolidation and further extension and growth of the Spartacist tendency through programmatic clarity and real, if necessarily modest at the present time, involvement in the living class struggle.

9. One result of the evident bankruptcy of the existing ostensibly revolutionary organizations has been the formation of a series of left-centrist or centrist splinter groups. These groups have broken at least partially, and usually empirically, from the open revisionism of larger groups in a search for authentic Trotskyist politics. But the legacy of the past, as Marx said, weighs heavy on the present, and the road toward Trotskyism is long and arduous. Thus groups such as the RCG in England, Contre le Courant in France, elements of the Varga group and elements of the "third tendency" within the USec represent subjective attempts to move toward revolutionary politics, but remain caught in centrist confusion, largely inherited from their past. Not only do these

groups represent a potential source of forces for the Spartacist tendency, but the price of ignoring them or of failing to assist them in the indispensable political clarification will be extremely high: the consolidation of yet another obstacle to the building of the world party of socialism. A primary task of the IST is therefore to orient toward these groups polemically and where possible intervene in them in an effort to regroup the best elements of them around the authentic Trotskyist program and practice, as represented in the Spartacist tendency.

10. We must also energetically pursue the discussion of the important differences outstanding between the Spartacist tendency and the RWP of Ceylon. To this end, hopefully decisive discussions among leading comrades of the RWP and the IST are now projected. Contingent on the outcome of these discussions, the DOITT foresees an early international gathering to "politically and geographically extend the tendency and to further formalize and consolidate it." The present main responsibility for carrying out this discussion still resides with the section which initiated it, the SL/US.

11. While the only ultimately fair method of delegate selection for an International conference is one member one vote (with a minimum of one delegate for each group), the projected gathering will consist of potential IEC members, with attendance therefore based on the political experience and authority of the individual comrades, but independent of national bases and the respective numerical strength of different national groups. Given the current organization of the Spartacist tendency, comrades will be invited to the meeting by the Secretariat, subject to the approval of the interim highest body.

The most favorable result of the projected meeting would be to issue a Manifesto and proclaim the International Trotskyist League. The Manifesto and the organizational structure of the League (essentially an extension of interim forms, which would become the provisional organizational framework for the ITL) would then have to be confirmed subsequently at a delegated International Conference. The essential content of the Manifesto will represent a synthesis of the Declaration of Principles of the SL/US with the subsequent international agreements between groups of the IST and the systematic incorporation of the main political issues and tasks presently facing the Trotskyist movement internationally.

12. In the past, the SL/US has furnished most of the cadre for international work. In the long run, with the growth of the tendency, cadre for important international work will come increasingly from other countries. At the present time, the resources of the SL/US will be strained to the limit in order to fulfill its most pressing international obligations. The IS proposed to the SL/US further withdrawal of its comrades from domestic responsibilities to aid developments in the Near East and Central Europe as well as in Europe generally and also to exploit an apparent opportunity in Northern Europe. Primary responsibility to assist developments in England should lie with the Australian and/or Canadian groups.

In addition, the SL/US and especially its youth organization should undertake systematic effort to increase our over-all language capacity, in particular in German, Spanish, French, Hebrew; Italian and Russian are also strong priorities. Comrades whose studies give them the possibility of spending time in other countries should attempt to make use of it as much as possible (including Australia and England). Comrades with some language training, but who have not kept up their language skills, should make a systematic effort to revive and improve their ability. This involves subscribing to the left press of the countries in question, including of course the press of any sympathizing group of the Spartacist tendency, and acquiring a basic political library (Lenin, Trotsky, etc.) in that language. Only in this way will we be able to develop multi-lingual cadre over a long period of time. Comrades in other countries should be similarly encouraged to develop corresponding language skills, although in general this is more of a problem in the US (and Australia) than in Europe.

13. A not unimportant corollary of the strength of the SL/US in relation to groups in other countries is a relative weakness of the Interim International Secretariat, currently composed exclusively of North Americans. In order to strengthen the IS and to render it more sensitive to the needs of the tendency on a world scale, it is imperative that leading comrades from other groups be delegated to spend 6 months to a year in the international center as soon as it is possible to do this without fundamentally weakening the work of a particular group. Not only will this be beneficial for the individual comrades in question (and ultimately therefore for work in national sections), but it is an important element in the homogenization of cadre internationally.

14. An essential element in the expansion and consolidation of the Spartacist tendency must be an international press. We project transforming the different editions of Spartacist (English, French, German and eventually Spanish) into such a journal. Until the projected international conference, Spartacist will be published under the direction of the Interim Secretariat. Eventually, the different editions of Spartacist would be published under the centralized direction of an International Editorial Board (IEB), consisting essentially of the comrades present at the projected international meeting or chosen by it. While the IEB would have political responsibility for Spartacist, subject to the ultimate control of the tendency as a whole through world congresses, the composition of the editorial board of different language editions would be chosen by the IEB.

English Spartacist should appear quarterly on a regular basis. Both French and German Spartacists will appear not less than three times a year. The Spanish Cuadernos Marxistas will continue to appear irregularly. Any increase in these frequencies must be dependent on the availability of new forces to assist with editing and production.

15. At the present time, the SL/US still bears a special responsibility to aid in the development of nuclei both in countries in which sympathizer groups of the IST have not yet stabili-

zed, and also in countries where the IST has either isolated supporters or no disciplined supporters at all. An integral part of the tasks of the SL internationally is therefore intertwined with an evaluation of the tasks and needs of our movement in specific national arenas.

### III

16. France. For about 2 1/2 years, the SL has maintained systematic work centered on Paris. This work, in particular that of cde. Harvey, has been outstanding and under very difficult conditions. At the present time, the growth of the Spartacist tendency, the recruitment of several French comrades, including a former CC member of the FCR, and most importantly, the consolidation of the contradictions within the OCI toward a hardened right centrist position, barely masking its reformist appetites over the 1974 French Presidential elections, combine to change our orientation in France. We now project a Paris (or French) committee of the IST when (a) a short but decisive step in personnel growth and composition is taken, and (b) the basic technical means to function are acquired.

At that time, the Paris Committee will emerge as a clear opponent of all the existing French groups (despite the extreme disparity of forces) and through an aggressive regroupment policy aimed primarily at left elements within or offshoots from the existing groups (such as Contre le Courant, the Varga group, or the remnants of the "Bulletin Critique" within L.O.) will seek to consolidate itself as a propaganda group in France. The French comrades will also bear the special responsibility of exposing in detail the rottenness of the FCR, widely accepted as the "model section" of the USec majority.

As a corollary of the existence of the Paris Committee, the SL/US, under the direction of the IS, will publish a Marxist Bulletin in French detailing the history of its attempted discussions with the OCI, including all the correspondence. Pending the establishment of the IEB, French Spartacist will establish an editorial board, functioning under the Interim Secretariat, on which the French comrades are substantially represented.

17. Austria. The comrades of the Österreichische Bolshewiki-Leninisten (ÖBL) have requested the SL/US to render it specific assistance. The IS is making a concrete proposal to the SL/US to this effect.

The main tasks of the ÖBL at present are all related to organizational consolidation. The comrades must regularize internal functioning (including on an international scale); that is, minutes, study groups, cadre education, systematizing archives, and generally laying the basis for organizational expansion and for establishing a regular press as soon as possible.

The main weakness of the young ÖBL comrades is an impatience which causes them to have difficulty in establishing a clear set of logically ordered political priorities. The comrades tend to

see all priorities on the same level and/or be unable to choose among them. In our opinion, the main priorities in the immediate period for the ÖBL are:

(1) internal consolidation

(2) intensive contacting and intervention in order to gain a new set of sympathizers, the last one being now either recruited or rejected

(3) systematically laying the basis for a regular press. This will mean bringing technical and political quality of the Bulletin up to acceptable standards and only then increasing its frequency from twice a year to three or four times a year. The Bulletin should orient primarily to the Austrian left, for example through reprinting selected leaflets and publishing articles directed at Austrian opponents.

18. Germany. The basic tasks for Germany remain those outlined in the DOITT:

"to programmatically win over subjectively revolutionary elements from among the thousands of young left social democrats, centrists, revisionists and Maoists; to fuse together intellectual and proletarian elements, above all through the development and struggle of communist industrial fractions; to inwardly assimilate some thirty years of Marxist experience and analysis from which the long break in continuity has left the new generation of German revolutionary Marxists still partially isolated."

Virtually all of the German comrades are senior cadre who are, however, relatively isolated in Berlin. The stabilization and expansion of the Kommunistische Korrespondenz requires that the group expand into West Germany as rapidly as possible. Concretely, a presence must be established in a major West German city that is a center for ostensibly Trotskyist groups within six months to a year. Comrades from other areas of Europe should be freed in order to assist this work including extended preliminary trips. Particular emphasis should be put on an intervention in the GIM Kompass group. From a base in Western Germany, intensive contacting with individuals and groups should also be carried out.

In this context, KK should reorient to broader sections of the German left, and the group should pay special attention to the USec and the dangers of a fusion between the USec Kompass and the Spartacusbund. The IS must improve coordination of translations. A commission is being established to coordinate translations and the publication of articles, including major IST documents, in the different German-language publications of our movement so as to give comrades more advance notice than has previously been the case.

19. Israel. The main task in Israel remains the recruitment of individuals in order to stabilize the politically highly qualified but numerically weak Spartacist nucleus. The main orientation for the immediate period will continue toward Avantguard, and to a

lesser extent to the USec group. Israeli Spartacist should be stabilized at about one every three months.

In this connection, it is imperative that other sections acquire and develop the capacity to translate from Hebrew into various languages, in order to take advantage of the valuable contributions of the Israeli comrades.

20. Australia-New Zealand. The ANZ comrades will have the main responsibility for pursuing our work in England, particularly after they have consolidated two functioning locals and their newspaper. In order to do the English work, they must also develop an Australian leadership which will not be disastrously affected by such an extension of responsibility. At the present time, both the IS and the ANZ comrades do not feel that ANZ will be able to meet the obligations involved in less than a year without seriously damaging the organization.

21. England. The situation in England is ripe for an intervention by the Spartacist tendency. We are beginning to be known, Workers Vanguard has developed a small but regular readership, and we have one solid, although young and inexperienced comrade there and perhaps a developing sympathizer or two. By the same token, if we delay systematic English work for too long, the fact that we are known there means that other groups will harden their cadre against our intervention, and the openings which now exist will be closed off. Due to the unusually rotten state of the British left, comrades in numerous groups are open to us since these groups are unable to answer our arguments, as has been amply demonstrated by discussions with them at various times. In particular, the Chartists, Workers Fight, the Revolutionary Communist Group and possibly the OCI group in England would be fruitful fields for recruitment/regroupment, in addition to a broader emphasis on the IMG, the RWP, the Grant group and the IS. There also exist a certain number of independent militants (sometimes with many years' experience) who have left established groups for empirically correct although extremely limited reasons. To the extent that they are known to us, these militants need to be contacted intensively, otherwise they will tend to drift away or into other groups.

At the present time, however, there appears to be no way we can exploit these opportunities systematically. We must seize on sporadic openings and possibilities should a more sustained perspective open up. England remains the No. 1 unfulfilled priority internationally.

22. Canada. The comrades who established the Toronto Committee of the IST have made excellent progress, in particular in winning over or destroying the sympathizer circles of the RMG. Significant inroads have been made into the RMG. Prospects for expansion are excellent, and the name of the committee has been changed to the Canadian Committee of the IST. We can look forward to the rapid growth of the Canadian group to about 20 members. The Canadian comrades should aim at the rapid establishment of a branch in Vancouver, which can also undertake work in the region. Although Workers Vanguard is currently sufficient for Canada, the comrades

should begin moving toward acquiring the bases for a regular press. Mutual assistance between the SL/US and the Canadian comrades should develop further with a net gain in the process going to the much weaker Canadians.

23. Sweden. The Swedish section of the USec is one of the younger sections (the group was founded in 1970), the most left-wing of the Pabloite groups and its membership does not appear particularly USec-loyal. Since we have a politically well-developed sympathizer in Sweden (who however is organizationally passive) with an extensive knowledge of the Swedish left, the opportunity for rapidly recruiting a small group through our political interventions is both good and concrete. We therefore are proposing such a trial intervention centered on a modest publication program in Swedish.

24. Italy. The Italian USec is, like many other sections, faction-ridden. The "third tendency" (Revolutionary Marxist Tendency) in Italy is a heterogeneous grouping which in the past has been at least implicitly pro-SWP. However, it also contains at least one leading trade unionist and has a certain strength. Thus the "third tendency" at the World Congress manoeuvred to have the leader of the Italian RMT represent it even though he was not officially a delegate.

Comrades of the IST have in the past had substantial contact with the Italian RMT, in particular with leadership elements. Although we do not now have the forces or language capacity to orient to the Italian situation, we should pay close and continuing attention to developments there and attempt to involve elements of the RMT in serious discussions.

25. Japan. The representative of the Oda group whom we have met was clearly a serious and dedicated comrade. The Oda group has translated the SL Declaration of Principles and the Letter to the OCFI and the OCI into Japanese and may assign a representative for further discussion with us within the next year. Due largely to cultural differences between Japanese society and Western societies as well as to language difficulties, it has been hard to form an exact estimation of how close the Oda group stands to us. However, when our representative visited Japan in 1972, he concluded that we were closest to the Oda group among all the Japanese ostensibly Trotskyist groups. It appears to be the only group in Japan with some sense of the programmatic alternatives generally accepted by ostensible Trotskyists and of the implications of the different alternative positions. On the basis of the most recent discussions, there is no doubt that contacts with them should be vigorously pursued. Following a forthcoming report on the Japanese movement, we may be able to form a better evaluation in the near future.

26. Chileans. Discussions with and winning over elements of the Chilean left, thrown into a state of organizational and political disarray by the 1973 coup, remains a world priority. Chileans in particular need to come to an unambiguous assessment of Allende's popular-front government. Our Spanish-language literature, which has already had wide distribution, is crucial to our effort to

crystallize out a Chilean sympathizer group of the IST. However, this task is rendered significantly more difficult by the fact that the MIR has forbidden its militants to leave the country.

In view of the difficulties, contacts with the Chileans in exile should be handled directly through and under the direct instruction of the IS.

Interim Secretariat of the IST,  
11 August 1974

By J. Brule (Phila.)

In examining the class nature of the Histadrut, we are asking the following question: will an upsurge of the Israeli proletariat take place inside or outside its framework. It is necessary to examine the fundamental attitudes of the Israeli bourgeoisie and proletariat to the Histadrut. It is my contention that the former will seek to destroy it; the latter to defend it.

To say that the Histadrut is part of the state apparatus is to tell the Israeli workers that the Histadrut is so defective it should be junked. It is to put the Histadrut in the same category as the fascist unions or the trade unions in Franco's Spain. Such "union" movements are characterized by most or all of the following: (1) outlawing the right to strike (2) open invitation to the class enemy to join (3) the nonexistence of a class struggle axis between the unions and the state; i.e., Franco does not regard the Spanish unions as a threat to the Spanish bourgeoisie (4) constant attempts by the workers themselves to set up organizations counterposed to the existing union structure.

(1) The right to strike has always been a fundamental test for a trade union. Recognition of this right is at least a primitive recognition of the necessity for class struggle. The Histadrut recognizes this right (Of course, the Histadrut leaders no more want to exercise it than George Meany and Co.); (2) The Histadrut explicitly excludes those who employ the labor of more than one other person--once again contrary to the open collaborationism of company unions and fascist unions (3) The main parties of the Israeli bourgeoisie--the Liberals and Herut--have always demanded that the government nationalize health services (i.e., take them out of the hands of the Histadrut). If the Histadrut is part of the state, why should the bourgeoisie care which state agency implements health care (In fact, dispensation of health benefits is one of the major attractions of the Histadrut. By attacking this the bourgeoisie is hoping to weaken the labor movement). (4) Most of those who repudiate the Histadrut from the left, like Comrade Y. Rad, counterpose the Workers Committees to the Histadrut as the embryos of genuine trade unions. Unfortunately, the Workers' Committees are the shop floor level bargaining and grievance committees authorized by the Histadrut itself! Can one conceive of Franco's trade unions similarly legitimizing the Comité Obreros?

#### Arguments vs. the Histadrut

I) A major argument in favor of repudiating the Histadrut is that it contains members who are a) on the other side of the class line, like cops, and b) nonproletarian elements, like housewives and farmers.

The Histadrut comprises about 1/2 of the adult Jewish population and about 75% of the total number of wage and salary earners, self-employed workers, and members of cooperatives.<sup>1</sup> (The corresponding figure for Arab workers is 50%.)<sup>2</sup> Of its 500,000 members in 1955, 162,000 were housewives, 72,000 were members of the kibbutzim and moshavim (farm collectives and cooperatives), another

15,000 were under the age of 18 and members of the Histadrut youth, and some 10,000 were professionals and artisans. This leaves around 250,000 wage and salary earners. Foremen, police, and some salaried managers are eligible to join the Histadrut, although they are not necessarily, or even generally, members of the trade union department of the Histadrut.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, actual capitalists who own businesses employing wage labor, are explicitly excluded.

The mere presence of nonproletarian elements does not mean that the Histadrut is not a trade union. Cops, prison guards, foremen, government bureaucrats and even supervisors are represented by the AFL-CIO, without disqualifying it as a trade union. The big problem is that non-trade union members of the Histadrut have a say over strictly trade union matters. (This is exercised not directly, but through the centralization of decision-making, in the top councils of the Histadrut, elected by the entire membership.) That is not good and we should fight to correct this. There is nothing the matter per se, however, with the trade unions establishing working relationships with working class housewives and working farmers.

The key question is whether the presence of nonproletarian elements qualitatively deforms the Histadrut into an institution that cannot, even in a primitive sense, defend the interests of the workers. The retention of the right to strike and the existence of bargaining committees independent of the bosses disproves this.

II) It is true that the Histadrut carries out activities other than strictly trade union ones. Educational and cultural activities are certainly not inconsistent with trade unionism. Some people argue that the only reason so many workers join the Histadrut is to take advantage of its health insurance benefits. So what! As Pelling points out in his A History of British Trade Unionism, the prime cause for the jump in the membership of British trade unions between 1910 and 1916 was ". . . the integration of the unions' benefit functions into the state schemes for health and unemployment insurance."<sup>4</sup>

What's usually cited here is the Histadrut's economic activities. The Histadrut sector accounted for 20% of the net domestic product of Israel in 1960. This, however, does not mean that the Histadrut is capitalist or part of the state. Producers cooperatives, trade union "capitalism," etc., are not unknown in the history of the workers movement. The fact that it plays a relatively large role in Israel is due to unique historical factors. The point, however, is not to demand that the Histadrut get rid of its holdings, but to demand that the Histadrut sector be operated in the interests of the Israeli working class, Arab as well as Jew. This requires the expropriation of all private industry and the institution of genuine workers control. If there has been a trend in recent years, it is the further subordination of the Histadrut sector to capitalist interests--selling of key industries pioneered by the Histadrut, like shipping, to private business, etc.

A note on this. We must support the right of workers employed in the Histadrut sector to strike. The Histadrut tops are particularly sensitive to strikes here, because it hits at the illusion

that this sector is run in the interests of the workers. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize that it is precisely in the Histadrut sector that the leadership feels most pressed to pay lip service to "workers control." While they propose only phony, class-collaborationist schemes, they are responding to the workers' demands, who regard the Histadrut as their own.

III) It is said that the Histadrut discriminates against Arab workers. My response is that it would be surprising if they didn't. Perhaps more significant is the inclusion of some Arab workers in the first place. This demonstrates the de facto junking of the line of "creating a Jewish working class" under the need to control militant Arab workers. This action is characteristic of a typically pragmatic labor bureaucracy--comparable to the old AF of L bureaucrats who dispensed with their craft union prejudices when they realized that the unskilled workers were going to be organized by someone. While the Histadrut leadership remains riddled with Hebrew chauvinism, this derives from its objective relationship to the Israeli working class and the better-off Jewish sector, and not from abstract ideological considerations. ? ?

IV) There is a misconception that the Histadrut leadership is selected proportionately to the representation of the political parties in the Israeli parliament. This is simply false. The Histadrut membership elects its own leadership every four years. Each party presents a list of candidates to the Histadrut membership and is awarded representatives on the basis of its showing. Some bourgeois and religious parties, as well as worker parties, participate in the elections, but this is similar to what obtains in Germany.

The other important question broached by the Histadrut is the class nature of the labor parties and CP. (I will not refer again to the CP, which is a special case. Comrade Rad seems to regard it as an Arab peasant party similar to the Chinese Communist Party after the Canton massacre. My response is why doesn't it act that way, join the PLO and wage guerrilla warfare, etc.) The organizations that founded the Histadrut in 1920 were Ahdut Ha'avoda, Hapoel Hatzair, and Hashomer Hatzair, and the left Poale Zion. These same organizations were the constituents of the Mapai, founded in 1930 (Ahdut Ha'avoda and Hapoel Hatzair) and the Mapam, founded in 1948 (of the left Poale Zion and Hashomer Hatzair). The Histadrut, then, was built by the same personalities that built Mapai and Mapam, and it is a necessary corollary of rejecting the Histadrut as a working class organization that one reject Mapai and Mapam, also.

An examination of the history of the tendencies that formed Mapai and Mapam would demonstrate the strength of socialist ideology among their membership. This is but one factor. Within the Zionist movement there were frequent physical clashes between the labor Zionists and the Revisionists, the right wing Zionists led by Jabotinsky whose members became the cadre of the Jewish terror squads like the Irgun. The Revisionists, who took to wearing brown shirts, attempted to break the power of the Histadrut by scabbing for orange growers and factory owners.<sup>5</sup> The descendants of the Revisionists today dominate right wing parties like the Herut and are

no more reconciled to Mapai and Mapam than they were years ago.

Mapam, a left social democratic party, was based in the Hashomer Hatzair which remained outside Mapai and moved away to the left in the 1930's. Hashomer Hatzair espoused a more militant class line, had a pro-Soviet orientation and called for the establishment of a binational state. For several years after the founding of Israel Mapam maintained a pro-Soviet orientation (It finally admitted in 1958 that ' . . . the maintenance of the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union during 40 long years brought with it manifestations of perversion and signs of degeneration').<sup>6</sup> It denounced Israeli complicity in the Korean War, called for the maintenance of the labor trend in education, strict separation of church and state, a government of labor parties, etc. While in practice Mapam betrayed even this program under pressure from the more dominant reformists of Mapai, it is difficult to see how one can classify it as a nonworking class party.

One incident that describes the conflict between the Mapai, Mapam and Histadrut on the one hand and the Israeli bourgeoisie on the other is the Red Flag incident of 1953. On May 1, 1953 the red flag was displayed and the workers anthem sung in some public schools belonging to the labor trend in education. The General Zionists, the main bourgeois party in the governing coalition, protested. When Mapai asserted that it intended to permit the display of the red flag under certain circumstances on May Day and the Histadrut holiday for the planned unified national school system, the General Zionists resigned and the government fell. Eventually Mapai capitulated and the General Zionists reentered the government. The class lines had been drawn between the working class and bourgeois parties.<sup>7</sup> *The Mapai capitulated!*

The question of the class nature of the Histadrut, Mapai, and Mapam is a fundamental one. Without a correct analysis one can make few advances in the class struggle. To some extent I believe that the false characterization of the Histadrut stems from impressionism. The tempo of the Israeli movement has been greatly affected by the constant preparation for war, the series of military victories won over the Arab states (until recently). Under these circumstances one could expect the labor leaders to adopt a particularly chauvinist and reactionary stance. Since 1948 Israel has had a succession of coalition governments dominated by the social democrats. Under such governments in a period of relative class peace it is natural that the class antagonisms between the trade unions and the state would appear somewhat muted. As the class struggle sharpens, the class relations will manifest themselves more clearly. Woe to the organization that is calling for the creation of new trade unions when the Histadrut is striking to defend a Mapai-dominated government against a military coup. It would be equally unfortunate if we are not present for the inevitable radicalization of the Histadrut and its membership.

In addition to being impressionistic this position creates illusions in reformism. I would ask Comrade Rad and his cothinkers these questions: Suppose there existed genuine reformist-led mass workers organizations--how would they act differently from the

Histadrut, Mapai, and Mapam? Would they cease to discriminate against Arabs, collaborate with the Jewish Agency and Israeli state, attempt to prevent strikes, etc.? In a country where one can legally distribute Bolshevik literature, where the working class was shaped by strong socialist influences, there are neither trade unions nor workers parties? What, after all, prevents them from being organized?

Footnotes

1. Zweig, Ferdynand. "The Jewish Trade Union Movement in Israel." In Integration and Development in Israel, edited by Eisenstadt, Bar Yosef, Chaim Adler. Praeger, 1970. p. 163.
2. Lumer, Hyman. Zionism: Its Role in World Politics. International Publishers. 1973. p. 18.
3. Zweig. op cit. p. 170.
4. Pelling, Henry. A History of British Trade Unionism. Penguin Books, 1963. p. 129.
5. Laqueur, Walter. A History of Zionism. Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1972. p. 318.
6. Birnbaum, Ervin. The Politics of Compromise. Associated University Press, 1970. p. 56.
7. Ibid., pp. 201-10.

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by Mark London

1. My object, as I have repeatedly stated to you, is to belong to a Trotskyist organization which not only recognizes the urgency of recruiting advanced workers, but which actively seeks to do this by making trade union work its central priority. Concretely, in Canada at present, the advanced workers are the social-democratic, and to a lesser extent, Stalinist militants. They can be reached, with few exceptions, only through the trade unions. Therefore, immediately upon acquiring a very minimal organizational infrastructure, a Bolshevik group must, as its central tasks, a) systematically and persistently colonize the unions, and b) engage the NDP and Stalinist workers within them in hard programmatic fights based on the transitional program.

2. The press, which reflects the organization's priorities, would consequently be mostly occupied with sustained exposure, from an explicitly Trotskyist viewpoint, of social democracy and Stalinism, as these ideologies manifest themselves at home and abroad.

3. Other tendencies would be dealt with, but they would be dealt with commensurate with their influence among the advanced workers. In this period, then, the press would largely ignore them except insofar as their militants were involved in significant strikes or demonstrations we deemed worthy of coverage because of the lessons they contained for the workers. The press would not sacrifice precious space, necessarily limited given our resources, and devoted to the social-democrats and Stalinists (the NDP and the CP), to provide continuing coverage of groups essentially divorced from the class such as the RMG, New Tendency, Socialist League, LSA, etc. In the rare instances where these grouplets were located in the class (e.g. RMG in the post office), sustained coverage and polemics would be assigned to the plant bulletin of the party cell within that workplace. In the event these tendencies grow in the next period, our press coverage would grow accordingly.

4. I am not opposed to an organization which concerns itself with petty-bourgeois radicals or other "peripheral" elements. I hope this will lay to rest the SL's allegations that I am a "syndicalist" who sees the only contradiction as being that between Labour and Capital. I will return to this later.

5. It is necessary to emphasize, however, that I very definitely regard work among these peripheral elements as secondary--particularly in this period. Students and other marginal groups, save in exceptional circumstances, have only a secondary importance. While the contradiction between Labour and Capital is not the only contradiction, we must never lose sight of the fact that it is the central contradiction. Only the working class, it bears repeating, can overthrow capitalism. Consequently, activity among the proletariat is central.

6. Additionally, insofar as it affects party-building, worker cadre are qualitatively more important than recruits from the campus milieu. Left to themselves, students and intellectuals are subject to every intellectual fad within their milieu. Parties composed

overwhelming of petty-bourgeois elements invariably lack long-term organizational or programmatic stability. With less at stake, they treat party loyalty lightly and easily develop a split mentality. They leave as easily as they join, unless they can impose their own style and outlook on the organization. In short, if you are overweight with petty-bourgeois elements, you end up turning the party in a petty-bourgeois direction, no matter what its origins and no matter how programmatically pure and proletarian oriented it is in theory at the outset. Not for nothing did Trotsky admonish the SWP, (whose proletarian composition and programmatic steadfastness, in fact, were higher than in any other group at the time) that it still had "too many petty-bourgeois boys and girls." This is more true than ever in the present period. Perhaps the SL would like to gloss over that warning. I can't.

7. Program and class composition cannot be treated apart from each other. There was a tendency in the old POT (and in tendency 3 of the RMC) to treat class composition as everything, apart from program. I find an opposite, but equally dangerous, tendency in the SL to treat program as everything, apart from class composition. The SL was undeniably correct to point out to the POT and tendency 3 that the mere fact that a party has a working class base does not mean it will be Bolshevik--witness the early anarcho-syndicalists, the social democrats, the Stalinists, and, closer to home, the Cochranites, LO, and other working-class based Trotskyist currents. But neither is program everything--or, rather, neither is program everything when it is seen, as I believe the SL sees it, in somewhat narrow terms as being only a set of immediate and transitional demands and a series of positions taken on important events in the class struggle. Program also includes orientation and practice. I refer you to the formulations in the Transitional Program which stipulate the centrality of trade union work as being a condition of membership in the FI, and which dismiss discussion circles from membership, no matter how ardent their commitment to "Trotskyism" and how firm their attachment to the demands of the TP.

8. Orientation and practice--and, in this sense, program--is very much determined by the class base. That is why I feel uneasy when SL'ers emphasize, as has been my experience, that the degeneration of the SWP and the FI was primarily due to the fact they lacked "intellectuals of the calibre of Trotsky, Leon, Klement, etc." There is some truth in that. But I think it is safe to say that even an intellectual of Trotsky's calibre, would not be able to carry his positions in organizations overweight with petty-bourgeois intellectuals and students. This is because the petty-bourgeoisie is almost congenitally unable to wrench itself free from its own milieu to turn towards an alien (to it) working class environment. Its natural inclination is to submerge itself in its own milieu, and reinforce its own isolation from the class.

9. Ideologically, this fact is reflected in a pronounced tendency to downplay the importance of the industrial proletariat and to exaggerate the significance of its own environment--the students and the "left" grouplets which originate from that milieu. In the SWP/LSA and in the INT, this revision of Marxism was embodied in the concept of the "youth vanguard" and the spurious "periphery to the

centre" tactic. In the SL, for reasons I am going to go into presently, it is embodied in its concept of "regroupment" through the "QRO's". It should be added that these revisions need not be accompanied by an absolute rejection in theory of the industrial proletariat. The petty-bourgeois groups, in varying degrees, all continue to pay lip-service to the centrality of the industrial workers, if only out of obeisance to inherited traditions and in order to win to its ranks students and intellectuals attracted to Marxism. But the key point is that the centrality of the proletariat is largely ignored in the organization's practice, in making activity among the workers its central priority, in channelling most of its energies and resources in that direction, and in subordinating work in its own milieu to that task.

10. It is true, of course, that there are some small campus-originated groups, for the most part Maoist and spontaneist, which do recognize their petty-bourgeois composition, recoil at it, and attempt to move out of the campus milieu into the unions. This is a healthy impulse. The problem with these groups is not that they attempt to work among the proletariat, but the manner in which they do so. That is to say, their practice among the workers is liquidationist. They are to be charged with succumbing to the relative backwardness of the proletariat in terms of the demands they raise when they finally make contact. Student-oriented groups like the SL, RMG, and LSA, however, do not see the attempt to make contact as a healthy impulse, for the most part. The attempt is condemned as much as the manner in which the attempt is made. This is what I think lies behind the attacks on "workerism," which as I read it, is a euphemism for wanting to directly attempt to penetrate the working class. I don't like the term because of what I recognize, on the basis of many conversations with SL'ers, RMG'ers, and LSA'ers, is implicit in it, and I don't recall ever seeing it used by Lenin or Trotsky, particularly in the sense employed by those people. The debate on this question between groups like the SL and the RMG and groups like the CPL and the RU, sounds very much to me like a debate between groups, on the one hand, who succumb to the backwardness of the class by liquidating into it and groups, on the other hand, who succumb to its backwardness by simply ignoring it.

11. I indicated above that I consider the SL's regroupment concept to be a revision. But, you may object, is it not true that Lenin and Trotsky also sought to "regroup" through "splits and fusions" from opponent tendencies in the workers' movement? Quite true. But unlike the SL, for whom regroupment is largely abstracted from class considerations, Lenin and Trotsky sought to regroup from those currents which were embedded in the class and had influence among the advanced workers. Lenin, you'll recall, polemicized with the Mensheviks and Economists because of the workers who were being led astray under their influence. Trotsky took on the social-democrats and Stalinists in order to reach their worker-militants. It is quite clear from his writings, for example, that he wanted to orient to the Socialist Party and the Workers Party because, as he repeatedly stated, these organizations had a capacity for attracting large and growing numbers of workers repelled by the Stalinists. You can be sure that numerous "socialist" and "Marxist" groups divorced from the class, without any appreciable influence among any group

of advanced workers, existed in these periods also. Any you may be equally certain they were treated as secondary, if not altogether ignored, in the Bolshevik press. Trotsky's thrust, it is abundantly clear from his writings in the Thirties, when he was locked into this milieu, was to break out of it--not to primarily build the party from within it (as a preliminary to breaking out), as the SL, in its practice, primarily attempts to do. Hence, another admonition to the SWP, this time to cease spending an inordinate amount of time polemicizing with the left intellectuals at the expense of worker-based currents: "It is my firm conviction," he wrote Shachtman, "that a certain reorganization of the New International and the Socialist Appeal is necessary--more distance from Eastman, Lyons, etc. and nearer to the workers, and in this sense, to the Stalinist party. (In Defence of Marxism, 83, my emphasis).

12. I have not got a sense of a similar thrust in my talks with SL'ers. Quite the opposite. I have been encouraged to put more distance between myself and the workers (and, in this sense, the social-democratic and Stalinist parties) and less between myself and the groups composed primarily of left intellectuals without perceptible influence among any group of advanced workers (RMG, LSA, New Tendency, etc.). Typically, the importance of work among the proletariat is downplayed and the importance of the petty-bourgeois groups is grossly magnified. Partly, this explains why the SL press, which regularly and attentively covers the petty-bourgeois groups, is so seductive to militants in these groups. It interests them and flatters them and makes them feel important. But it is not a press to win the advanced workers. I'll get to that presently.

13. SL militants are normally confident and consistent when defending most aspects of the organization's theory and practice. The confidence is largely warranted. I have found them to be correct, as you know, on more issues than any of the other petty-bourgeois groupings. When, however, I have pressed them on the character of the milieu they operate in, they have with great difficulty, hesitation, and barely disguised annoyance that they have to deal with the question, provided me with a whole range of contradictory and confusing answers. The answers often varied from one SL'er to another.

a) There are those SL'ers who readily (sometimes eagerly) concede the petty-bourgeois character of these groups. Then they proceed to "explain" what I have heard "explained" time and time again in the LSA and the RMG: That in this period it is more fruitful to engage in the primitive accumulation of cadre on the campuses than in the trade unions. One SL'er told me without embarrassment that you could not seriously think of trade union work until you had "at least one thousand members"--he meant, presumably, one thousand students and intellectuals.

b) There are, on the other hand, those SL'ers who, perhaps because they feel a more instinctive unease than some of their other comrades about concentrating their work in the petty-bourgeois milieu, simply deny the obvious: that these are groups composed overwhelmingly of petty-bourgeois elements. They rigidly insist they

in the class and not divorced from it. "Is not the RMG in the Post Office?", I have repeatedly been asked. End of question. End of argument. I am supposed to conclude on the basis of this, I suppose, that the RMG is therefore not a group of petty-bourgeois divorced from the class and its institutions.

c) Finally, and most often, you get the SL'er who attempts to combine the two arguments. He or she will claim the organization gives equal weight to the workers and the petty-bourgeois groups outside them. In other words, we are now being told that the SL has two central priorities. Now, it would of course be nice to be able to claim that both are priorities, but while this may satisfy all of its contacts, particularly those "workerists" who worry about its seeming preference to operate in the petty-bourgeois rather than the trade union milieu, to claim to have two basic thrusts, two orientations, two priorities, is a contradiction in terms, is a dishonest method of argument, and does not permit a clarification of differences.

Let the SL clarify. Which of the above three positions captures the essence of their politics? Should we listen to those SL'ers who suggest that the SL has a "proletarian orientation," in the sense I would understand it, i.e. that the organization recognizes the centrality of trade union work, that its press is attuned to this need, and that it devotes the bulk of its energies and resources to this? Or should we pay more attention to those who argue that the SL presently works among the petty-bourgeois groups because it is a more fruitful arena for intervention and accumulation of cadre? Or is it going to insist that it does both equally, and that you can have two basic orientations, two basic thrusts, which do not pull in opposite directions? Let them clarify, then we can proceed with the debate.

14. Of course, I'm not agnostic on this question of the SL's orientation as #13 might suggest. I think their responses are inconsistent and slippery because they do not feel themselves on firm ground, and they want to encompass and co-opt the criticisms. I say this because I have a sense of having gone through this debate once before in the RMG. Arguing with SL'ers, I have been struck by the similarity of their arguments on this issue to those the Smileyites employed at the RMG convention. Perhaps the SL'ers are more adroit and sophisticated, but that is all. You will remember that on the question of orientation the Smileyites started out by emphasizing the need to build an elaborate organizational infrastructure as a preliminary to "serious" trade union work. You will remember that they placed primacy on regrouping from the other left currents, (exaggerating their importance and the gains to be made), and characterizing as "workerist" those who stressed turning the organization to the "backward" working class. Under the pressure of the debate, they progressively retreated to the point where they began to insist that they too were bent on "serious" trade union work--how could we claim otherwise? They retreated to the point where they, in fact, abandoned the priority they gave to party-building among the left groups, and promised to have two priorities, two basic thrusts--one in the direction of the campus milieu, and one equally in the direction of the unions. I recall complaining at the time, justifiably I

think, that this was a retreat under pressure from their originally stated unequivocal positions, and was designed to encompass the debate by satisfying everyone. I remarked that the result could only be a blurring of differences and a lack of clarity. Now, I am not suggesting that SL = tendency 4 in all its manifestations (hardly) or that tendency 3 = Bolshevism (again, hardly), but on this particular question, and it is a fundamental one for me, there is an astonishing parallelism between the SL and the Smileytes, both in the way they proceed with the argument and in the conclusions they come to.

15. In this period particularly, given the uneven development of consciousness, you cannot simultaneously orient to the advanced workers (Stalinist and social-democratic) and the "advanced" petty-bourgeoisie (Trotskyist, Maoist, syndicalist). The SL does not do this in the U.S. and, based on my conversations, would not do this up here either. They orient to the Maoist, Trotskyist, and syndicalist grouplets originating from the campuses and largely rooted in or around that milieu (the fact that they may have ex-students implanted without roots in the class does not alter this) to the detriment of an orientation to the advanced workers. I rest my case that the SL's trade union work is secondary to their work among the ORO's on the evidence of their press, which--I am sure the SL will agree--always reflects, or should reflect, the organization's priorities since it is its single most effective organizing tool.

16. The SL press cannot simultaneously bring political consciousness to the workers and the advanced petty-bourgeoisie it seeks to reach. As a tool for regrouping social-democratic or Stalinist workers in Canada, or Stalinist, McGovernite, or Wallaceite workers in the States--all of whom express political dissatisfaction with the status quo, marking them off from the mass of workers--it is next to useless. At best, it has attempted to reach out to selected groups of black Maoist workers, but this in no way contradicts what I have been arguing. I'll return to this below.

The fact is that the WV is written for the concerns and consciousness of the Trotskyist, and Maoist, students and intellectuals. This makes it largely irrelevant to the concerns and consciousness of the advanced workers in the U.S. and Canada which, while we may regret it, are simply not--and you can hold your breath and turn blue trying to deny this--the same as those of the advanced petty-bourgeoisie thrown up by the campus explosions of the Sixties.

Does this make me a "liquidationist" as the SL would allege? I don't think so. You are not a liquidationist if you suggest that advanced workers in Canada in this period might be more interested in continuous coverage of the NDP and Stalinist parties and bureaucrats they are confronted with everyday of their political lives, than they are in Peter M.'s resignation letter from the RMG, or the RMG's refusal to debate the SL, or an extensive analysis of where the New Tendency goes wrong. You think I am trying to make trivial debating points? I guarantee you that if you truly wish to reach the advanced workers, as you say you do, and if you stare reality in the face and accept that the advanced workers are in or around the social-democratic or Stalinist parties, you will be

engaged in a running battle every week with a Canadian SL and a Canadian WV which will want to, as a result of their priorities, devote space that could better be utilized to break those workers from their reformist allegiances to cover the Maoist, Trotskyist, and spontaneist grouplets to a degree they hardly warrant.

But you are saying that in addition to the ORO's, the WV also covers Watergate, Chile, Vietnam, France, Britain, and other pressure points of the international class struggle, and that you wish to cover these also. Fine. I will emphatically agree that we must cover these, and in detail, but I will also proceed to argue that the SL pitches these articles to the level of consciousness of the grouplets and not the level of consciousness of the advanced workers. Please note this well: I am not arguing that the press I have in mind would not arrive at the same political conclusions, for the most part, as the SL on many of these questions. You know that from our discussions. But I am saying that the articles I would want to see would assume less familiarity with the issues on the part of the workers, and consequently would have a different starting point and emphasize certain lessons--the lessons the workers have yet to learn about the class struggle that the Maoist and Trotskyist students and ex-students concentrated in the grouplets learned in the Sixties--prior to arriving at the same conclusions. Let me put it another way: Right opportunists start and end at the level of consciousness of the workers. Left sectarians start and end above the level of consciousness of the workers (they "go over their heads"). Bolsheviks would start at the existing level of consciousness of the workers and step by step lead them to the appropriate political conclusions. I tried, I think, to demonstrate how the differences would reflect themselves, for example, in coverage of Chile when I was last in Winnipeg. I won't go into that again now, but wait for the SL to come back at me once again, as I suspect they will, with the "liquidationist" charge before I proceed further.

Finally, what about the SL's coverage of trade unions, you say? Again, I suggest that if you read their press carefully, you will find most of these articles concentrate on the workplaces where the SL has fractions, and concern themselves for the most part, with the economic struggle being waged in them.

To sum up, workers reading the SL press will not find enough in it to break them from their political illusions, will find the coverage of the ORO's irrelevant to their struggle, and if their attention is still engaged after that, will not easily relate to the coverage of world events, and in the event their plant is at Mahwah, Fremont, etc., will only draw lessons essentially relating to the economic struggle there. Taken as a totality, therefore, the SL press does not politically educate the advanced workers by destroying their political illusions because it does not talk enough, or talk in an effective way, about those illusions.

17. I suspect the SL leadership itself recognizes that the press is not a suitable vehicle for reaching the advanced workers in the plants and offices. I have always been struck by the apparent disparity between the front and rear pages of the WV, which by

and large cover topical events (Watergate, Portugal, Middle East, UAW Convention, etc.) and are capable of interesting workers, even if in a limited way, and the inside pages, which are heavily weighted with news of the left grouplets and subjects pitched more to their concerns and consciousness. I suggest to you as a working hypothesis that the SL leadership, instinctively or consciously, generally accepts that plant gate sales would not proceed as briskly with front pages bearing bold headlines such as "IS Splits," "VNL: Lonely Hearts Club," "Where The Lambertistes Go Wrong," etc. Their instincts, to be sure, are sound. But this seems to me to be rather in contradiction to their cocky insistence that even if the politically-conscious workers are unaware of these grouplets and their discussions, they want to force these debates to their attention--what they mean when they proudly boast that "the workers have to read the WV with a dictionary." Apart from the fact that you cannot force anyone to read anything which is removed from their existing concerns and consciousness--you have to interest them by starting with their concerns and consciousness and lead them forward, in every article, step-by-step to the correct Trotskyist conclusions--even if we accept this proud boast of the SL, we are still left with the question of why, if they are so convinced that you can start above the existing level of consciousness of the advanced workers, they rarely, if ever, express this belief concretely on the front page, the most important page of the press. If it is so critical in this period that the workers be forced to interest themselves with the grouplets, and, moreover, that this can be done, how to explain this liquidation in practice of that notion on that page of the press which is utilized for plant gate sales. Surely, in Canada, if I accepted the SL theory on this, and were editing a Canadian WV, it would logically follow for me that I would not bury my polemics with the grouplets on the inside pages, but would thrust them to the forefront of the press. In other words, I might stand at the plant gates of Douglas Aircraft with a front page article on, say, "Where The RMG Goes Wrong On The 'New Mass Vanguard'," trying to sell it to the politically-conscious workers streaming through. When someone would object that there is no way the attention of NDP or Stalinist workers would be engaged by this (it is addressed to RMG militants), I would have to, if I were faithful to the SL line, reply that it was capable of interesting those workers, or even if it were not, would insist that even so I was not going to "liquidate my politics," and that "I was damn well going to force them to interest themselves with this"--as the "dictionary" theory of politics requires. But, somehow, having seen what the American SL does with the front page of the WV, I suspect a memo would soon be dispatched from the "international Spartacist tendency" in New York, telling me to stop this nonsense or cut out plant gate sales.

18. Perhaps the SL is prepared to argue, however, as many of their base cadre have, that I will be able to "sell" to the "many" "ostensible revolutionaries"--that is, to the "many" RMG or New Tendency or CPC-ML or CPL implants streaming through the gates? Let them. I will again argue they fly in the face of reality simply to justify their own revisionist brand of petty-bourgeois regroupment politics. I may even invite them to come up and hit any number of selected plants of their choice and try this. I will let them do

it for any number of weeks and then gauge their success. And were there an organization distributing a press laden with exposure of the NDP and Stalinists in both the economic and political arenas, i.e. a press pitched to the concerns and consciousness of the advanced workers, it would be instructive to compare the results. Regretably, of course, there is not such an organization. That is why our task is to begin constructing one--immediately.

19. You will now cite the SL's Transformation Document which points to a target of 35% trade unionists in that organization in the next few years. You will add that the multiplication of their caucuses, particularly in auto, indicates they are serious about the goal. I don't question this. In itself, and taken out of context, this is a step in the right direction.

But the reassignment of even 35% of its organization (even 90% if you want to stretch a point), in a period of campus lull and growing worker militancy, no more indicates the SL has made a political turn to the proletariat than, for example, the reassignment of 35% (or 90%) of the worker-cadre in the type of proletarian organization I would like to help build, to the campuses, in a period of industrial lull and campus upsurge, would indicate that we had taken a political turn to the student milieu and the left group-lets concentrated in or around it.

This is because we are not involved in a numbers game. It is not solely a question of how many students you take off campus and implant in industry, or how many workers you take out of the factories and send back to school. It is a question of what these individuals bring in with them from the organization when they enter the plants or schools. These individuals are not simply individuals; they are the face of the organization in the plant or school. I am sure the SL would agree.

To illustrate this in the concrete, let us imagine that we re-assigned 35% of our worker-based organization to the campuses. Would this in itself constitute a real political turn? Hardly. For such a political turn, if it were undertaken, would have to be reflected in our press, the mirror of the organization's politics, and its single most important organizing vehicle. If, therefore, we continued to place secondary emphasis on the campus-based left (RMG, New Tendency, SDS, etc.) and continued to place primary emphasis on the worker-based tendencies (NDP, Stalinists), as we would, I am certain the SL, commenting on this, would deny we had made an appropriate turn and would reject fusion on the proper understanding that we still did not share the same political thrust. At best, they would say our "turn" was empirical and limited by their standards. They would suggest that the fact that we sent individuals to intervene on certain campuses and around the left groups was not enough. They would claim the organization was not arming these cdes. with a press that could enable them to operate and recruit most effectively in that particular milieu, and that therefore the individuals concerned were being wasted.

I would say much the same thing in relation to their alleged turn. It is not enough to simply shift the ratio of workers:intel-

lectuals in an organization to claim a proletarian orientation. Such a turn has to be conceived of in political terms. For the SL to make such a political turn, it would have to be reflected in its press. I indicated above this is not the case: It continues to write to the concerns and consciousness of the radicalized petty-bourgeoisie and places primary emphasis on the campus-based left grouplets in its coverage. For us, this means that even were it to assign 35% of its Canadian cadre to industry, I am convinced the priority it gives to regroupment from the petty-bourgeois milieu would logically result in coverage of the worker-based tendencies being subordinated to continuous coverage of the left grouplets outside the class. On that basis, I would continue to deny that they had made a turn to the class, and would rule out fusion because their politics were not in line with ours. I would say their turn was empirical and limited. I would suggest they had only sent individuals to intervene in certain factories, that the organization, through its press, had not made a turn to the advanced workers in the class, and that even the comrades they had sent in were being wasted since they were not armed with a press which could enable them to propagandize and operate most effectively in that particular milieu.

20. Incidentally, the question of a youth group for us would be involved in a period of campus upsurge. Not only would we re-assign worker-cadre, if necessary, as I indicated, but we would also set up a youth group with its press. In this way, we could maximize our opportunities in the campus milieu and among the political grouplets based there, without having to reorient the party press away from the class--our consistent primary orientation. In other words, we would not fall prey to the "greener pastures" theory of the old Cochranites or the current SWP, IMT, etc., which is a key to understanding Pabloism. This is my understanding of the youth group, a tactical question corresponding to a particular situation. I am not certain whether the SL views the question this way.

21. At root, you will discover, I think, that the differences between the SL and myself flow out of an assessment of what is an advanced worker. Advanced workers are defined by political consciousness. That is to say, they concern themselves with the sphere of relations outside the plant, outside the sphere of relations between the bosses and the workers. In this sense, they are to be distinguished from the workers who have a trade-union consciousness, whether they are passive bread-and-butter Gompersites or angry young militants with spontaneist impulses, whose focus does not extend beyond the economic struggle.

The category of advanced workers, defined in this sense, the way Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky defined it, is itself divided into reformists, centrists, and Bolsheviks. The relationship of these forces within the class is a shifting one, depending on the nature of the revolutionary leadership and the conjuncture. We may say that since the degeneration of the Third International, the advanced workers seen as a totality, are reformist--that is they are dominated overwhelmingly by the social-democratic parties and the pro-Moscow CP's.

The SL, however, apparently considers as the advanced workers, Maoist, Trotskyist, and consciously syndicalist workers--what they term the "ORO's," a term, so far as I know, which is foreign to the Marxist vocabulary. They exclude the worker-activists in or around the social-democratic parties and pro-Moscow CP's from this category. If this is not explicit in their theory, it is abundantly evident in their practice.

The SL also blurs the distinction between advanced workers and petty-bourgeois intellectuals. For me, advanced workers are only to be located at the point of production. But SL'ers strongly imply that the advanced workers also include the petty-bourgeois intellectuals in left groups divorced from the class on the basis that their organizations, in an abstract way, identify with the "workers movement." Therefore, the SL equates its intervention into these groups with an intervention into the advanced workers. This is metaphysics, not Marxism. And if the SL has not, for obvious reasons, codified this blatant revisionism in documented form, it is certainly implicit in the understanding of the SL cadre I have spoken with.

22. The difference between myself and the SL, therefore, does not concern, superficially, who seeks to "regroup the advanced workers" around a Trotskyist party in this period as a preliminary to winning the masses. We both claim that. The difference is that the SL evidently understands by advanced workers only "ostensibly revolutionaries," while I understand the advanced workers to not only include--but to be overwhelmingly dominated by--the reformist CP's and social-democratic parties. In terms of practice, accordingly:

a) I want to regroup from those workers inclined towards the reformist parties, the NDP and the CP. If you think of the advanced workers not simply as a sum total of individuals but as a category, the advanced workers today are in or around those parties. In other words, if we win the NDP and CP workers, we win the advanced workers.

b) The SL wants to regroup scattered Maoist, Trotskyist, and syndicalist individuals in the class (most often ex-student implants without real roots or influence in the class) and, more especially, petty-bourgeois intellectuals in the ostensibly revolutionary organizations. In their practice, they evidently see these as the totality of the advanced workers, or at least the key stratum of them. That they are not that should be absolutely clear, because even if you win every single member of the RMG, LSA, Socialist League, CPC-IL, CPL, etc., you will still not have touched the overwhelming bulk of politically conscious workers, i.e. the advanced workers, who will remain under the hegemony of the social-democratic, and to a lesser extent in North America, the Stalinist bureaucracies.

23. I would argue further that the SL, with its political thrust, will be unable to win even the "ostensible revolutionary" workers it claims to court. The orientation I outlined above would. This is because the "ostensible revolutionaries" in the class, even if they become convinced by your line on Maoism, Pabloism, Cuba, etc. will still want you to provide them with a press which they can use to break up the NDP and CP clusters in their plants. If you do not have a press which talks directly to the NDP and CP, even the most

serious "ostensible revolutionaries" will disregard you. Talk to Stu S. or Jim M., for example, if you want confirmation. If there are any advanced workers, even by the SL's criterion, in the class, they most certainly include these two. They even read the Worker's [sic] Vanguard faithfully! Certainly Jim, and increasingly Stu, are closer to our positions on the history of the FI, trade union work, etc., and therefore to the SL positions on these questions, than anyone else you will find in the class. But they will never join SL until they are convinced that it could also provide them with the means of polarizing what they correctly recognize to be the overwhelming majority of advanced workers--those in or around the NDP and CP.

The SL, to sum up, objectively therefore attempts to bypass the overwhelming majority of advanced workers to reach the "ostensible revolutionaries," without understanding that it is not only the theoretical needs of the "ostensible revolutionaries" they must satisfy, but also their practical needs--their need to break up the bulk of the advanced workers concentrated in or around the social-democrats and Stalinists. That is to say, they do not appear to grasp that you do not recruit only on the basis of theory--an idealist notion--but on the basis of what you have to offer militants in terms of theory and practice.

24. We now come to the last barricade SL'ers erect in defense of their avowed proletarian orientation: The idea that they build formations exterior to the party called Militant Action Caucuses which are given the responsibility of injecting political consciousness into the class through the medium of the transitional program. Astonishing admission! The party, through its press, we are being told in effect, does ignore the workers; it passes that "chore" on to units which are not explicitly identified with it, and are equipped with limited resources and scanty plant bulletins. The party, presumably, is too busy with other concerns. For myself, a proletarian orientation is defined not in terms of the relationship of some party members to some plants but in terms of the relationship of the organization to the class, most particularly to the category of advanced workers. The organization must speak to the class in its own name both inside and outside the plants and offices, especially when this is not illegal and, perhaps even when it must go underground. The SL, I have argued, is not able to speak to the class at the plant gates. And, in the few factories where it is inside, it virtually liquidates the SL party cell into cell fronts which it calls Militant Action "Caucuses."

The MAC's are simply responses to "red clauses," you say? I propose that is not the only reason they are set up. The SL would set up a MAC even where those clauses do not exist--as, for example, they have stated they would do in the post office. Their preposterous explanation for this is that someday a "red clause" may be instituted. Are we to treat this seriously? Do they really believe that if the bosses and bureaucrats felt it necessary at some point to purge the reds, they need the formalism of a "red clause" to do it, and that a MAC in response to that would prevent this? Setting up a cover for your militants, even in these circumstances, is hardly a guarantee against repression; it is simply a legalistic attempt,

a feeble one at that, to evade identification of your militants with your organization on a proscribed subversive list (the "red clause"). Liquidating the identification of your militants with your party, is always the worst of alternatives, yet the SL proposes to do this in the post office, before such is even required!

I am inclined to suspect that the deeper reason the SL does not intervene in its own name is because its press, oriented to the ORO's, would be an irrelevant embarrassment for them, enforcing their isolation in the workplace. Better, perhaps, to set up a MAC, free the militants from having to intervene as SL'ers circulating Workers Vanguard (which should talk to the workers) and circulate instead a newsletter in the name of the cell front, which is more related to their consciousness and concerns. To my mind, only the fact that the SL would set up such a caucus around the transitional program makes it superior to the RMG's proposed practice of setting up cell fronts called Mole Groups. But if you read that section of my post office document dealing with the necessity of militants to identify, wherever possible, with the party, you will see why I think of MAC's only as a last resort to seek cover. It is, the SL agrees, a tactical question. But as with the youth group, in practice they seem to elevate it to the level of a principle. Might we justifiably ask them, therefore, that if they truly see these ancillary bodies as tactical questions, please clarify under what conditions they are tactically appropriate and under what conditions they are tactically inappropriate?

25. You raised the question of the Communist League in the U.S., and wondered if that did not justify the SL's contention that the ORO's are "in the class." Comrades, the CL is an exceptional case. It is simply not your typical ORO. It is strategically located in the centre of one of the most important industries in all of advanced capitalist society, and, even more important, it could provide a real link to the critically-important black proletariat. The SL's attention to it is warranted, although to split it in its direction, it will have to offer it more than critiques of its practice in the WV; it will have to convince it that SL also orients to its milieu. In any event, attention to the CL which is of strategic importance in the class in no way justifies allocating precious space in your press to the SWP, CSL, VNL, RU, RSL, etc. and the other grouplets nowhere near as significant. The SL, comrades, is saying to you that the CL is in the class, therefore all the ORO's are in the class. It is like when they argue that they have comrades intervening in a few factories, therefore the SL is intervening in the class. You have to descend very deep, I think, into empiricist logic to arrive at such conclusions: What is true of the part is not true of the whole. It is my feeling that the space the SL devotes to the grouplets could perhaps better be used to counterpose Trotskyism to the McGovernite, Wallacite, and Stalinist illusions of the growing number of American workers who are emerging out of the passive mass of bread-and-butter unionists and expressing dissatisfaction with the political status quo. In any case, my purpose here is not to comment in depth on the SL's relationship to the American class struggle. I only know they seek to apply their regroupment strategy to the conditions of the Canadian class struggle, and I have tried to show what implications that would have for us.

26. Does all of this mean I would not attempt, as the SL does, to create splits in the petty-bourgeois ORO's with an eye to winning their best elements? It does not. I have been arguing throughout only that the attempt would be secondary to winning the advanced workers--in this sense, the best of the NDP and Stalinist militants in the unions. But this does not preclude doing patient and systematic contact work or fostering splits in petty-bourgeois organizations, particularly those in motion, through the circulation of documents specifically aimed at the politics of those organizations--much as the SL itself does. I look forward to the day, in fact, when we can introduce a document along the lines of this one into the SL with a view to splitting it and winning its healthier elements. To have maximum impact, of course, it would be important to be in a position where we can show the best SL'ers that we are not only theoretically correct, but that we have an organization and a practice, particularly one rooted in the class, to offer them. The only difference with the SL, then, is the question of orienting the workers' press to these elements. And as I have tried to show, you will reach the best "ostensible revolutionaries" not solely by offering them a critique of their organizations, however correct, but by showing a press and a practice which is capable of addressing itself to, and breaking, the illusions of the social-democratic and Stalinist workers in the class.

27. The question of the USec. must be seen in this context. The USec. is young, heterogeneous, in crisis, and of all the allegedly Trotskyist currents, the likeliest to grow, for better or for worse, as a result of the simultaneous crises of Maoism, Castroism, and the traditional workers organizations. I therefore believe we must intervene in the USec., starting perhaps with an intervention into the IT and IMG, perhaps its healthiest sections and the ones most accessible to us, after the RMG convention, when we will have sufficient documentation to circulate. If and when we are forced outside, we should maintain our links and continue to intervene, as I outline in #26, at the same time we develop our press and intervention into the unions in accordance with our resources. I am confident we will have a sufficient incubation period, assuming tactical perspicacity, to cohere around us a mature leadership from inside and, if necessary, from outside the USec.

28. Did I hear you correctly when you said Richard S. of the SL invited me to join with my differences? Remind him to reread the that WV article ridiculing Joe T. for daring to invite the "principled" SL into the USec. given their differences. Why should I leave the USec., a turbulent international arena of thousands of avowedly Trotskyist militants, to join a U.S.-based group of a few hundred? I would split immediately to a Bolshevik organization, or if I concluded that the base of the USec. was hopelessly hardened, that we could survive and grow outside, or if the USec. betrayed the workers on the scale of the German events--the criteria Trotsky used, you'll remember, in turning away from the Third International. But I don't believe in "lesser evilism." In fact, the closer an organization is to your politics, the more relentlessly you should try to destroy it, because it confuses and often deflects the best militants from the proper course. Here, too, the SL will agree. It should be apparent from everything I've written and said that at

this point I hardly consider the SL to be anything more than quantitatively better than the others. A qualitatively different organization would be a Bolshevik organization, and I'm still looking. And if I don't find, I'll try to build. The SL, in my opinion, is merely the most sophisticated "left wing" of the petty-bourgeois radical groupings. I suspect when the history of the revolution is written, they'll be granted a footnote of indebtedness for some theoretical and archival services to the proletarian party. Nothing more.

29. I have concentrated on the question of party and class in this document, because that is what the SL has apparently confused you most about. The difference over the press merely reflects a much deeper difference over the method of building the party. The SL recognizes this, and so do I. Ultimately, I predict the debate will reduce itself to the SL claiming it is virtually impossible and not really necessary to regroup advanced workers (i.e. NDP, CP) in this period (it is always posed as "in this period" for these groups), and myself claiming it is both possible and urgent. That is to say, the debate will reduce itself to a question of those who succumb to the relative political backwardness of the working class by ignoring it, like the SL, and those like myself who refuse to accept this. The SL will attempt to justify this, in the final analysis, by developing a "theory" whereby reformist workers must somehow become "ostensible revolutionaries" before they are open to the influence of the party--a stages theory of consciousness--and that the party itself for an indefinite period (extending far beyond the time when it has the capacity to publish a press aimed at the workers) must be built from the petty-bourgeois milieu. You will, I suppose, have to ask yourselves whether you truly think it is possible to regroup advanced workers without liquidating the transitional program to finally resolve the question.

30. Obviously, the other questions are equally critical. We have explored many of the SL questions--particularly those relating to the history of the FI, Stalinism, guerrilla warfare, economism, the popular front, etc.--to our mutual satisfaction, I think. But in subsequent documentation, I want to go into some of the lines the SL developed by itself, or through a mechanical interpretation of the teachings of the Bolsheviks. I am thinking particularly of their current election line on the NDP and critical support to the grouplets, their election line of the Labour/TUC government, their characterization of the OCI as left-centrist, and their approach to united front work and demonstrations, as it has manifested itself here in Toronto. I am more open on their Middle East position, but it needs discussion.

31. There is, finally, another question I want to explore. The SL, I understand, has charged me, in addition to being a "workerist" and a "liquidationist," with being a "maneuverer." I understand further that you comrades got annoyed at this. However, in my opinion, while I appreciate this as an expression of your personal loyalty, I believe it is legitimate for them to introduce that charge into the debate. The manner in which individuals or political groups conduct polemics, i.e. their political behaviour, is inseparable from their politics as a whole. I know, for example, that if the

situation were reversed, if the SL even hinted to me that you were slippery maneuverers or opportunists, I would have to explore that further, painful as it might be, in the event the SL might be perceiving something grossly unhealthy about you that I was perhaps too blind to see. I would lay aside my personal feelings about you for the moment--there is no room in politics for sentiment--because such a serious charge, if confirmed, would cause me to immediately lose faith in your willingness to deal with political questions in an open and honest way, a Bolshevik way, and consequently your political judgements as a whole would become suspect. The charge, then, is laden with political implications. This would apply even if I had become convinced you were maneuvering in a largely unconscious way.

So the question is an important part of the discussion, and I urge you to treat it that way. You must explore this further. You must request the SL to substantiate this. It is clearly in your interest to do so. If they can convince you of this, it will go a long way towards resolving your confusion in their favour. On the other hand, if they cannot--and, of course, they cannot--I think you should begin to call into question why they introduced that wild charge (among others) in the first place. I believe if you do that you will conclude, as I do, that it was because, consciously or otherwise, they do not feel secure enough to deal with my criticisms in a completely open and political way, and have sought other means to undermine me. In that event, the substantiated allegations I have been making about their polemical maneuvering, particularly with regard to the question of my orientation and the p.o. document, may ring more true. That is my special interest in wanting this question documented to the fullest extent also.

n.d. [mid-June 1974]

by IDB Editor

Interception of the London document on the SL by the RMG led to London's removal from its Political Committee and his suspension from the organization.

Richard Cramer has written a substantial draft reply analyzing the flat contradictions, non-sequiturs and simple falsehoods in the document. Certain considerations inhibit the present publication of Comrade Cramer's reply. Therefore we would like to note here just three points about Comrade London's document.

(1) His statement that the SL is a student-centered organization is a simple falsehood and fully known to him as such.

(2) His felt central need to orient to the alleged mass of social-democratic and Stalinist workers in North America expresses itself in his first major programmatic document (he had previously written one calling for more militant trade-union tactics from an essentially programmatically neutral standpoint!). But willy-nilly he has been compelled to recognize reality by making his document an all-out attack on the Spartacist tendency which he seeks to show is on every grounds irrelevant. In his formal schema there is no place and surely no need for dealing with the SL at all since the SL is surely even unknown to most social-democratic or Stalinist workers.

(3) In actuality of course he must for his real purposes confront the SL. We conclude therefore that he is not a real workerist, as for example the Ellensite Spark group, who actually did drop Marxist politics like a hot potato and bury themselves in the plants: ignoring the SL and all other competitors in favor of telling the workers about their lousy conditions of labor and life (as if this was what they had to be told). London is akin rather to the Harry Turner type whose armchair "workerism" is a posture to conceal a classic centrist opportunism and designed to bolster the facade of weak-willed and frantically anti-SL petty-bourgeois poseurs. An Ellens would hardly touch a London or a Turner with a ten-foot pole. She at least knows petty-bourgeois fakers when she sees them.

16 August 1974

by Richard Carling (Boston)

I believe that the implicit assumption of the SL's position on Ireland published in WV #7, namely the existence of an Ulster nation, neither British nor Irish, was factually correct but that insufficient attention to the historical peculiarities of its national development led to inadequate programmatic conclusions.

The emergence of a Protestant Ulster nation can be traced through the evolution of a complex three-way relationship between the English nation, the native, Gaelic, Catholic population of Ireland and the English and Scottish settlers in Ireland. This relationship has exhibited markedly different characteristics at different key points in the island's history.

Prior to the Protestant Reformation, English colonization was only partial and was accompanied by a high degree of assimilation. With the Protestant epoch, the Tudor monarchs decided on a path of clearing the island of the natives and stocking it with loyal Englishmen. This plan only succeeded in one area of Ireland, the Northern province of Ulster. Large numbers of land-hungry settlers, mostly Presbyterians from the Scottish lowlands, emigrated there after the conquest of 1609. To attract these settlers the Ulster Custom was established, providing the settlers not with ownership (which was in the hands of Anglican gentry) but with security of tenure and the right to profit from any improvements in their holdings. The most important features of Ulster society can be traced to this period: the numerical predominance of Protestants of all classes alongside a large and specially oppressed Irish Catholic minority. "Because settlement proceeded by the grant of specific estates to undertakers, rather than by a gradual movement of settlers from east to west as in America, the native Catholic Irish, while subject to loss of title to land, were not systematically forced out of the country. In America, settlers achieved a final solution of the Indian problem by force...In Ulster, Catholics remained near the settlers, a standing challenge to the property of the new settlers and to their regime." (Richard Rose, Governing Without Consensus, p. 79)

The Cromwellian conquest of 1652 extended the Protestant Ascendancy throughout the island but "...did not in practice involve colonization on the model of the Ulster plantation...The mass of the working population did not change, and the chief effect of the settlement over most of the country was to establish a Protestant landowning and ruling class, small in numbers, in a countryside which remained Irish and Roman Catholic." (Liam de Paor, Divided Ulster, p. 11)

The effort of the Irish Catholics to regain their lands and rights by supporting the Stuarts' claim to the English throne produced the decisive Protestant victories celebrated to this day in Ulster and left a prostrate Catholic populace incapable of mounting another serious threat to the Protestant ascendancy for generations. "The Williamite settlement ended for a long time to come the possibility that a Catholic property-owning class would dominate

Ireland." (De Paor, p. 17) "By 1703, the proportion of land owned by Catholics was less than 14 percent of the whole of Ireland." (Rose, p. 79)

Throughout the seventeenth century, small scale woolen, cotton, linen and other manufactures had developed on the basis of "cottage industries" pursued by the Scotch and English settlers, who unlike the Catholic tenants, were permitted to accumulate the proceeds of any improvements or diversification in their land holdings. Export of these manufactures and also of livestock was seen as a competitive threat by English manufacturers and landlords alike. They moved to squash this threat, driving many of the Protestant settlers into bitter opposition, while allowing the growth of the non-competitive linen and hempen industries, centered in Ulster. English protectionism, primitive methods of agriculture and the semi-feudal system of "rack-renting" (Rack-renting allowed landlords to increase rents proportionate to increases in tenants' yield.) that prevailed in the rest of the island ensured that, except for Ulster, Ireland would remain a backward and impoverished agricultural society until well into the twentieth century. In the outline of a report on Ireland, Marx noted:

"1698: The Anglo-Irish Parliament (like obedient colonists) passed, on the command of the mother country, a prohibitory tax on Irish woolen goods export to foreign countries.

"1698: In the same year, the English Parliament laid a heavy tax on the import of the home manufactures in England and Wales, and absolutely prohibited their export to other countries. She struck down the manufacturers of Ireland, depopulated her cities and threw the people back upon the land.

"Similar legislation of England against Irish cattle.

"1698: Molyneux pamphlet for the independence of the Irish Parliament (i.e. the English colony in Ireland) against the English. Thus began the struggle of the English colony in Ireland and the English Nation. Simultaneously, struggle between the Anglo-Irish Colony and the Irish Nation." (I do not believe Marx used the term, "Irish Nation," in a precise, scientific sense in this context.)

(Marx and Engels, Ireland and the Irish Question, p. 129)

In the absence of any serious Catholic challenge to the Protestant Ascendancy during the 18th century (The struggles of the Whiteboys and other secret societies grew out of specific, local abuses of the agrarian system and were not a fundamental threat to the Protestant order.), a steady accumulation of English abuses led the Protestant settlers to follow a course not unlike that of the American colonists. Protectionism alienated manufacturers, merchants and commercial farmers, large and small. Discriminatory religious laws applied not only to Catholics but also to Ulster Presbyterians. Power in the Dublin Parliament was concentrated through a system of rotten boroughs in the hands of the most

corrupt, parasitical and subservient section of the Protestant landlords. Anxious to win support from the small minority of "respectable" Catholic landlords and merchants, the rising Protestant bourgeoisie began to cautiously link the cause of Catholic emancipation to their demands for free trade and parliamentary reform. The Dungannon assembly of the Ulster Volunteers in February, 1782, described by Irish historian W.E.H. Lecky as "undoubtedly the most faithful representatives then sitting of the opinions and wishes of the Irish Protestants," resolved by nearly unanimous vote that "...as men and as Irishmen, as Christians and as Protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and that we conceive the measure fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and the prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland." (W.E.H. Lecky, A History of Ireland in the 18th Century, pp. 181 and 183)

In 1791 Wolfe Tone, Presbyterian lawyer and founder of the United Irishmen, wrote that "The wealthy and moderate party of the Catholic persuasion with the whole Protestant interest would form a barrier against invasion of property." (Lecky, p. 229)

Tone deserves his niche in the lexicon of Irish nationalist saints, not by virtue of any mystical identification with the Gaelic past, but because the 1798 uprising represented the first (and last) serious possibility of a secular, independent and united Ireland, based on a rising national capitalism. The insurrection was not only defeated through superior military force and organization but also because the national struggle bypassed the vast majority of Catholic peasants (with the notable exception of County Wexford), weighed down by ignorance, brutal oppression and clerical reaction. In addition, the divide and rule policies of British imperialism were developed to perfection in this period. A limited Catholic franchise in 1793 was a bid for Catholic loyalties, on the one hand. The growth of the secret and rabidly anti-Catholic Orange Order was a bid for Protestant loyalties, on the other. Catholic Defenders and Protestant Peep O'Day boys were allowed to carry on their sporadic pogroms in the rural areas of Ulster. Marx's outline describes the result of the rebellion's defeat: "Anglo-Irish House of Commons voted for the Act of Union passed in 1800. By the Legislature and Customs Union of Britain and Ireland closed the struggle between the Anglo-Irish and the English." (Marx and Engels, p. 131)

In the 1840's the rise of a substantial Catholic petty-bourgeoisie, tied to the Church and pressing the claims of a specifically Catholic nation, welded the interests of the Ulster industrialists and merchants to the Protestant Ascendancy, in general, and particularly to the British Connection. Opponents of the "two nations" analysis of Irish history must provide a consistent alternative explanation of the process whereby the direct descendants of the leaders of the United Irishmen became the staunchest supporters of the Union within a single generation. The evolution of two nationalities on the island can be traced primarily to the uneven development of industrial Ulster and agricultural Ireland. The prosperity of Ulster's engineering and shipbuilding industries (built on the foundations of the linen industry) required free

access to the British market and was fundamentally counterposed to the demands of the Catholic leaders for protective tariffs. This basic economic conflict interlocked with the persisting sectarian divisions, especially aggravated by the close association of the Catholic clergy with the Home Rule movement. The foundation of the Unionist movement in 1886 was not simply the expression of Protestant bigotry or the reflex loyalty of transplanted Englishmen. Politically, socially and economically, "a chasm opened between North and South in the 1880's." (Rose, p. 85)

All classes of Ulster Protestants, Presbyterian and Anglican alike, linked their interests with the most reactionary elements of the English bourgeoisie, gentry and military caste. The partition of 1920 represented the definitive separation of the two nationalities in Ireland and represented a similar process of Balkanization as the partitions of India and Palestine. The creation of a Protestant Ulster nation with a large and unassimilated Irish Catholic minority was the result not of a bourgeois democratic national movement in the epoch of rising capitalism but of the disintegrative tendencies of a reactionary national movement spawned by decaying imperialism. This is demonstrated most clearly by the partition itself. By excluding three of the nine original counties of Ulster, the Partition assured a) a permanent Protestant majority, b) a sufficiently large territory to maintain some internal market and an agricultural hinterland, c) a large Catholic minority to serve as a pool of super-exploitable surplus labor and as the raison d'etre for the reactionary ideology and institutional structure that cements the Protestant Ascendancy together across class lines.

Do the Ulster Protestants regard themselves as a nationality, different from the English and the Irish? Based on an extensive survey of the national and religious loyalties of Ulster, conducted in 1968, Richard Rose concluded:

"The evidence of the Loyalty survey questions the claim of both London and Dublin by showing that Ulster is truly a separate political system...If historical events and contemporary social psychology be regarded as sufficient to justify the creation of a nation-state, then Northern Ireland might claim complete independence of both Britain and Ireland. Yet this is the solution least mentioned in the politics of this troubled land." (Rose, pp. 215-216)

Following the disintegration of the Unionist monolith, the experience of direct rule, the extension of internment to right-wing Protestants, the failure of Sunningdale and the Ulster Workers Council strike, independence is a very live question in Ulster:

"The Union itself...is burdensome and distasteful now to the Protestant masses...Mr. Wilson's televised reference to 'spongers' did more than anything to crystallise and harden this feeling, and now there are scores of former Loyalists proudly wearing miniature sponges in their lapels.

"The Ulster Independence Movement has its roots in the extreme Right-wing of Unionism. William Craig was talking about it obliquely two years ago and only now is he being

taken seriously. In these two years, however, the idea has taken hold and flourished in the para-military organisations, which with their vast membership and political influence are the real grassroots of the Protestant community.

(The Guardian, 30 May 1974)

"Early this week,...a group of Northern Irish businessmen did a most unusual thing. They went to London to try to talk to the people in power (if not in control) to suggest that...Northern Ireland might be better off without the British connection...The group was led by Mr. Desmond Lorriemer (who, among other things, is chairman of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive), and comprised Protestant employers--financially successful men with public school voices and public school backgrounds."

(The Observer, 2 June 1974)

While recognizing that Protestant Ulster meets the Marxist criteria of a nation and that there is a growing sentiment to break the British connection, our programmatic approach must be conditioned by a number of factors. First, the existence or possibility of a bourgeois-democratic national movement. In his polemic against Luxemburg's criticism of Clause #9 of the Bolshevik program, Lenin wrote "If one interprets the Marxist programme in Marxist fashion, not in a childish way, one will without difficulty grasp the fact that it refers to bourgeois-democratic national movements...No less obvious...is the conclusion that our programme refers only to cases where such a movement is actually in existence." (Collected Works, Vol. 20, pp. 404-405) The U.D.I. minded Ulster Protestants no more resemble a bourgeois democratic movement than the Muslim League in India or the Jewish Agency in Palestine. SEcondly, whether the exercise of the right of self-determination aids or contradicts the demands of democracy in general and the proletarian struggle for power. Again from Lenin, "The several demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute, but only a small part of the general-democratic (now: general-socialist) world movement. In individual concrete cases, the part may contradict the whole; if so, it must be rejected. It is possible that the republican movement in one country may be merely an instrument of the clerical or financial-monarchist intrigues of other countries; if so, we must not support this particular, concrete movement, but it would be ridiculous to delete the demand for a republic from the programme of international Social-Democracy on these grounds." (Vol. 22, p. 341)

Leninists raise the right of self-determination in order to combat the chauvinism of workers in oppressor nations and to build class solidarity across national divisions. Do our slogans in WV #7 accomplish this? "For the Right of Self-Determination for an Independent, Democratic Ulster" aims to "cut across the legitimate aspects of the Protestant workers' fears of domination by the present, clerical reactionary state in the South." In the first place, it is, to say the least, unusual to direct such a slogan at the workers not of the nation which actually oppresses Ulster, Britain, but at the workers of a potentially oppressive nation, Eire. Indeed, it could be reduced to a campaign to amend the

1937 Eire constitution. Second, the movement for a democratic Ulster and the movement for an independent Ulster are fundamentally counterposed with no bourgeois (or even petty-bourgeois) national movement to link them, even in a partial and half-hearted manner. Thirdly, our qualified formulation of the slogan guts the right of self-determination of any real meaning. To paraphrase Lenin's analogy, it is like insisting that a woman's right to a divorce implies that she must get a divorce. Fourthly, if the slogan is understood to be synonymous with an "Independent Workers Ulster," it is not a very useful slogan (somewhat analogous to "A United, Red Bengal"). A revolutionary transformation in Ulster before Britain or Eire is both the least likely and most vulnerable possibility.

To link this first slogan with "The Unification of Ireland in a completely Secular, Democratic Irish State" is to further eschew our programmatic thrust by reading Ulster's history through a Republican lens. Ulster is an integral part of the British Isles, no more fundamentally linked to Ireland than it is to England. In the event of a workers revolution in Eire, we would struggle for a Socialist Federation of Ireland. In the event of a workers revolution in Britain, we would struggle to maintain the British connection albeit on the basis of full national equality. I propose dropping this first set of demands altogether.

Parenthetically, the only "democratic" solution to the Ulster problem that we might conceivably support would be a new border in which those overwhelmingly Catholic areas contiguous with Eire were ceded with the consent of their Catholic majority. Even this possibility raises the spectre of religious war and pogroms and would hardly be one of our demands.

While I do not have a precisely formulated set of slogans to counterpose to those raised in WV #7, I will suggest the key types of demands that are needed:

1. Not Orange Against Green but Class Against Class  
Democratic Rights for the Irish National Minority in Ulster  
Secularization of the State of Eire  
A Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours
2. British Out of Ulster  
End Internment  
End Sectarian Murder  
For Workers Militias Based on the Trade Unions  
*Non-Sectarian*
3. Break with the Coalition Government in Eire  
Labor to Power on a Socialist Program of Expropriating Basic Industry
4. Down With the E.E.C.  
— For Trade Union Unification Throughout the British Isles  
For a Socialist Federation of the British Isles with the Equal Participation of Eire, England, Ulster, Scotland and Wales.

17 August 1974

By J. Holbrouck (Boston)

- I. "In Northern Ireland Catholics are Blacks who happen to have white skins." (De Paor, p. 13)

The conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland is historically analogous, not to the "religious" conflict in the Middle East which led to the partitioning of Palestine on a national basis, but rather to the conflict between black and white in the United States.

II. The nation is a category applicable to the period of the rise of capitalism. The historical development of Ireland has been as one nation, not two. Although Catholics and Protestants are distinct religiously, culturally, ancestrally, and at one point even linguistically, the pre-Partition Northern provinces of Ireland did not have a separate political economy, the key criterion for a nation, any more than the Black Belt in the South ever did. The "rack-renting" system, which the North escaped through the "Ulster custom," raised a barrier to the development of capitalism in the South, making it a backward agricultural hinterland to the urban North, burdened by the Protestant Ascendancy.

III. The bourgeois revolution in Ireland, at the end of the 18th Century, took the classic form of the revolutionary urban classes leading behind them the backward, vacillating peasantry. This took the form of the revolutionary alliance between the United Irishmen of east Ulster, the industrial center of Ireland and at that point almost 100% Protestant, and the Defenders, the arm of the Catholic peasantry against the Protestant Ascendancy. It was defeated by the counterrevolutionary alliance of the British and the Orange Order.

IV. The Orange Order originated out of conflict between Protestant and Catholic peasants in mid-Ulster.

"But there were also in the North, and in the North alone, Protestant masses, who, unlike the landlords and placemen, did not maintain a continuing connexion with Britain and a colonial relationship to Ireland. They had been assimilated to the country and were themselves an exploited class, paying rent to the landlords or, in rapidly increasing numbers, producing the new industrial wealth for factory wages. They had inherited, from the special privileges of their settler ancestors, the 'Ulster custom' in land-tenure, which left them with a feeling that their position was superior to that of the natives of other parts of the country, but with the abiding fear that they might be reduced to the condition of these. The landlords, especially from the late eighteenth century onward, had exploited this fear, fomenting the conflict between poor Protestants and poorer Catholics in competition for land, in a kind of rent-auction where the poorest could make the highest bidding because they could better tolerate poverty, which led to the explosion of violence between Defenders and Orangemen at the end of the century."

(De Paor, p. 49)

In all-Protestant Belfast, as much as in Catholic Dublin, the Orange lodges were simply government creations. They in no sense reflected any desire for "Ulster self-determination" and in fact were not originally "loyalist." When the Dublin parliament was abolished by the Act of Union, according to De Paor, "Among those who were opposed to the Union were the great majority of Orangemen throughout the country." The famous Orange slogan "croppies lie down" was originally directed against the Protestant United Irishmen, who cropped their hair as a symbol of republicanism. As a movement, the Orange Order was and is similar in character to the American Ku Klux Klan.

V. The Great Famine of the 1840's led to the flight of the Irish peasantry either out of Ireland entirely or to the urban North. By the late 19th century, the Catholic population of Belfast had risen from almost nothing to 35%, transforming the "rent-auction" into a "wages auction," and transforming the Protestant working-class of Belfast into the mainstay of Orangeism, which it remains to this day.

VI. In the era of imperialism, the national bourgeoisie, tied to the imperialists, is no longer capable of accomplishing the democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution. Neither the very weak Catholic bourgeoisie of Dublin nor the Protestant bourgeoisie of Belfast desired to escape from the yoke of British Imperialism. The parliamentary maneuvering by Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party, the representatives of the Catholic bourgeoisie, represented opposition, neither to Imperialist rule, nor to the Protestant bourgeoisie of the North, but to the Protestant Ascendancy in the South. The Irish Parliamentary Party lined up with the British Liberal Party against the Tories.

VII. "The struggle for power within the English establishment threatened now seriously to affect the interests of the colonial establishment in Ireland. The English landlord interest was under severe pressure as a result of the constitutional change effected in the Parliament Act (which abolished the veto power of the House of Lords--JH); their Irish wing was in danger, there they resolved to take their stand."  
(p. 76)

The "settler's rebellion" was actually a rebellion of the right wing of the Tories against English bourgeois democracy. "Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right" was the slogan of Lord Randolph Churchill! The partitioning of Ireland, unlike that of Palestine and now Cyprus, was not the result of the national conflict of two interspersed peoples. It was the result of the class struggle in primarily, England, and secondarily, Ireland. It is, therefore, more analogous to the partitioning of Vietnam, Korea or Germany. This is symbolized by the fact that the Irish Parliamentary Party in the North sent its parliamentary representatives to Stormont, and not the First Dail!

"A nineteenth-century-style ruling caste, supported (at times uneasily and reluctantly) by an aggressive Protestant middle class, established, and maintained for half a century,

power in Northern Ireland by a classic application of the principle of divide et impera." (p. 104)

Naturally, the partition resulted in a disastrous economic depression, with an average unemployment rate of 25% until WWII.

VIII. Except in Northern Ireland, the Irish Parliamentary Party simply ceased to exist after WWI. The old colonial state apparatus was destroyed and a new bourgeois state was erected in the course of the Irish Rebellion and the immediately following Irish civil war. The Irish Republican Volunteers was a petty-bourgeois insurrectionary force not dissimilar in type from Castro's rebel army. One wing (represented by Pearse) allied itself with the Irish Citizens' Army, a worker's militia led by Connolly, in the Easter Rising. The other, represented by Griffith and the original Sinn Fein, was viciously anti-proletarian. The issue of the civil war was not reunification, but rather whether a neo-colonial relation should be set up with Britain. The Free State made peace with the British and the Protestant Ascendancy in the South, crushed the peasant movement, which achieved its highest expression in the Limerick Soviet, and dismantled the Sinn Fein courts and police. The defeated IRA split, with the right wing, led by Eamon De Valera, accepting the results of the civil war and forming Fianna Fail.

IX. It is essentially incorrect to characterize Eire as a "theocracy." A genuine theocracy would be pre-Civil War Spain, where the Church was the second largest landowner. In Ireland, the landowners were the "Protestant Ascendancy," and Catholicism was an oppressed religion, whence derives its great influence. Whereas the Unionists are rigidly sectarian, the heirs of the "Protestant Ascendancy" are an integral part of the Southern ruling class, and Protestants have not infrequently held top governmental posts. It must not be forgotten that the "Browne affair" led directly to the fall of the Costello government. Eire has repeatedly offered, in case of reunification, to exempt Protestants from all laws against abortion, contraception, etc. Actually, religion has more influence in the North (through the Unionist Party and such figures as Rev. Paisley) than in the South.

X. At the present time, both North and South are integrated into the British economy, with quantitatively more British investment in the South. Therefore, the current British policy is to seek to end the economic vivisection of Ireland by reuniting it, thereby making it a more efficient unit for imperialist exploitation, and equally importantly, ending the extension of British welfare state benefits to Northern Ireland.

XI. The democratic demand of the reunification of Ireland can only be carried out fruitfully through proletarian revolution. We do not call on the bourgeoisie, English or Irish, Catholic or Protestant, to reunite Ireland. Our attitude toward concrete reunification schemes should be essentially parallel to the criteria for supporting union mergers as outlined by Cde. Seymour. Therefore, we can give critical support for reunification schemes only under the following two preconditions.

1) No loss of the social benefits won by the British working class through 100 years of struggle! To Leninists, class questions always take precedence over democratic questions.

2) Complete separation of Church and State! The religious fears of the Protestants, though objectively irrational, are nonetheless a real, material force which cannot be ignored.

XII. The WV slogan of "self-determination for Ulster" objectively gives backhanded support for the Enoch Powell-William Craig slogan of UDI. The conditions attached to it merely make it utopian (why not call for a Protestant worker's republic?). The WV slogan "The Unification of Ireland in a completely secular, democratic Irish state" has the defect of being what the British imperialists want! Our slogans must be:

FOR A SOCIALIST FEDERATION OF THE BRITISH ISLES

FOR A UNITED SOCIALIST IRELAND THROUGH PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

XIII. The Loyalist Movement, unlike Stalinism, is "reactionary through and through and to the core." The mass sectarian mobilization of the late '60's was generated, not by NICRA calling for the reunification of Ireland (instead they called for protection from British troops!) nor even by IRA terrorism, which was a later phenomenon, but by the elementary calculation that equal access to jobs, housing, etc. (the NICRA program) meant less access for Protestants! Any doubt that this is so should be resolved by the reactionary strike in Ulster, which, formally speaking, simply sought to achieve "self-determination for Ulster" by abolishing Sunningdale, which objectively represented a British attempt to reunite Ireland! Nonetheless, we consider it to be a reactionary strike, and would seek to end it (while opposing British intervention).

received 19 August 1974

INTERPENETRATED PEOPLES, SELF-DETERMINATION  
AND PERMANENT REVOLUTION

by Reuben Samuels

The Leninist position on the national question is perhaps presented most succinctly in the following passage from Lenin's "Draft Program for the 4th Congress of Social Democrats of the Latvian Area," (1913, Collected Works, Vol. 19, p. 116):

"As democrats, we are irreconcilably hostile to any, however slight, oppression of any nationality and to any privileges for any nationality. As democrats, we demand the right of nations to self-determination in the political sense of that term (see the Programme of the R.S.D.L.P.), i.e., the right to secede. We demand unconditional equality for all nations in the state and the unconditional protection of the rights of every national minority. We demand broad self-government and autonomy for regions, which must be demarcated, among other terms of reference, in respect of nationality too."

The problem of applying these Leninist criteria for the special national question raised by interpenetrated peoples was graphically presented by Merejkin, a Ukrainian delegate to the Second Congress of the CI, in an amendment to the "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions":

"The attempt made to settle the relationships between the nations of the majority and the minority nationalities in territories of a mixed population (Ukraine, Poland, White Russia), has shown that the transfer of the power of government from the hands of the big capitalists to the groups of the petty bourgeoisie constituting the democratic republics not only does not diminish but, on the contrary, aggravates the friction among the nationalities. The democratic republics oppose themselves to the proletariat, and attempt to convert the class war into a national one. They become rapidly impregnated with nationalistic exclusiveness, and easily adapt themselves to the practices of the previous dominating nations, which fermented discord among nationalities, and organised pogroms, with the assistance of the government apparatus, to combat the dictatorship of the proletariat (the anti-semitic movement in the "democratic" Ukraine towards the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918, organised by the Central Rada). The savage pogroms during the end of 1918 and the first half of 1919 were organised by the "Ukrainian National Directorate." The pogrom movements in the Polish democratic republic have been furthered by the Polish Socialist Party, the Party belonging to the Second International, as well as by the coalition regime of Pilsudsky. Experience has likewise shown that there is no democratic form of government which would defend the rights of the minority nationalities in a territory with a mixed population."

(The amendment concludes with an attack on Austro-Marxian individual national autonomy.) Likewise, Stalin, in "National Factors in Party

and State Development," a resolution adopted by the 12th Congress of the Russian CP (April 1923), wrote that the nationalities oppressed by Tsarism retain a heritage of "defensive nationalism" which:

"often turns into aggressive nationalism, into the outright chauvinism of the stronger nationality directed against the weaker nationalities of these republics. Georgian chauvinism (in Georgia) against the Armenians, Ossets, Adjarians and Abkhasians; Azerbaidjanian chauvinism (in Azerbaidjan) against the Armenians; Uzbek chauvinism (in Bokhara and Khorezm) against the Turkmens and Kirghiz, (~~American~~ <sup>Armenian</sup> chauvinism,) and so on--all these forms of chauvinism, which moreover are fostered by the conditions of the New Economic Policy and by competition, are a grave evil which threatens to make certain of the national republics the scene of squabbling and wrangling."

(quoted from Selections from V.I. Lenin and J.V. Stalin on National and Colonial Question, Calcutta Book House, p. 142)

It should be noted that these two passages deal with the problems of mixed populations after the proletarian conquest of power in Russia. The Merejin amendment deals both with the situation in which Soviet power granted outright self-determination to a bourgeois government (Poland) and where self-determination was subordinated to questions of civil war, foreign intervention and consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship (the Ukraine). The Stalin passage deals with the problems engendered by intermixed populations in areas (Transcaucasus) where the heritage of Tsarist national oppression has generated a "defensive nationalism," which for the more powerful nationalities (Georgians and Azerbaidjanian), self-government is often converted into "offensive nationalism" directed against weaker intermixed peoples. No doubt the situation in the Transcaucasus was exacerbated by the "Great Russian" policies of Stalin and Orjonikidze against which the incapacitated Lenin protested in his last writings dictated from his deathbed. It is also important to note the interrelationship between national rivalries of mixed populations and social stratification especially among the peasantry, which were both exacerbated by the N.E.P. For example, Stalin wrote in 1912:

"If...there is no serious anti-Russian nationalism in Georgia [wrote Stalin in 1912] it is primarily because there are no Russian landlords there or a Russian big bourgeoisie to supply the fuel for such nationalism among the masses. In Georgia there is an anti-Armenian nationalism; but this is because there is an Armenian big bourgeoisie there which, beating the small and still unconsolidated Georgian bourgeoisie, drives the latter to anti-Armenian nationalism."

(quoted from E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol. 1, p. 344)

The experience of the Bolshevik Revolution confirms that the democratic resolution to the problem of mixed populations with conflicting national claims depends on the carrying out of the agrarian revolution led by the proletarian dictatorship and a regime of workers democracy which in the context of defending the proletarian dic-

tatorship exercises the greatest possible sensitivity and flexibility in handling the national question.

Our movement first confronted the question of mixed populations with conflicting national claims in Palestine, and our re-evaluation of the 1948 Israel-Arab war. Our original position, of revolutionary defensism on the side of the Hagannah against the Arab League, was based on the belief that the Arab League invasion threatened the genocide, dispersal or forced annexation of the Hebrew people. Contrary to Cobet, in this kind of war, the military relationship of forces and intentions of the combatants is central to a revolutionary defensist position, and not solely on a class analysis. Obviously both sides were capitalist. Our revolutionary defensist position was based on the belief that the Arab League forces massed such overwhelming military superiority that they threatened the destruction of the Hebrew people. From a simple class analysis of the Nigerian war against Biafra or the North Sudanese war against the Southern blacks, we would conclude that since both sides were capitalist (or in the case of Sudan one side capitalist and the other pre-capitalist) that such a war was no different than the various Indo-Pakistani Wars. Obviously the difference between the former and the latter, the reason that we have a defensist position on the side of South Sudan or Biafra is not from a class analysis of the contending sides, but because one side had such overwhelming military superiority that it threatened the destruction of another people. And this had been our position in the 1948 Israel-Arab wars. One can justifiably claim that our understanding of that war was highly out of line with the reality. But it is for that reason that a closer reading of the history, the accumulation of new facts (the Myerson-Abdullah agreements, the relative equality of military forces at the beginning of the war and the rapidly accumulated military superiority on the Israeli side) and not a different or deeper class analysis which convinced us that we had been wrong about the 1948 War. If Cobet has a different class analysis than ours about the 1948 War (i.e., that it was analagous to the Indo-Pakistani wars), then he should make this explicit. It is not to be found in his letter.

Further we must ask the hypothetical question: If the war had indeed threatened genocide, would Cobet have taken a revolutionary defensist position? We note that it is Cobet's letter and not Norden's amendment which confuses the nation and the state. Our old position was that it was a people and not a state which we defended; only for Zionists and right-wing Arab nationalists are the Hebrew people co-equal with the Israeli state. Further, revolutionary defensism does not mean voting war credits for a bourgeois army. Trotsky did not call for a vote for war credits for the Republican Army in the Spanish Civil War; instead he defended the struggle for an independent workers militia. Nor did he call for a vote for war credits to the KMT in the Sino-Japanese War (assuming that a parliament in which such a vote might have been taken existed). Instead he called for a military alliance between the KMT and Red armies.

Nor is our position dependent on considering the Jewish immigrant population in Palestine an already compacted nation by 15 May 1948. Even if the Jewish population in Palestine at that time was

a dispersed people living in noncontiguous communities, we would still be revolutionary defensist if we thought they were confronted with pogroms.

During the 30's the Trotskyist movement did not consider the Jewish population in Palestine to be a nation. Their demand was for complete equality for Jews in a democratic, independent Arab Palestine. However, after the defeat of the 1936-39 Palestinian Arab revolt the Zionists consolidated a closed economy. While the only common language of the Jewish immigrant population was Yiddish, the language of commerce was the artificial modern Hebrew which immigrants were expected to rapidly learn (the use of Yiddish was often proscribed by the Zionists). When the UN passed partition on 29 November 1947 there were 600,000 Jews and 1,200,000 Arabs in Palestine. Over half the Jewish population was concentrated in three cities: 150,000 in Tel Aviv, 100,000 in New Jerusalem and 80,000 in Haifa. The rest of the Jews lived mainly in agricultural settlements or small towns located in the central plains between Tel Aviv and Haifa or in eastern Galilee. However, this area was one of mixed population. Adjacent to Tel Aviv was the Arab city of Jaffa, adjacent to New Jerusalem was the mainly Arab Jerusalem and Haifa was an Arab community almost coequal in size to the Jewish. The Central Plains and eastern Galilee also had Arab settlements. While the Jews constituted 1/3 of the population and owned only 6% of the land, under partition they were to get 55% of the land, the most important cities and best ports (Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Haifa) and the best land, while the Palestinian Arabs who made up 2/3 of the population got 45% of the land. The Zionist state would encompass 538,000 Jews and 397,000 Arabs while the Arab state included 804,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews. Thus the UN partition was highly unjust on the Arab side. And between November 1947 and May 1948 when the Zionists declared "independence," and "determined itself," 300,000 Arabs had been driven out of the Zionist part of partition. Thus by May 1948 a relatively compact and homogenous entity had been created; certainly by May 1948 a nation had been created. To ask what day and what hour this Jewish population in the Near East compacted into a nation is like asking when does a boy become a man: When he is bar mitzvahed? In the 30's the Jews in Palestine were not a nation; by May 1948 they had become a nation; in between they were an immigrant population from Central and Eastern European countries who lived in compact communities and were rapidly acculturated and drawn into a Hebrew-speaking Zionist political economy.

Thus, we should stand with the position adopted by the SWP during this period with regard to Palestine:

"Haven't the Jewish people the right to self-determination and statehood as other peoples? Yes--but even if we abstract this question from its aforementioned social reality the fact remains they cannot carve out a state at the expense of the national rights of the Arab peoples. This is not self-determination, but conquest of another people's territory."

--Militant, 31 May 1948

To which Hal Draper of the Shachtmanite Workers Party responded in "How To Defend Israel" (New International, July 1948):

"A dishonest reply. 1) It means that the Jews have a right to self-determination but no right to exercise it. This does not make sense. One may, as we said, advise against its exercise, in favor of a different course, but it is pure fakery to grant the right and in the same breath denounce its exercise as the 'conquest of another people's territory.' 2) If the Jews have the right of self-determination what territory can they 'self-determine themselves' in without infringing upon the national rights of the Arab peoples? Is there any? Obviously none. What does the 'Yes' mean?"

For the WP, in transit from Trotskyism to social democracy, self-determination has a sort of Wilsonian categorical imperative. For Leninists, on the other hand:

"The several demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not absolute, but only a small part of the general-democratic (now: general-socialist) world movement. In individual cases, the part may contradict the whole; if so it must be rejected."

The SWP realized that in the objective situation which existed in 1947-48 that the Hebrew people could only "self-determine themselves" in the Zionist fashion, in the nationalist fashion, in the capitalist fashion, through the destruction of another nation and the conquest of their territory. Dispersal and genocide are the capitalist and nationalist solutions to the problems of mixed nationalities. To undo this problem Sammarakkody claims that Israel did not represent the self-determination of the Hebrew people (a question he incorrectly claims has been on the agenda since the beginning of the 20th century) while many comrades, including Cde. Cobet, claim that the Hebrew nation no longer has the right to self-determination. After all, says Cde. Cobet, the Hebrew nation has had its self-determination, i.e., Israel. But here once again Cobet makes the Zionist mistake of equating the Hebrew nation with Israel. Our movement rejected the UN partition scheme, we opposed the formation of the state of Israel, we fought for and fight for another determination for the Hebrew nation, the socialist federation of the Near and Middle East, in which the Hebrew nation, as an application of the principle of the equality of nations, must get out of the occupied territories, must repudiate the Zionist annexations. But the Hebrew nation can democratically only enter into such a federation voluntarily, freely, and this implies the right to secede as well as the right to federate (i.e., self-determination).

Likewise in Ireland/Ulster, has the Irish question been resolved because the Irish nation has "determined itself" into an independent Irish state, Eire? Of course not. Prior to 1921 while fighting for a socialist federation of the British Isles we would have fought for complete independence for all 32 counties of Ireland, even if that meant that Ireland would have fallen under a reactionary

Catholic-clericist regime. But now there has been an independence, a "determination," an "independent" Ireland; the "Republic" of Ireland now exists. The Irish question is no longer simply one of independence from England. The simple demand for a reunified Ireland implies a forced reunification with the reactionary clericist Dublin regime irrespective of the wishes of the Protestants. This is not a democratic, much less a socialist solution. The Protestants, who would constitute 25% of a united Ireland, would no doubt expect to be treated the way the Georgians treated the Armenians, the way the Turks are now treating the Greeks on Cyprus, i.e., it would simply represent a reversal of the terms of oppression. Cde. Holbrouck claims that Dublin has promised Protestants religious freedom and that the ban on contraceptives would not apply to them. But of course no mixed marriages. Cde. Holbrouck, and even the Romonovs let the Pale of Settlement have its rabbis.

Then what is the Irish question? The Irish question is one of an oppressed national minority in a piece of what is called the United Kingdom, i.e., Ulster. Obviously, one "solution" for this Catholic national minority is to take the three counties west of the River Bann and reunite with ~~Ulster~~<sup>Eric</sup>. This would involve enormous dislocation and uprooting, mass population transfers, etc. Ulster has a population of 1.5 million of which 65.1% are Protestant and 34.9% are Catholic. Thus, while the Palestinian Arabs outnumbered the Jews 2:1 the Protestants outnumber the Catholics by the same ratio. Ulster is divided ethnically and geographically by the River Bann. Here is the religious composition by county for Ulster:

<u>East of the Bann</u>	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Protestant</u>
Antrim	24.4%	75.6%
Down	27.6	71.5
Armagh	47.3	52.7
<u>West of the Bann</u>		
Londonderry	50.5	49.5
Fermanagh	53.0	47.0
Tyrone	54.6	45.4

Is Ulster, or are the Ulster Protestants, a nation? I believe we must reject the conception of Ulster or Ulster Protestants as a nation at this time. This is not to say that under certain conditions (withdrawal of British troops and England washing its hands of Ulster, continued inter-communal fighting, growing exclusiveness of the Protestant population, population transfers, etc.) that the Protestants could develop into a nation, but even given their numerical majority they do not at this time have the attributes of nationhood. Therefore I think our demands for "the right to self-determination for Ulster" and for "a democratic independent secular

Ulster" must be rejected.

Then what is the Ulster Protestant? He is an extension of the English (and Scottish!) nation into Ireland. He is not a white settler in Rhodesia and the IRA are not the Mau Mau. The Ulster Protestant belongs to British trade unions, he sends his representatives to the British parliament, and participates in the benefits of the English welfare state. There is a material basis for Unionism: a higher standard of living for the Protestant working and middle class than can be provided for Catholics in Dublin. Unless we are some sort of Third World Maoists or Christian egalitarians, socialism is not asking Protestant workers to give up the "privileges" they enjoy by union with England by a union with Catholic Dublin.

Cde. Richard C. who considers the Ulster Protestants a nation, writes:

"In the first place, it is, to say the least, unusual to direct such a slogan (right to self-determination) at the workers not of the nation which actually oppresses Ulster, Britain, but at the workers of a potentially oppressive nation, Eire."

What unites Cdes. Cobet, Richard C. and, as far as I can tell Ed C. and Charley B., is the belief that a gunshot wedding for either the Hebrews in the Near East or the Protestants into a "united Arab Republic" or a "united Ireland" is a democratic resolution of the Irish and Palestinian questions. What they do not understand is that the Hebrew nation and the Protestants in Ulster are not Tsarist Russia, the U.S., Germany or Great Britain. They are not great imperialist powers. They are a besieged people, surrounded by a much more numerous people who view them and whom they view as enemies. Their "privileges" which are at best a not very high European working-class standard of living, are very precarious if, for them, precious. Their nationalism is not simply "great power chauvinism," it is also a defensist nationalism. The Jews of Israel know about pogroms and genocide. The "exemplary" actions of the IRA and Palestinian commandoes speak to the Hebrew and Ulster Protestants a distinct "political program" which may not be the program that the vicarious Third World cheerleaders of the IRA and Fatah project on their heroes. It is the program of the pogrom, the program of the "defensive nationalism" of an oppressed nation which in power becomes the "aggressive nationalism" of the irredentist oppressor nation. The right of the Ulster Protestants and Hebrew-speaking nation to decide their own fate within the context of a general democratic and socialist solution in the British Isles and the Near East is an irreducibly necessary guarantee that the "squabbling and wrangling" that took place even in Red Georgia and Red Azerbaidjan might not have to be repeated again and again, and that the "defensive nationalism" of both the oppressor and oppressed nations be fought.

A generalization of the perspective some comrades have offered on the Irish and Palestinian questions borders on Maoism. To believe that the Dublin regime has an historic mission in the reun-

ification of Ireland and that the Protestants should swim back to Scotland, or that any one of the Arab "republics" can create a "democratic" solution to the Palestinian question by denying the rights of the Hebrew nation, including the right to another, a socialist determination, is the Maoist two-stage revolution. Instead we stand on the basis of the Permanent Revolution of Trotsky which perhaps has had its most resounding confirmation in regard to the question of interpenetrated peoples. Only within the framework of the proletariat in power can there be a democratic resolution of mixed populations with conflicting national and democratic claims.

At the same time the theory of the Permanent Revolution and especially its application to the problem of mixed populations should not lead us to an ultra-leftist insensitivity to national oppression. The right to self-determination is an immediate burning question of the Palestinian refugees, robbed of their land, in a way in which it is not for the Hebrew workers and farmers who occupy their stolen lands. There is a series of urgent democratic questions which confront the Catholic oppressed national minority in Ulster. For example, in the Near East we must invert the racist and exclusionist slogans of Zionism. "Conquest of land," but for the Palestinians: Israel out of the occupied territories, no annexations. End military law in the occupied territories and the emergency regulations in Israel. For a Constituent Assembly elected by direct universal suffrage on both sides of the Jordan. For "the right of return" only for the Palestinians: repatriation with full democratic rights and/or full compensation to be paid to the fellahin (peasants) and not the effendis (landlords). "Conquest of labor" for the Palestinians, for a bi-national trade union organization with full internal democracy and independent from the Zionist state, no discrimination in hiring, for control of hiring by independent bi-national unions, sliding scale of wages and hours, abolish the Hagannah, for a bi-national workers militia. Towards an Arab-Hebrew Workers Republic as part of the socialist federation of the Near East.

In Ulster we would continue to call for British troops out, an end to internment, disarm the Royal Ulster Constabulary, for a non-sectarian workers militia against orange and green terror, no discrimination in housing, for a sliding scale of wages and hours and no discrimination in hiring, for British Isles-wide trade union federation, for union control of hiring, etc. We should demand an Irish Worker's Republic, as part of the Socialist Federation of the British Isles, i.e., we should drop the slogan of the right to self-determination for Ulster and for an independent secular Ulster, nor should we call for a united secular Ireland or a united socialist Ireland or a socialist Ulster, the latter being simply utopian. Only the demand for an Irish Workers Republic as part of the Socialist Federation of the British Isles presents the framework in which the problem of mixed populations can be resolved in Ulster. And without a Trotskyist section in Ulster able to intervene and shape events, we can really do no more than champion the democratic rights of the Catholics and present the framework in which a democratic resolution of the sectarian ~~strife~~ in Ulster can be

strife

resolved. In any case we should be clear that we reject the forced unification of the Protestants into a capitalist Ireland, especially Eire, ~~meaning in the present context their right, if they want, to remain part, albeit a reduced part, of England.~~

21 August 1974