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Marx wrote that the working class must free itself from capitalist oppression. The class as a whole will be led by its vanguard, organized in the revolutionary party. The construction of vanguard parties on an international scale is the central task Marxists face in this epoch. Obviously the party which seeks to organize the vanguard of the working class must have a proletarian orientation. The necessity of this orientation has been reaffirmed throughout the history of the socialist movement. A fundamental aspect of a proletarian orientation is that the party must see the recruitment of workers as a basic task, must enter the organizations of the workers, and must seek to root itself in the working class. The party must be predominantly working class in composition.

The central point of this document will be to show that the Socialist Workers Party, despite what it may say, no longer has a proletarian orientation, and that the party leadership, while ignoring the necessity of a proletarian orientation, is developing new concepts about the relationship of the vanguard party to the working class -- concepts which are directly opposed to Leninism.

The major reason for the party's present course is that it has been and is adapting to its petty-bourgeois milieu and composition. This process of adaptation is not irreversible. On the contrary, it can and must be stopped and reversed.

SECTION I: CLASS COMPOSITION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

It is elementary materialism to observe that being determines consciousness. As Marx said:

The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness (Critique of Political Economy, pp. 11-12)

In other words, the social being of a person determines his class consciousness. His consciousness, in turn, determines his actions. The class composition of the vanguard party must be a working class composition not only because the working class must free

itself, but also because the composition of the party, in the long run, influences the party's program. Every revolutionary organization in history, whether a faction or a political party, which has based itself somewhere other than the working class has succumbed to the class on which it was based.

Proletarian composition and solid ties with the working class alone do not guarantee success. It should be enough to look at some of the Communist Parties to see that. Program is fundamental. But the program can become a "scrap of paper" if the party is not rooted in the working class. That is the central lesson in the Shachtman fight. Trotsky and Cannon repeat that lesson over and over again in their writings on that struggle.

Trotsky pointed to the importance of the proletariat's effect on the course of the party many times. In Russia prior to the spring of 1917, the primary leadership of the party had been, for many months and even years, physically separated from the struggle of the workers due to exile and imprisonment. It took the intervention of Lenin to transcend the separation from the working class (imposed by exile) and maintain a revolutionary consciousness. Lenin's April Theses found little support among the old Bolshevik leaders of the party. They rejected his "too left" position. On the other hand, Lenin's program did find acceptance among the left Bolsheviks (mainly workers) who, as Trotsky said, although they did not know how to refute the premise about the bourgeois character of the revolution, nevertheless, with the instincts of their class, rejected the idea of support to the Provisional Government and even demanded the expulsion of the party leaders (Kamenev and Stalin) who advocated it. Turning this around, it becomes obvious that without the worker Bolsheviks, Lenin's theses would have found little acceptance in the party.

Later in the history of the Bolshevik Party, after the Civil War and the death of Lenin, the leadership again became separated from the working class, this time for different reasons and with different effects. The vanguard role that the worker Bolsheviks played in the Civil War had taken a considerable toll. Many of the industrial proletariat who survived the war became demoralized.

The social stratum which Lenin

was able to turn to in 1917 did not, practically speaking, exist for Trotsky. Although there may have been worker Bolsheviks instinctively groping for the correct program, they were outweighed by the vast and growing petty bourgeoisie being admitted to the party. This petty bourgeois layer found just what it wanted and needed in Stalin's program, as Stalin's program found a base in the petty bourgeoisie. The permanent revolution was anathema to the bureaucracy and its social base.

These brief examples from the history of the Russian Revolution are not the only examples of the necessity of a proletarian composition. The Shachtman-Burnham fight in our own party, as mentioned before, offers the same example.

The relationship between program and composition is dialectical. Just as the program makes the party, so the party (the composition) in turn can make or shape the program. Without the program, the proletariat is powerless. Without the proletariat, the program cannot be implemented. It is necessary for the vanguard party to root itself in the working class: this alone will not guarantee the making of the revolution, but without this, the revolution will not be made.

SECTION II: THE WORKING CLASS AND THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE

In discussing the construction of a revolutionary party rooted in the working class, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the heterogeneous nature of the working class and of which sections of the class the party considers to be key.

In the generally accepted Marxist definition, proletarians are subject to two basic conditions: (1) they are forced to sell their labor power, (2) they provide the capitalists with surplus value or surplus labor time. All workers, however, are not the same. The foreman, the technician, and the assembly line worker are all paid wages, but their social power and social roles are quite different. What distinguishes certain workers, especially the industrial workers, is the manner in which they are exploited. The basic division in the working class is between productive and non-productive workers. The productive workers are those who are exploited at the point of production and thus produce surplus value. Included in this group are transportation workers, who Marx says in Capital, Volume II, Chapter VI, participate in a necessary "additional process of production."

It is productive workers that Marxists have always considered the key sector of the working class. It is on their backs that the basic contradiction of capitalism rests. In addition, the socialization of production under capitalism creates a cohesiveness in the working class not found in any other oppressed sector of society. The rationalization of production, involving increasing division of labor and concentration of masses of workers at the point of production, has created a tremendously powerful capacity for organization in the working class, and has created within the class a certain consciousness of its own power. The powerful organizations of the industrial workers are a result of this process.

Of course, even within the category of productive workers there are divisions and stratifications. On the one hand, numbers of productive workers remain unorganized. On the other hand, skilled workers, whom Marx described as "a superior class of workmen," are in a privileged position within their class. Having been granted a relatively higher standard of living, these workers are more susceptible to petty bourgeois ideology in the workers' movement.

For these reasons socialists consider the key section of the working class to be the basic productive and distributive workers. This group is the only sector of society which possesses the power to bring the process of capitalist production to a halt.

The remainder of the work force is comprised of non-productive workers. Except for government workers, who are paid from the wages of the working class as a whole, the non-productive workers are paid out of the surplus value created by the productive workers. They create no value, but they contribute unpaid labor time to the capitalists:

Important changes have occurred in this section of the working class in the past several decades. The first change developed with the increasing urbanization and centralization of American capitalism. Certain groups of workers, such as postal, sanitation, communications, and urban transit workers, have become more and more important to the daily functioning of the economy. They have the ability to seriously hamper the functioning of capitalist production. The conditions of their work have generated growing union organization and militant strikes. In addition, Black and Chicano workers, the most oppressed section of the working class, have concentrated in

increasing numbers in these jobs, as well as in basic production. This section of the class, then, which was unimportant in Marx's day, has now assumed definite strategic importance to the vanguard party.

The second major change occurring among the non-productive workers has been the tremendous quantitative growth of commercial workers, administrative workers, clerical workers, technicians, etc. Trotsky, in "Marxism in Our Time," described this development this way:

At the same time, it is true, the development of capitalism has considerably stimulated an increase in the army of technicians, managers, servicemen, clerks, attorneys, physicians -- in a word, of the so-called "new middle classes." (p. 21)

In addition, Trotsky said in "The Communist Manifesto Today":

Furthermore, the bourgeois state has long directed its conscious policy toward the artificial maintenance of petty bourgeois strata. At the opposite pole, the growth of technology and the rationalization of large scale industry engenders chronic unemployment and obstructs the proletarianization of the petty-bourgeoisie. Concurrently, the development of capitalism has accelerated in the extreme the growth of technicians, administrators, commercial employees, in short the so-called "new middle class." In consequence, the intermediate classes, to whose disappearance the Manifesto so categorically refers, comprise even in a country as highly industrialized as Germany, about one-half of the population. (p. 8)

The underlying cause of the growth of this stratum is the basic process of capital accumulation. Under the force of competition, capitalism increases its investment in constant capital (capital for machines, plants, and raw materials) and decreases (relatively) its investment in variable capital (capital for wages). The result is a decline in the rate of profit. This decline is compensated for by a greater mass of commodities. The numerical decline of the productive workers is compensated for by the creation of new armies of commercial workers to sell the growing mass of commodities, clerical workers to economize the circulating time of these commodities, and technical workers to research new commodities.

Because of their dependence on the amount of surplus value available to the capitalists, these workers are basically economically competitive with the productive workers. In fact, in many cases, especially with regard to the technical workers, their job is to increase the exploitation of the productive workers. Time-study men, research and design engineers, and technicians of all sorts, for example, increase the amount of surplus value extracted from each worker. It is this role which separates these workers from the mass of workers. The consciousness which develops from their work cannot be identical with the ideology of the assembly line worker. The atomized character of this work stands in further contrast to the concentration of the industrial proletariat. Lacking an independent relation to the means of production, these non-productive workers constitute a socially unstable layer.

To summarize, the social power of a sector of society is determined by its relationship to production.

Based on this general analysis, Marxists have always sought to build revolutionary parties based on the workers involved in basic production and distribution. With the recognition of the changes in certain sections of the working class brought about by urbanization, this should suffice as definition basic to the call for a proletarian orientation. However, in the last several years Comrade Ernest Mandel has developed a theory which challenges these basic Marxist definitions. And the SWP leadership has neither criticized Mandel's assertions nor analyzed the implications these assertions have for the strategy of the revolutionary party. In fact, our party has been following the logic of Mandel's position without admitting it.

It is Mandel's opinion that "... starting either with the great depression of 1929-32 or with the second world war, capitalism entered into a third stage in its development..." ("Workers Under Neo-Capitalism," ISR, Nov.-Dec., 1968, p.2) Mandel calls this new period neo-capitalism and says that it has been characterized by "The massive reintroduction of intellectual labor into the process of production..." ("The Leninist Theory of Organization: Its Relevance for Today," ISR, Dec., 1970, p. 41) Mandel then says:

Thus a process is underway of proletarianization of intellectual labor. Proletarianization does not mean primarily

(or in some circumstances at all) limited consumption or a low standard of living, but increasing alienation, increasing subordination of labor to demands that no longer have any correspondence to the special talents or fulfillment of the inner needs of men. ("The Role of the Universities in the West," Intercontinental Press, Nov. 2, 1970, p. 941 Mandel's emphasis)

In fact, Mandel says, "...men forced to sell their labor-power to the manufacturing, cotton-growing, data-processing or dream producing factory..." are "industrial labor in the broadest sense of the word...." (ISR, Nov.-Dec., 1968, p. 5)

"What are the indicators," Mandel asks, "of the enhanced proletarian character of these 'new' layers of workers which become progressively integrated into the working class?" (ISR, Nov.-Dec., 1968, p. 7) He answers:

We could cite offhand a series of striking facts: reduced wage differentials between white-collar and manual workers, which is a universal trend in the West; increased unionization and union militancy of these "new" layers, which is equally universal (in Brussels as in New York, school teachers, electricians, telephone and telegraph workers have been among the militant trade unionists in the last five years); rising similarity of consumption, of social status and environment of these layers; growing similarity of working conditions, i.e. growing similarity of monotonous, mechanized, uncreative, nerve-racking and stultifying work in factory, bank, bus, public administration, department stores and airplanes. (ISR, Nov.-Dec., 1968, p. 8)

We have a series of striking facts for Comrade Mandel. Proletarianization means much more than increasing alienation. The fact that someone works at a "monotonous, mechanized, uncreative, nerve-racking and stultifying" job does not make that person a proletarian. What Marx meant when he spoke of the proletarianization of the petty bourgeoisie was the absorption of that section into the productive process at the point of production. This is not happening today.

We repeat that for Marxists it is the role a particular stratum plays in production that determines that stratum's class outlook. It is not

the wage rate that determines class outlook. If it were, waitresses and parking lot attendants would be among the most revolutionary sections of the working class. It is not "similarities of consumption, social status and environment" that determine class outlook. It is not even unionization that determines class outlook. If it were, members of the Social Service Employees Union, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, and the UAW would all be equivalent. One characteristic of industrial labor is that through strike action it can halt capitalist production. This can in no way be said for dream merchants, data processors, or any of the technical intelligentsia.

In his article on "The Leninist Theory of Organization," Comrade Mandel says the following in defining categories of the "technical intelligentsia":

The intermediaries between science and technique, or between technique and production: laboratory assistants, scientific researchers, inventors, technologists, planners, project engineers, draftsmen, etc. In contrast to category 1 [foremen, timekeepers, etc.], these layers are not accomplices in the process of extracting surplus value from the producer. They take part in the material process of production itself and for that reason are not exploiters but producers of surplus value. (ISR, Dec., 1970, p. 40)

This conception has nothing in common with Marxism. Surplus value is produced at the point of production. The intelligentsia described by Comrade Mandel do not work at the point of production. Comrade Mandel may say that the designer of a machine or tool is indispensable to the production of surplus value, but that was just as much the case in Marx's time as it is now, and Marx did not say that such engineers or inventors produced surplus value. Nor did Marx say that they were proletarian. He did say in Capital, Volume I, Chapter XV, that certain technicians and repairmen were "a superior class of workmen," but these are not what Mandel refers to. Furthermore, much of the work of these members of the "technical intelligentsia" is never reflected in any way in actual commodities. In fact, as we have shown, they aid the capitalists in the extraction of surplus value.

The question of exactly where the line between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie is drawn is an important theoretical problem. It does

not, however, affect the point of this document. We base ourselves on the traditional Marxist analysis of the key section of the proletariat. If the SWP leadership intend to act on the basis of any new analysis, it is their responsibility to describe in detail why the old position is no longer applicable, and exactly what the new position is. It is also their obligation to describe in full the impact of the new analysis on the party's strategy.

It is the implications of his analysis with regard to party strategy that Mandel fails to discuss, yet it is these implications that are the most dangerous part of his analysis. The logic of his position is clear. First, of his new "producers of surplus value" -- "laboratory assistants, scientific researchers, inventors, technologists, planners, project engineers, draftsmen, etc.," he asserts:

[They] can only enhance the impact of the working class and revolutionary organizations because they equip them with the knowledge that is indispensable for a relentless critique of bourgeois society, and even more for the successful taking over of the means of production by the associated producers. (ISR, Dec., 1970, p. 40 Mandel's emphasis)

To Comrade Mandel, don't you see, the technical intelligentsia is not only part of the working class, but that part which plays an "indispensable" role in the overthrow of capitalism. Insert any of the specific occupations listed above into the first word of the quoted sentence and the tragicomedy of Mandel's position will become apparent. What is this "indispensable" knowledge? If it is the knowledge of how to overthrow capitalism, then there is obviously no need for the party. If it is the knowledge of how to run the factories after capitalism is over-thrown then Mandel is siding with the crassest anti-working-class petty bourgeois hacks who maintain that the workers are incapable of running the economy.

The inevitable logic of Mandel's position is that the party today must orient toward this layer of intelligentsia. We maintain that while the party must try to win recruits anywhere it can, it is incorrect to assign anything more than secondary importance to any layer but the industrial proletariat. Of course, if dream merchants are considered "industrial labor," then the proletarian orientation becomes a farce.

Mandel has an even softer spot in his heart for the intelligentsia-to-be, the students. He tells us that "...the student revolt can become a real vanguard revolt of the working class as a whole, triggering a powerful revolutionary upsurge as it did this May in France." (ISR, Nov.-Dec., 1968, p. 9) This obviously develops from Mandel's implicit inclusion of the students as part of the working class. The unmentioned conclusion here of course is that a party composed of students is a party composed of workers, so a student orientation is a proletarian orientation.

Again, we stand on the old assumptions. Students are not workers. Students, by virtue of their suspension between classes and the values and attitudes their situation produces, are a petty bourgeois layer. The party, while not ignoring the developments among the students or any other section of society, must at all times gear its major attention and activity toward rooting itself in the key sectors of the proletariat. We will prove that this is the traditional position of Bolshevism. Comrades who want to offer a new position are obligated to produce a thorough analysis of the new situation and explicitly refute the old theories.

SECTION III: THE PARTY'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE TRADE UNIONS

As we have already said, in order to win the workers and help them make the socialist revolution, the party must be rooted in the working class. The word rooted is particularly appropriate to describe the relationship of the party to the class because the party draws its strength from the working class. The class is the primary source of life to the party. The task of the party is to bring revolutionary consciousness -- Bolshevik politics -- to the working class, to build up the party primarily from the working class, and to organize and lead the working class for the seizure of state power and the socialist reconstruction of society. In order to do this, the party must be a party of the class, not outside or apart from the class. Only a party with the correct program, rooted in the correct class, can accomplish the task of smashing the bourgeois state.

The key sector of the working class is, as we have already said, the industrial proletariat. It is this group that has the power to make the socialist revolution, and it is in this group, specifically, that the vanguard party must sink its roots. The industrial working class in the

U.S., as in other countries, is organized into trade unions -- the UAW, USW, URW, UMW, etc. These trade unions, backward as they are, represent the present of the working class. It is the task of Bolsheviks to represent the future of the movement in the present of the movement.

The trade unions are the fighting organizations of the working class. As Engels said of them, "...if they are not made to fight against the encroachments of capital, what are they made for?..." (The British Labor Movement, p. 19) This is not to say that because the workers are organized into unions they have political class consciousness. The trade unions are the defensive organizations of the working class to maintain and improve their wages and working conditions. We, the Bolsheviks, are the conscious element in the struggle of the working class -- we are the ones who bring revolutionary class consciousness to the working class.

Not only are the trade unions combat organizations of the working class, but they are also an arena of struggle themselves, an arena in which different tendencies engage in battle for influence over the workers.

In order to win over the most advanced workers by revolutionary propaganda and agitation, Bolsheviks must be where the workers are. In other words, the Bolsheviks must be inside the combat organizations of the working class. Here is what Comrade Cannon had to say on the question:

The purposeful activism of the educated socialists must be directed primarily into the trade unions precisely because they are the immediate connecting link with a broader circle of workers and therefore the most fruitful field of activity. When the socialist idea is carried into the workers' mass organizations by the militant activists, and takes root there, a profound influence is exerted upon these organizations. They become more aware of their class interest and their historic mission, and grow in militancy and solidarity and effectiveness in their struggle against the exploiters.

At the same time, the party gains strength from the live mass contact, finds a constant corrective for tactical errors under the impact of the class struggle and steadily draws new proletarian recruits into

its ranks. In the trade-union struggle the party tests and corrects itself in action. It hardens and grows up to the level of its historic task as the workers' vanguard in the coming revolution. (Notebook of an Agitator, p. 107)

It is our duty to fight with the workers and defend their interests. We do this not only by participating in the economic struggles of the workers, but also, and most importantly, by bringing Bolshevik politics to the workers. The most important workers we want to reach are in the industrial unions. It is our duty to be there -- not tomorrow, but today.

A. Lenin and Trotsky on the Trade Unions

In preparation for the struggle against the ultra-lefts at the Second World Congress of the Communist International, Lenin wrote "Left-Wing" Communism, An Infantile Disorder". In this very important work Lenin argued against the ultra-lefts because they sought to spark an uprising of the proletariat without engaging in the long, hard, patient, systematic work which is necessary for Bolsheviks to engage in in order to win the proletariat. In this work Lenin said that the Bolsheviks must work in the trade unions, no matter how reactionary those unions might be.

To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of the workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders.... (p. 37)

* * *

If you want to help the "masses," and to win the sympathy, confidence and support of the "masses," you ... must imperatively work wherever the masses are to be found. You must be capable of every sacrifice, of overcoming the greatest obstacles in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently precisely in those institutions, societies and associations -- even the most reactionary -- in which proletarian and semi-proletarian masses are to be found. And the trade unions and workers cooperatives...are precisely the organizations where the masses are to be found. (p. 37 our emphasis)

* * *

There can be no doubt that these gentlemen, the "leaders" of opportunism, will resort to every trick of bourgeois diplomacy, to the aid of bourgeois governments, the priests, the police and the courts, to prevent Communists joining the trade unions, to force them out by every means, to make their work in the trade unions as unpleasant as possible, to insult, bait, and persecute them. We must be able to withstand all this, to agree to any sacrifice, and even -- if need be -- to resort to all sorts of stratagems, artifices, illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, only so as to get into the trade unions, to remain in them, and to carry on communist work in them at all costs. (p. 38 our emphasis)

In these quotes from one of Lenin's most important works we can see that Lenin considered it a fundamental duty and utter necessity for the Bolsheviks to enter the trade unions, the organizations of the working class. Yet today, when we in the citadel of imperialism do not have to resort to "all sorts" of devices to get into the trade unions and remain in them and carry on Communist work in them at all costs, the party barely discusses the question of entering the trade unions. We seem content to leave the few comrades we have in industry remain there, but we certainly do not show any desire to strengthen our forces in the unions with campus recruits.

Instead, the party leaves the question of entering (when it considers it at all) to the hazy future. It does not heed Lenin's teachings and it abandons the "insufficiently developed" and "backward masses" precisely to those reactionary leaders who have betrayed and will continue to betray them. The party's attitude seems to be that if the workers look around and see us leading the student movement, the antiwar movement, women's liberation, and decide to come to us, fine. But as for going to them, we will not lift a finger to enter the trade unions. Such a lack of concern with the trade unions is an abandonment of our heritage, a disregard of the lessons of history, and a casting off of our duty.

Lenin stated in the strongest terms the necessity of revolutionaries working to get into the trade unions. Trotsky did likewise. In 1935 Trotsky was interviewed by the Independent Labor Party of England. He said:

Illegal work is work in the

mass organizations -- for the ILP it is systematic entry and work in the trade unions, cooperatives, etc. In peace time and in war it is the same. You will perhaps say: "They will not let us in. They will expel us." You do not shout: "I am a revolutionist" when working in a trade union with reactionary leadership. You educate your cadres who carry on a fight under your direction. You keep educating new forces to replace those expelled, and so you build up a mass opposition. Illegal work must keep you in the working masses. You do not retire into a cellar as some comrades imagine. The trade unions are the school for illegal work. (Writings, 1935-36, p. 72)

In Trotsky on the Trade Unions the following remarks by Trotsky appear:

The question of the relationships between the party, which represents the proletariat as it should be, and the trade unions, which represent the proletariat as it is, is the most fundamental question of revolutionary Marxism. (p. 21 our emphasis)

* * *

The Communist Party is the fundamental weapon of the revolutionary action of the proletariat, the combat organization of its vanguard that must raise itself to the role of leader of the working class in all its spheres of its struggle without exception, and consequently, in the trade union field. (p. 15)

* * *

The character of the party's leadership [of the trade unions], its methods and its forms, can differ profoundly in accordance with the general conditions of a given country or with the period of its development. In capitalist countries, where the Communist Party does not possess any given means of coercion, it is obvious that it can give leadership only by Communists being in the trade unions as rank and file members or functionaries. (p. 17 our emphasis)

* * *

Under these conditions, the thought easily arises: Is it not possible to bypass the trade

unions? Is it not possible to replace them by some sort of fresh, uncorrupted organization of the type of the revolutionary trade unions, shop committees, soviets, and the like? The fundamental mistake of such attempts lies in that they reduce to organizational experiments the great political problem of how to free the masses from the influence of the trade union bureaucracy. It is not enough to offer the masses a new address. It is necessary to seek out the masses where they are and lead them. (p. 55 our emphasis)

* * *

A party that doesn't participate in the real trade unions is not a revolutionary party. (p. 58)

Such were the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky on the relationship between the party and the trade unions. It seems obvious that Lenin and Trotsky were teaching Bolsheviks that they must be in the trade unions, no matter what the politics of the unions, no matter what the political climate of the country, no matter what. First and foremost the Bolshevik-Leninists had to be in the trade unions to win the industrial workers to the party and to thus build a party of proletarian revolutionists who would lead the masses to a seizure of state power.

But what Lenin and Trotsky taught on the question of the trade unions is not even discussed in the party today. Instead, what is implied in the party documents and in the statements of party leaders is that we do not have to enter the trade unions at all. That this is, indeed, what the leadership of our party implies will be illustrated in another part of this document. First we will give a brief history of the SWP's position on the trade unions.

B. The SWP and the Trade Unions, 1936-51

In 1936, when the nucleus of what was to become the Socialist Workers Party was inside the Socialist Party, Comrade Cannon was editor of Labor Action, the newspaper which replaced The Militant during the entry period. In an article in Labor Action entitled "Deeper Into the Unions," Comrade Cannon addressed himself to revolutionary socialists in this manner:

The turn toward trade-union work means the turn toward new life for the Socialist Party in the West. It means reconstructing the organization on a proletarian foundation. And that

is what is needed, first of all, to be a real force in the class struggle and not a mere club of well-meaning people....

It takes a fighting organization to make a revolution, and the place to build it is inside, not outside, the broad labor movement. That means, primarily, the trade unions. We still have a long way to go to complete this necessary transformation of the party. What has been done so far -- and it is all to the good -- is, after all, merely dabbling. We will not really get down to business until we devote nine-tenths of our time and attention to trade-union work.

The trade unions are the elementary and basic organizations of the workers and the main medium through which the socialist idea can penetrate the masses and thus become a real force. The masses do not come to the party; the party must go to the masses. The militant activist who carries the banner into the mass organization and takes his place on the firing line in their struggle is the true representative of resurgent socialism.

And it is not enough by any means to have a few "specialists" attending to this function while the others occupy the cheering section in the grandstand. Nothing is more absurd and futile than such a party. Auxiliary organizations can and should be formed to enlist support of sympathizers and fellow-travelers. But the party of the proletariat, to my notion, should be conceived as an organization of activists with the bulk of its members -- everyone eligible in fact -- rooted in the trade unions and other mass organizations of workers. (Notebook of An Agitator, pp. 106-107 our emphasis)

We had hardly left the Socialist Party and founded the SWP than a struggle began between the petty bourgeois capitulators to American imperialism on the one hand, and those who defended the proletarian program and composition of the party on the other hand. As early as 1939 Trotsky warned the SWP that its social composition had to be improved (proletarianized), and that this, more than anything else, would help fight against the petty bourgeois program of Shachtman and Burnham.

Urging proletarianization of the party as an utter necessity, Trotsky said that "The class composition of the party must correspond to its class program." (In Defense of Marxism, p. 94) Trotsky characterized the minority of the party by saying that it was a revolutionary generation which grew up outside the labor movement. It would degenerate despite its devotion to the revolution, Trotsky warned, unless it took steps to proletarianize itself:

A qualification must be made to this extent -- that not only Shachtman's personal failing is embodied therein, but the fate of a whole revolutionary generation which because of a special conjuncture of historical conditions grew up outside the labor movement. More than once in the past I have had occasion to speak and write about the danger of these valuable elements degenerating despite their devotion to the revolution.... To escape this danger it is necessary to open a new chapter consciously in the development of the party.... It is necessary to make an about-face on one's own axis: to turn one's back to the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, and to face toward the workers. (In Defense of Marxism, pp. 104-105 Trotsky's emphasis)

The party could begin to proletarianize itself, Trotsky said, by entering the factories, by working with the workers, by orienting itself toward the factories, strikes, and unions. The petty bourgeois youth in the party should be sent into the working class districts for day-to-day work among the proletariat.

In Struggle for a Proletarian Party, the companion volume to In Defense of Marxism, Comrade Cannon took up the organizational side of the question. Cannon said that the party must be rooted in the workers' mass movement. He said that "...the most basic task of all [is] the penetration of the trade-union movement." (p. 59) And he added that the petty bourgeoisie show an aversion to real participation in the mass movement of the workers.

How, then, was the party to do political work in the trade unions? In talking to Trotsky, Cannon said, "We began with the idea, that it is impossible to play a role in the unions unless you have people in the unions. With a small party, the possibility to enter is the first essential." (Writings, 1939-40, p. 60) In other words, the party had to first enter the trade unions, then it could do political

work in them. Elementary, it should seem, since this is what Lenin and Trotsky had taught and the Bolsheviks in Russia had practiced.

During the war years and afterward the party colonized comrades in industry. Likewise, the Workers Party (Shachtmanites) did the same. However, the WP members did not take the time to integrate themselves into the union movement. Instead, they began telling the workers what to do and how to do it and were consequently often booted right out of the movement. The SWP, on the other hand, even though it stated that it had limited aims in the trade unions during the war, "...laid out a course of intensifying the educational phase of our work, the work of penetration, preparation, solidification of our cadre in the unions, and party recruitment. (SWP Bulletins, Volume 8, No. 10, p. 22 our emphasis)

When the masses began to move, we were able to participate and play a significant role, because we had consolidated, through hard, consistent work and struggle stable union fractions in a number of key industries. But the Shachtmanites...had no stable union fractions or any other kind of fractions left in the unions when the great strike wave engulfed America. (SWP, Volume 8, No. 10. p. 22 original emphasis)

Our work of penetrating the unions and slowly but surely organizing stable union fractions enabled us to make many gains when the post-war strike wave broke out. The size of the party increased rapidly as workers joined our movement.

In 1948 the party discussed whether or not the Wallace third party movement was the beginning of a labor party. Comrade Cannon, who argued against the party's joining the Wallace movement, again emphasized the necessity of being in the trade unions: "If we are in the unions and have forces there, we will be a power in any labor party formation that arises, the moment we join it, roughly in proportion to the strength of our forces in the unions and the general propagandistic power of our press." (SWP, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 19-20)

In 1948 the PC of the SWP also stated that the development of the left-wing in the unions depends on the degree of our participation in the rank and file movement. We also restated what Trotsky had said in "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" -- that the opposition in

the trade unions would be gathered around two fundamental points: (1) independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state, and (2) democracy in the unions.

C. The SWP and the Trade Unions, 1952-56

In 1952 the party stood in the middle of the cold war and on the threshold of the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell fight. Due to the witch-hunt in the unions and to the climate of reaction in the country, prospects in the unions were not very promising. Yet in its political resolution of 1952, the party said:

The perspectives guiding our party must flow from the maximum of possibilities inherent in the general situation, not the minimum. We intend to challenge and engage in direct combat all rivals for the leadership of the advanced workers. (SWP Discussion Bulletin, No. 10, p. 15)

* * *

We must strive to maintain as many ties as possible in the unions and to penetrate more deeply into them. Members should use opportunities afforded by the arms boom to become integrated in the labor movement and non-worker comrades should be encouraged and assisted to enter the factories and stay there. (p. 17)

One of the fundamental questions in the Cochran fight was over the question of the party's relationship to the trade unions. According to the majority, the Cochranites wanted to seek greener pastures, more rewarding fields of activity than the trade unions because the trade unions were not at that time the most fruitful field of activity for revolutionists. Many of the current leading party members were also in the leadership in 1953, and many of them argued against the Cochran-Bartell proposition to seek greener pastures outside the trade unions.

1. Comrade Dobbs Comrade Dobbs had the following to say about the necessity of staying in the trade unions:

Talent is very useful, as are adroit tactical maneuvers. But nobody can cheat the laws of the class struggle through talent, maneuvers, or any other gimmick. To win leadership in fact, as well as in name, and to apply class struggle politics in union tactics, we must have

strength in the ranks. (SWP Discussion Bulletin, No. 11, p. 14)

* * *

Our strategic orientation is to build an independent mass revolutionary party. All our tactical maneuvers must be subordinated to and co-ordinated around this strategic aim. To build a mass party our primary tactical orientation must at all times be toward the mainstream of the organized working class. (SWP, Vol. 15, No. 6, p. 16)

Comrade Dobbs said that it was precisely the proletarian orientation which was being challenged by the Cochranites, who wanted to make our main field of work the Stalinist circles, students, etc.

2. Comrade Kerry During the Cochran fight Comrade Kerry had this to say:

The radicalization of the American workers will take place via the unions, especially in the mass production industries. This prospect determines our basic orientation toward this concrete milieu. Any digression from this course, any "detours" away from our proletarian orientation under the illusion of finding greener pastures elsewhere can only serve to disorient the party and render us incapable of playing our role as leavening agent in that process of radicalization. (SWP, Vol. 15, No. 7, p. 14 our emphasis)

3. Comrade Hansen Perhaps the most apt description of what the Cochran-Bartell group wanted to make out of the party was provided by Comrade Hansen in a document entitled "The Challenge to Our Orientation." Due to the aptness of Comrade Hansen's characterization of Bartell's ideas, we shall quote an entire section of his document:

The Light Cavalry Concept

Comrade Bartell's revisionism did not stop with his Menshevik challenge to the authority of duly elected party bodies. On page 13 of his article, "The Struggle in the New York Local," he tosses in a concept of the party which, if taken seriously, would give us something novel to say the least.

It's "nonsense," he says, that he proposes "to make the Stalin-

oid organizations, such as the Compass Clubs and the ALP our main field of work." But it's nonsense only because "this arena" is not "big enough and fruitful enough to absorb our main forces and attention." If the arena were big enough and fruitful enough then he "would not hesitate to propose this." To justify this answer to his nonsensical "if," he explains that we must "have no fetishes or taboos" about our "main arena."

I suppose all of us will agree with Comrade Bartell about not having "fetishes or taboos" about our proletarian orientation, but that is not what is involved -- it is the proletarian orientation itself. Now listen to Comrade Bartell develop his concept of how the party should orient itself provided certain "ifs" apply:

"If there should develop a sudden rise of militant struggle among the Negro masses, we would not hesitate to place this first on the agenda and make this our main field of work, even though it occupies, according to Stevens-Ring, only second place in our strategic orientation."

Do you get the picture? The party wheeling like light cavalry from preoccupation with the "politically conscious circles" and charging up to Harlem and other Negro communities, bugles blowing and leaflets announcing: "We are here, fresh from the politically conscious circles to lead you in the further rise of your militant struggle!"

Now read Comrade Bartell's next paragraph: "If it should so happen that a significant radicalization develops on the campus while the labor movement remains temporarily passive and dormant, we should head straight into this current, even give it our main attention for a while, without worrying as to whether it is third, fourth, or seventeenth in our order of priority."

Do you get the picture? Our light cavalry reins in, wheels around and thunders onto the campus green showering leaflets on the students: "We are here, fresh from the militant struggle among the Negro masses to lead you in any further development of your significant radicalization!"

Comrade Bartell does not develop his concept any further than that, but let us suppose that a sudden big rank and file strike movement develops on the waterfront bringing to a climax the long series of sporadic flareups we have witnessed in New York. Again orders go out to the light cavalry. We gallop down to the waterfront, banners flying, and pass out leaflets by the thousands, announcing: "We are here, fresh from the significant radicalization of the campus, to lead you in ousting King Ryan and setting up a hiring hall!"

Can you imagine the response of the longshoremen? I won't give it to you, but I can assure you it wouldn't be longer than two short pithy words.

Reading these two paragraphs of Comrade Bartell's it is difficult to describe what amazement I felt. Could it really be possible that Comrade Bartell went through the 1939-40 struggle with the petty-bourgeois opposition without once grasping the real meaning of Trotsky's concept of a proletarian orientation? Does he really conceive of "organization" as a hurtling of forces here and there the way the anarchists conceive it? (A strike breaks out, for instance: you grab the first train there and announce you've come to lead it.) (SWP, Vol. 15, No. 7, pp. 26-27 Hansen's emphasis.)

In the same document Comrade Hansen defined sectarianism as considering the American working class too backward to work in and therefore seeking other arenas. Accusing the Cochran-Bartell minority of being sectarian, Hansen said:

They are sectarian because they resist applying the tactic fitted to the peculiar conditions of the country they live in. The resistance is to day to day work in the proletariat as it is and not as we wish it or as it was in the upsurges of the past, or as it will become in the future. (p. 36 our emphasis)

Comrade Cannon, who was not in the National Office at the time of the Cochran fight, wrote from Los Angeles and had this to say about Bartell's position:

The question was put falsely by

Bartell when he demanded that his critics point out to him some specific field of trade union activity. The thing is that you must first have an orientation toward the trade unions, consider that our main field of work, proletarianize the membership, especially the younger comrades, and send them into the factories: that is the precondition for the opening up of specific opportunities. That's the way our trade union activities begin almost everywhere. (SWP, Vol. 15, No. 12, p. 24 third emphasis is ours)

Comrade Cannon also quoted Trotsky on the working class's ability to suddenly, unexpectedly explode. "Hence the conclusion: It is necessary to prepare." (p. 28) Further, Cannon said that "The fight for socialism is unthinkable without a fight for the revolutionization of the trade unions. That is what gives party trade union work such transcendent importance." (p. 53 our emphasis)

In 1953 the majority resolution stated:

The notion that little if anything effective can be accomplished in action by the militants in the union movement until a general war has run a considerable course, is false in perspective and practice. The transition of the workers to a more energetic state will be the result of prolonged molecular processes. Even small signs of a shift in their moods and actions must be noted and their first expressions grasped if the militants of the vanguard are to fulfill their role as a ferment in the process of radicalization. (SWP, Vol. 15, No. 16, p. 6)

And the party's 1953 organizational resolution stated:

Above all the student and unemployed youth must be sent into industry and involved in the life and struggles of the workers. Systematic, exceptional, and persistent efforts must be made to assist the integration of our unemployed youth into industry despite the restricted field of employment. (SWP, Vol. 15, No. 16, p. 52)

In 1954, after the Cochranites were expelled from the party, the party repeated that the fight for leadership of the radicalizing workers

will begin as a fight for leadership of the unions, since the workers will use the unions as the foundation on which to build their own party. Finally, the party concluded: "Class conscious militants in considering their own political tasks, must begin with the understanding that it is necessary to go with the working class through all its experiences. There is no escape from that...." (Discussion Bulletin, No. 26, p. 9 our emphasis)

D. The SWP and the Tactical Turn, 1957-64

Cochran and Bartell, in their desire to find "greener pastures," were reacting to the long years of waiting for the revolution and to the reactionary climate of McCarthyism. Precisely because Cochran and Bartell saw no immediate prospects in the trade unions, they wanted to abandon the proletarian orientation and "orient" the party elsewhere. As we have shown, the party majority fought the Cochran-Bartell "greener pastures" scheme in 1953. Yet in the period from 1957-64, the SWP eventually came to accept the Bartell position on "greener pastures" without open acknowledgement of it.

In 1956 international events enabled the party to begin to take steps out of isolation, to participate in social movements, and to recruit. With the Hungarian Revolution and the Khrushchev revelations, the party was presented with the opportunity to intervene in the "loosening up" in the broad socialist movement. The party immediately took advantage of this opening to get out its ideas and to recruit.

The period from 1957 to 1959 was called the "regroupment period." During these years the party's main public activity was working with CPers, ex-CPers, and Bartell. This work centered around running a "united socialist election campaign" to oppose the capitalist parties. In doing this the party hoped to attract and recruit ex-CPers and their fellow travelers who were shaken by the 20th Congress revelations.

Immediately after the Khrushchev revelations came the civil rights movement, the Cuban Revolution, the anti-HUAC demonstrations, the Student Peace Unions, and so on. All of these presented the party with opportunities to intervene, propagandize, and recruit.

All of these social movements also, because they were mainly petty bourgeois in composition, led the party deeper and deeper into a petty bourgeois milieu. The fact that the working class had not radicalized,

making trade union work very difficult, led the party further and further from trade union work in this period. In short, despite the lessons of the Burnham-Shachtman fight, despite the lessons of the Cochran-Bartell fight, despite the fact that many comrades wrote documents calling for more attention to trade union work, the SWP leadership moved further and further from the proletarian orientation.

The period from 1957 to 1964 had both positive and negative sides. The positive side was that the SWP was able to break out of its extreme isolation, intervene in social struggles, propagandize, and recruit. The negative side was that the party moved further and further from the working class. The party's participation in the radicalizing campus milieu, which began as a tactical turn towards a layer in motion, has today become an orientation in and of itself.

This is not to say that a tactical turn toward non-working class layers inevitably results in an abandoning of the proletarian orientation. But as Trotsky warned in Lessons of October, out of every tactical turn arises the possibility that "...the internal groupings in the party, which originate from the necessity of a turn in tactics, may develop far beyond the original controversial points of departure and serve as a support for various class tendencies." (p. 27)

It is our contention that in the period from 1957-64, a period which necessitated a tactical turn toward petty bourgeois layers, the SWP, influenced by the petty bourgeois milieu it was working in and recruiting from, began to see work in that layer as the party's primary and permanent orientation. In other words, what began as a necessary turn in tactics has gone too far. As we shall show in the next part of this document, the party is so oriented toward the students today that despite stirrings in the working class between 1965 and today, the party merely comments on these stirrings and makes no effort to enter the working class and lead its struggles.

E. The SWP and Greener Pastures, 1965-71

1. Students Build Bridges By 1965, the party leadership no longer considered our basic task to be rooting ourselves in the working class. In 1965 there was no mention made, as there is none made now, of sending comrades into the industrial proletariat. Instead, we were told, and are told now, that the recruitment of students is the building of a bridge to the

working class. Once it was our task to penetrate the working class by sending comrades into the trade unions to recruit workers. Now, it seems, we do not have to send comrades into the trade unions. Instead, we can stick to recruiting students, and sooner or later the workers will come over this bridge of students to us.

Our work among the students as our primary task was justified in the following manner in 1965:

Because of the exceptional opportunities [read "greener pastures"] open to us within the student movement a top priority must be given to this sphere of party work. So far as it is possible within the framework of a priority to work among students, party efforts must be directed toward winning black militants to our ranks, especially on the part of our Negro comrades. Attention to the trade union movement must of necessity depend primarily upon worker comrades with the press backing them up. (SWP, Vol. 25, No. 2, P. 20)

Here everything is upside down, inside-out, and backwards. Instead of the party having a proletarian orientation and the basic task of penetrating the workers' organizations, "exceptional opportunities" (greener pastures) are pleaded and the working class is given a second or third place in party concerns. Here we must simply repeat Comrade Hansen's question to Bartell: Could it really be possible that the party leadership went through the 1939-40 struggle with the petty bourgeois opposition without once grasping the real meaning of Trotsky's concept of a proletarian orientation?

It is true that the 1965 organizational document of the party said that the party "...must be deeply rooted among the workers...composed predominantly of workers and enjoy the respect and confidence of workers," and that the party must make a "concerted, determined, and systematic effort, consciously directed by the leading committees of the party, to spread out into all sectors of the mass movement -- civil rights organizations... labor organizations...campuses..." (SWP, Vol. 25, No. 3, p. 20)

It is true that the party said the above in 1965, but the above was repeated practically word-for-word from the 1953 organizational bulletin, with the exception that in 1953 the party said it must penetrate the workers movement rather than "spread out" into

"all sectors of the mass movement." It is obvious, though, no matter what verb is used, that the SWP has made no systematic, concerted, or even determined effort to get into the working class.

Furthermore, the 1965 organizational resolution, which is based in large part on the 1953 resolution, dropped the section entitled "Steps to Proletarianization" -- a section contained in both the 1941 and 1953 organizational resolutions. If we are determined to root ourselves in the working class, then why do we throw away the steps that will enable us to do so? Why did the party leadership, instead of changing or modifying the steps to proletarianization, discard them?

In 1965 Comrade Breitman wrote a short document in which he said that a "new situation" confronted us in the unions: "The newness or differentness of the situation is a greater freedom for us to exist and function as known revolutionary socialists in the unions." (SWP, Vol. 25, No. 12, p. 1) Comrade Breitman also said that "...only inertia or folly should keep us from taking advantage of" the new situation. (p. 2) The party, however, made no mention of sending comrades into the trade unions.

It is true that in his report to the 1966 Plenum, Comrade Dobbs said that "We can look forward to new openings for colonization of comrades in given situations." (Internal Information Bulletin, January, 1967, p. 35) To our knowledge, however, this colonization still lies in the hazy future.

The documents for the 1967 Convention mentioned the changing mood of the workers, the growing militancy in the rank and file, but did not say that we should send comrades into the trade unions or orient ourselves to the working class.

In June of 1968 the PC's "Memorandum on Trade Union Policy" was published (Internal Information Bulletin), and although more new opportunities and increasing "molecular changes" were mentioned, we were still not told we had better begin to enter the trade unions.

2. France, 1968 In May-June of 1968 ten million workers were on general strike in France. The country was in a revolutionary situation. The reason the workers did not win in France in 1968 was because they gave allegiance to the Communist Party. They

gave this allegiance mainly through their trade unions. The corollary to this is that we, the Bolsheviks, were not in the trade unions to fight for the allegiance of the workers. The May-June events of France confirm the necessity of the vanguard party being rooted in the working class. The SWP leadership, however, does not choose to concentrate on this lesson of May-June, 1968.

Instead, the party leadership concentrates on the "vanguard role" of the students. Comrade Waters, in her "Report on France and the International Youth Movement," said that the JCR

...understood that...they had to provide the leadership for these revolutionary students and direct them towards the young workers. They understood that they had to stay with the student vanguard they were leading and go through a lot of these actions with them whether or not in some cases they agreed completely with everything that was being done. (Internal Information Bulletin, July, 1968, p. 6)

Apparently we and the JCR understand that we must stay with the students through thick and thin, agreement or disagreement, but we do not understand that we must stay with the workers.

Comrade Waters went on to say that in this country, "We can be thankful that we may have a few more years to prepare for an event of such magnitude." (p. 13) Just how are we "preparing" for this "event of such magnitude"? Are we attempting in any way to enter the trade unions and begin taking part in the ideological struggle that will arise there? Or are we going to wait until an explosion of the working class occurs before we even consider the necessity of preparing?

Comrade Hansen also reported on the French events, and he said that we (JCR) recruited some young workers in France during the May-June events, and that we (JCR) now have an avenue into the factories. Does this mean that we in the U.S. will wait until a general strike in order to recruit a few young workers who will give us an "avenue" into the factories? Such an outlook would be entirely incorrect. It is our task to make our own avenues into the factories by sending comrades in now, so that when an explosion occurs, we will be there, inside the working class, not outside. Lenin did not say that we make our way into the

factories only by recruiting a few young workers. He said that we must be able to resort "to all sorts of stratagems, artifices, illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, only so as to get into the trade unions, to remain in them, and to carry on Communist work in them at all costs."

In the political report to the 1969 Convention, Comrade Barnes brought up the French events in his closing remarks. According to Comrade Barnes:

We should look very closely at what happened in France, not just the speed and character of the explosion and the tremendous opportunities that developed, but the role that a small nucleus of Trotskyists were able to play. And thinking it over very carefully, we have an advantage over the French comrades. We have a little time before an explosion of that character. And not only that, we should also consider what a party that had the time and experience to build itself would be able to accomplish without a mass CP to contend with. That's what we should think about.

Our perspective is very realistic. (Internal Information Bulletin, December, 1969, p. 12)

Our perspective is not at all realistic if it does not include a perspective of sending comrades into the industrial proletariat now, so that we will be ready when the explosion occurs.

And contrary to what we are always being told, the main lesson of France is not that the students or any small vanguard were capable of "sparking" or "igniting" a general strike of ten million. Lenin long ago said that we cannot predict what immediate incident will ignite the masses.

We cannot tell...what immediate cause will most serve to rouse, kindle, and impel into the struggle the very wide masses, who are still dormant. Hence, it is our duty to carry on all our preparatory work in such a way as to be "well shod on all four feet".... ("Left-Wing" Communism Collected Works, Vol. 31, p. 97 Lenin's emphasis)

We repeat: We cannot tell what immediate cause will "ignite" the masses. It may very well be that a student struggle will touch off an explosion of the American working class. But the party leadership more and more implies

that the student struggles will ignite or spark the American working class into an upheaval similar to the one in France in 1968. Such an undialectical approach has nothing in common with Marxism. Such an undialectical approach implies that we need be "well-shod" on only one foot, and that is the student foot. Such an approach is absolutely incorrect. We do not know what incident will set off the working class. However, if we, the Bolsheviks, are not by that time deeply rooted in the working class, the revolutionary situation will be lost here, too -- and this time we will not be able to blame only the Communist Party.

3. Outside Instead of Inside Is Inside-Out The 1969 political resolution saw as the perspective for the coming period a "...breakdown of political equilibrium" and "the development of extraordinary openings and opportunities for independent black and labor political action along with the growth of revolutionary socialist ideas and influences." (SWP, Vol. 27, No. 11, p. 16) However, the resolution did nothing to prepare the party in regards to the working class. Let it be said that we would prefer "extraordinary" openings to "ordinary" ones any day. But it is our duty not only to take advantage of the ordinary openings, but also to enter the trade unions even under unfavorable circumstances. Was this not the lesson Lenin drew when he said we would resort to any subterfuge to get into the trade unions?

We must not relegate the recruitment of workers and our entry into the factories to the future, be it extraordinary or ordinary, but we must begin now to enter the trade unions in order to be there when the "extraordinary" happens!

The 1969 "Black Caucuses in the Trade Unions" report said that there were new openings for us in the UAW because of the Black caucuses forming there. "This concrete example signifies a new opening for us in a key trade union. At present, our intervention takes place mainly through our press." (SWP, Vol. 27, No. 11, pp. 26-27) This is like saying: A key door has opened for us -- at present we will simply toss a newspaper into it.

At the 1969 Trade Union Panel Comrade Lovell mentioned that we now find it easier to sell Militants at plant gates, and concluded: "The sale of Militants at plant gates makes it possible for us to now recruit young workers directly from the shops." (Internal Information Bulletin, October, 1969, p. 12) What does this imply if it does not imply that we are going

to rely on sales to recruit?

Comrade Barnes, in his political report to the 1969 Convention, said that the party does not have an orientation toward the student movement, but toward the "mass movement." He said that the party will intervene in all openings that will occur in all areas of the mass movement. Perhaps the "mass movement" also includes the trade unions and perhaps the party will intervene in the trade unions? No, for what Comrade Barnes says in one breath, he takes away in the next. He goes on to say that we must not attempt to guess how we will win the workers:

There's no use guessing the exact forms. The Bolsheviks would never have foreseen that their lack of a majority in the unions would not have been decisive; it was their majority in the Soviets that turned out to be decisive in the Russian Revolution. (SWP, Vol. 27, No. 11, pp. 10-11)

This statement by Comrade Barnes is wrong on three scores. First it is wrong because the Bolsheviks did have the leadership of the trade unions. Comrade Doug Jenness reports in the February, 1971, ISR that

Badayev estimates that among the class-conscious workers, the Bolsheviks had between three-fourths and nine-tenths of the support; the Mensheviks, the rest. For example, the Bolsheviks held a majority of seats on the boards of fourteen of the eighteen major trade unions in Russia at the time. (p. 29)

And Trotsky said in History of the Russian Revolution:

The instruments of the insurrection might have been the factory committees and trade unions, already under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, and at the same time in individual cases certain soviets that had broken free from the yoke of the Compromisers. (Book II, p. 314 our emphasis)

Secondly, the Bolsheviks could not have won the leadership of the Soviets if they had not already had the leadership of the trade unions. They won the leadership of the Soviets precisely because of their role in the trade unions. But Comrade Barnes' statement implies that if they could have foreseen that the Soviets would have been the instruments of insurrection, they

would have ignored the trade unions!

Thirdly, the statement by Comrade Barnes is wrong because it implies that it is not necessary to enter the trade unions and wage a struggle for the leadership of the working class through the trade unions. The implication is that we need not even try, let alone worry, or even guess at, the necessity of the trade unions as the arena of struggle for the leadership of the workers. Comrade Barnes assures us that it didn't matter that the Bolsheviks didn't have a "majority" in the trade unions. And if it didn't matter for them, why should it matter for us? Why should we even try to enter the trade unions and fight for our ideas and win the workers if quite possibly we could do it an easier way (greener pastures)?

The trade union question, which Trotsky called the most important for the labor movement and, consequently, for the party, Comrade Barnes dismisses. That question of the party's relationship to the trade unions, which Trotsky called the most fundamental question of revolutionary Marxism, Comrade Barnes calls a secondary matter, a guess.

However, just in case we didn't get the message that we need not enter the trade unions, Comrade Barnes tells us the secret in another way. In the political report he gave to the 1970 Plenum, he said:

It is interesting to note that in Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay, Trotsky pointed out that in a period where the unions have become more and more integrated with the state and encrusted with the bureaucratic, conservative, petty bourgeoisified lieutenants and sergeants and corporals of the ruling class, that the beginning and extension of organization and struggle outside the union movement is one of the key preconditions to prepare the transformation of the unions themselves into revolutionary instruments of struggle. (Internal Information Bulletin, 1970, No. 5, p. 7)

Trotsky said nothing of the kind in "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay." The fundamental lesson of this article was the necessity of Bolsheviks being in the unions, no matter what.

We cannot select the arena and the conditions of our activity to suit our own likes and dislikes.

It is infinitely more difficult to fight in a totalitarian or semi-totalitarian state for influence over the working masses than in a democracy. The very same thing likewise applies to trade unions whose fate reflects the changes in the destiny of the capitalist states. We cannot renounce the struggle for influence over workers in Germany merely because the totalitarian regime makes such work extremely difficult there.... All the less so can we renounce internal systematic work in trade unions of totalitarian and semi-totalitarian type merely because they depend directly or indirectly on the workers state or because the bureaucracy deprives the revolutionists of the possibility of working freely within these trade unions.... It is necessary to adapt ourselves to the concrete conditions existing in the trade unions of every given country in order to mobilize the masses, not only against the bourgeoisie, but also against the totalitarian regime within the trade unions themselves and against the leaders enforcing this regime.... (Trotsky on the Trade Unions, p. 70)

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From what has been said it follows quite clearly that, in spite of the progressive degeneration of trade unions and their growing together with the imperialist state, the work within the trade unions not only does not lose any of its importance but remains as before and becomes in a certain sense even more important work than ever for every revolutionary party. The matter at issue is essentially the struggle for influence over the working class. Every organization, every party, every faction which permits itself an ultimistic position in relation to the trade unions, i.e., in essence turns its back upon the working class, merely because of displeasure with its organization is destined to perish. (p. 71 our emphasis)

Perhaps Comrade Barnes, due to a lack of familiarity with the subject, did not mean to refer to "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," but instead to a portion of the Transitional Program entitled "Trade Unions in the Transitional Epoch." If so, here is what Trotsky had to say:

The Bolshevik-Leninist stands in the front-line trenches of all kinds of struggles, often when they involve only the most modest material interests or democratic rights of the working class. He takes active part in mass trade unions for the purpose of strengthening them and raising their spirit of militancy. He fights uncompromisingly against any attempt to subordinate the unions to the bourgeois state and bind the proletariat to "compulsory arbitration" and every other form of police guardianship -- not only fascist but also "democratic." Only on the basis of such work within the trade unions is successful struggle possible against the reformists, including those of the Stalinist bureaucracy.... It is necessary to establish this firm rule: self-isolation of the capitulationist variety from mass trade unions, which is tantamount to a betrayal of the revolution, is incompatible with membership in the Fourth International. (Transitional Program, p. 13 our emphasis)

* * *

...the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society; and if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions. If it be criminal to turn one's back on mass organizations for the sake of fostering sectarian fictions, it is no less so to passively tolerate subordination of the revolutionary mass movement to the control of openly reactionary or disguised conservative ("progressive") bureaucratic cliques. Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution. (p. 14)

It should be obvious from reading the above quotes that while Trotsky says that it is our duty to create militant organizations outside the

trade unions, it is first of all our duty to be inside the trade unions. "Only," Trotsky says, "on the basis of such work within the trade unions is successful struggle possible against the reformists, including those of the Stalinist bureaucracy." Being inside the unions -- that is the "precondition" for successful struggle.

In the same speech in which he reverses our "preconditions" in regard to the trade unions, Comrade Barnes also revises our basic policy of going to the workers. Instead, says Comrade Barnes, the workers will come to us:

We have already seen the beginning of the tendency for some working class militants regardless of what issues they're struggling over, to emulate the struggles that are going on concretely in society -- the struggle of the Blacks, the national minorities, the students, the antiwar fighters. And secondly we have some individuals attracted to the party or organizations leading these general struggles because that is proof that it is a conceivable party of their struggles. That is our most direct road to the recruitment of young workers today. (Internal Information Bulletin, 1970, No. 5, p. 13 Barnes' emphasis)

Thus we see the great discrepancy between present party policy (or lack of it) toward the trade unions and past lessons on this most important question. What Lenin and Trotsky considered a fundamental task -- the task of penetrating the trade unions -- the present leadership ignores. Lenin and Trotsky said we must go to the workers. The present party leadership explains that the workers will come to us because we are leading such successful struggles (except, of course, the trade union struggle -- but then, it is not really decisive to have a "majority" in the trade unions. In fact, if a "majority" is not necessary, need we even have a "minority"?)

The SWP leadership of the past considered it a precondition for victory to be inside the unions. The leadership of today considers it a precondition to be outside the unions.

What has happened is nothing less than a revision of our policy on our relationship to the trade unions. What will happen if we continue along this path of abandoning the trade union movement was issued as a warning by Comrade Cannon: "It is not sufficient for the party to have a proletarian

program; it also requires a proletarian composition. Otherwise, the program can be turned into a scrap of paper over night." (Struggle for a Proletarian Party, p. 9)

SECTION IV: PRESENT CLASS MILIEU, CLASS COMPOSITION, AND EFFECTS

In taking a conscious approach to the building of the revolutionary party, we must at all times analyze the state of the party and its relation to the working class. We undertake this analysis on the basis of the lessons learned from the accumulated experience of the Marxist movement. We must first examine the present class composition of the party, and the reasons for and effects of that composition.

The party today is predominantly petty bourgeois in composition and mentality. It is composed in its majority of comrades recruited from the campus arena. Due to historical conditions and the nature of this period, this unfavorable composition is somewhat unavoidable. However, that does not mean that it is any more desirable today, in the "new" seventies, than it was yesterday, in the "old" forties. Nor does it mean that we should be satisfied with the composition. As Trotsky said in 1939:

We are all very critical toward the social composition of our organization and we must change, but we must understand that this social composition did not fall from heaven, but was determined by the objective situation and by our historic mission in this period. It does not signify that we must be satisfied with the situation. (SWP, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 25 our emphasis)

In this document, we have used the lessons of the past to point out the dangers of a petty bourgeois social composition. Now we must ask what the attitude of the current party leadership on this question has been.

A. The Attitude of the Leadership -- Links of Good Will

Back in 1953, when the party leadership was arguing against the Cochran-Bartell attempt to abandon the proletarian orientation, Comrade Breitman had this to say:

What has been happening not in all branches but in many, is this: The difficulty of doing work in the unions has become an excuse for paying less and less attention to such work,

sometimes to the point of complete neglect. Our inability to lead masses in action has in many cases become the rationalization for abstention from practically all kinds of work in the unions... And the leaders of the party and the branches have not actively resisted this trend; in fact, we have often gone along with it, even justifying it in some respects.... What I am talking about is a self-imposed isolation, necessary perhaps in some cases, but by no means on the scale now in effect. (SWP, Vol. 15, No. 11, p. 21)

This statement by Comrade Breitman was a prediction of the party leadership's current attitude. The justification for abstention from trade union work swung into full gear in the 1965 political resolution, which stated:

Student youth entering the party have shown a marked capacity to wholly identify themselves with proletarian revolutionary perspectives despite the middle class background from which many of them come. This fortunate circumstance stems from a process of selection going on within the student movement itself. It is a big leap from inchoate rebellion against the capitalist status quo to membership in a proletarian revolutionary party.... Only the best among the student rebels are able to advance toward genuine revolutionary politics. Those who come to our party from today's student milieu do so under conditions that test their mettle as revolutionary vanguard fighters. It is not necessarily comfortable for them to take their stand with a small vanguard party generally isolated from the mass movement. In doing so they automatically subject themselves to persecution as "subversives" by the capitalist ruling class and its witch-hunt myrmidons. They cut themselves off from immediate prospects of becoming mass leaders within the broad student movement. People who can stand that gaff are not apt to be dilettantes. Instead, experience has shown these young comrades to be motivated by good will and genuine devotion to the movement....

This non-political romanticizing does not distinguish this generation of students who are joining the party in any way from previous generations. YSAers today are probably less isolated

because of their identification with Trotskyism than previous generations of party youth. If the ability to "advance toward genuine revolutionary politics" characterizes the "best" of the students, then we assume that the Shachtmanite, Wohlforthite and Robertsonite youth were probably the most developed and the "best" of the students. No doubt they too were labeled "subversives." And we assume that in most cases, at least, they were motivated by "good will and genuine devotion." The fact is that despite their identification with the program and the party, they crumbled before alien class pressures because of their background, the milieu in which they worked, and the fact that the party took no firm measures to overcome these obstacles. To again quote Trotsky:

...embodied therein...[is] the fate of a whole revolutionary generation which because of a special conjuncture of historical conditions grew up outside the labor movement. More than once in the past I have had occasion to speak and write about the danger of these valuable elements degenerating despite their devotion to the revolution. (In Defense of Marxism, p. 104 Trotsky's emphasis)

A more modern justification for our composition, basing itself on Comrade Mandel's "proletarianization" theories, is expressed in Comrade Seigle's youth report to the last party convention:

While the student population remains predominantly middle-class in its origins, there has been a significant influx from working class backgrounds. Social stratification within the student population as a whole has been reduced, with graduation from college no longer being an automatic entry pass into the petty bourgeoisie. College graduates have little hope of escaping the essential conditions of a wage-worker, and this perspective tends to link them more closely to the working class regardless of their social background. (Internal Information Bulletin, 1969, No. 5, p. 5)

This is sloppy sophistry at best. Comrade Seigle seems to be implying that students aren't really that much different from workers anymore, so we needn't worry about the party's concentration on the "exceptional opportunities" open to us in the student movement. A few points of clarification are in

order. First, we are not told how much the "significant influx" is, nor are we told whose definition of "working class" is being used -- Trotsky's or Mandel's. Second, the fact that there are more students from working class backgrounds today than there were in the past is of little significance unless we intend to convince the majority of workers of our program and leadership abilities by first convincing their college children, who will go home and convince mommy and daddy. With all the talk of "links" and "bridges," we sometimes get the feeling that this is, indeed, the party's perspective.

The fact is that all students, despite their class backgrounds, are inculcated with the petty bourgeois attitudes and values of the university milieu. Comrade Seigle mentions three of these traits in his report -- "an anti-historical and anti-theoretical bent" and "pragmatism." Their function as students -- suspended between social classes and the white collar jobs which they take upon graduation -- reinforces these attitudes and further isolates them from the mainstream of the working class.

Comrade Seigle says that "college graduates have little hope of escaping the essential condition of a wage worker." What is this essential condition? The sale of labor power? Fifty-thousand dollar a year executives do that. Students, by and large, will enter clerical, administrative, and research jobs that are petty bourgeois in character, either suspended between the boss and the production workers, or squarely on the boss's side.

The attitudes engendered in these layers by their relationship to production and their role in society are petty bourgeois attitudes. The characteristics of these elements are the same petty bourgeois characteristics that we traditionally inveighed against.

It is hard to determine exactly what Comrade Seigle meant when he said that "this perspective tends to link them more closely to the working class." If they "meet" the "essential condition of a wage worker," then they are not merely linked to the working class, they are part of it. If they are merely linked to the working class, something must separate them from the class and something else must link them to the class.

In any case, we hope Comrade Seigle does not wish to refute the need for the revolutionary party to differentiate among the various layers of the working class, to decide which

sectors are key, and to orient toward those sectors. We hope that Comrade Seigle understands that Marxists have analyzed the heterogeneity of the working class, have determined that the industrial proletariat is key, and must orient toward that sector. If Comrade Seigle or anybody else wishes to dispute that traditional Marxist analysis, we suggest he follow the example set by Trotsky in "The Communist Manifesto Today." Trotsky names the theories of Marx and Engels, described those that were still correct, and pointed to those that were now incorrect and told why they were incorrect.

Another example of the attitude taken by the current party leadership toward the composition of the party can be found in a comparison of the attendance statistics of the summer 1944 midwest vacation school and the statistics on party membership reported in two recent Internal Information Bulletins. The October, 1944 Party Builder contains attendance charts broken down by city and occupation. It shows an attendance of 51 auto and aircraft workers, 20 office and professional workers, 19 children, 16 housewives, 9 party functionaries, 7 steel workers, 3 ILGWU members, 2 rubber workers, 2 seamen, 2 students, and 1 railroad worker. This shows a specific attention to occupation necessary for a party which aims to root itself in the working class.

On the other hand, the April, 1969 Internal Information Bulletin contains the results of a party membership survey broken down mainly as to age, duration of membership, and formal education. The fact that the survey is primarily interested in age rather than occupation indicates an idealistic concern with age rather than the necessary materialistic concern with class on the part of the party leadership. This bulletin makes a point of the fact that 75 percent of the party has had at least some college education. So what? Is this a circular method of reaffirming the importance of our campus work by showing that most of the party's members have gone to college?

Tacked on to the end of the report is one line which says, "35 percent are currently members of unions." This is not the way a party serious about winning the working class describes the composition of its membership. What unions are these comrades in? How many are in basic industry? How many are in white-collar unions?

We get a hint as to the answer to this question in the credentials committee report from the last conven-

tion, printed in the January, 1970 Internal Information Bulletin. This tells us that the "most significant" representation by occupation was 150 students, 28 teachers, and 10 programmers. We assume that 35 percent of the party is about 200 people. If the AFT is the only union which claims more than 9 of the comrades who attended the last convention, what unions are all these comrades in, and what are they doing in them? This is such a basic question for a revolutionary party that it should never have to be asked.

B. Current Effects of Milieu and Composition on Party Work

Signs exist which point to the eventual course of the party's line should the party remain isolated from the working class. The petty bourgeois composition of the party reflects itself in various ways: a blunting of our class line to adapt to the petty bourgeois milieu; a refusal to engage in serious theoretical discussion of certain questions; a pragmatic approach.

1. Students, Youth, Rebels, and Roots The party's line is affected most obviously in its characterization and appraisal of the student movement. The document submitted by the United Secretariat to the Ninth World Congress (Third Congress Since Reunification), "The Worldwide Radicalization of the Youth and the Tasks of the Fourth International," was supported politically by the SWP. It thus outlines the position of the party on the student movement. The word "youth" is used, but it is obvious that what is meant is students. All the examples and demands relate to students. Only one sentence deals with the fact that "the young workers will be in the forefront of the movements to break the grip of the bureaucratic machines...." (International Information Bulletin, 1969, No. 4, p. 13)

The Trotskyist movement has always considered the proletarian youth the key to the future. That concept, and a program to reach the proletarian youth, is included in the Transitional Program. As Trotsky said in his speech, "Youth Fills the Breach," republished in the Militant of February 20, 1970, "The movement which has the working-class youth behind it is indestructible."

But the document puts the emphasis on student youth. It says, "Whoever succeeds in winning the allegiance of the most intelligent and devoted activists among the rebel youth holds the key to the future." (p. 13) We no longer have to win the allegiance of the best workers, or even the worker

youth, but merely some non-class sector designated as the rebel youth. And since this statement comes after ten pages of discussion of students and before the one sentence on young workers, we can only assume that "rebel" equals "student." The document says, "No tendency can hope to root itself and become a respected factor among the radical youth that does not fully and audaciously participate in the front ranks of its ongoing struggles, whatever shortcomings they may have." (p. 13) This is the concept we have traditionally held with regard to our relation to the working class.

The party's position was that we must be with the students, not the workers, wherever they are, despite objective conditions. "Work among the youth," says the document, "is not an end in itself." (p. 13) However, in countries like France and Italy, where the working class has recently engaged in tremendous struggles, and where the need for a revolutionary party rooted in the working class is most obvious, the SWP still advocates developing roots in the student movement without a word about the working class. (The world congress did not bother to take up Comrade Peng Shu-Tse's proposal to adopt a concrete orientation to and plan for work in the trade unions and working class as a whole.)

The logic of the SWP's position can be seen most vividly in Comrade Hansen's "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America." In this document, Comrade Hansen agrees with the conclusions that "on a continental scale a 'prerevolutionary situation' is shaping up, with the ripening of 'profound social and political explosions' and the 'outbreak of real revolutionary crises.'" (International Information Bulletin, 1969, No. 3, p. 4) And in this period of "revolutionary crises," Comrade Hansen maintains that "There is absolutely no escaping the conclusion that for the Fourth International the crucial question it faces is its capacity to sink roots politically and organizationally in the [youth]." The youth! A prerevolutionary situation is shaping up and we are told that the Fourth International must sink its roots not in the working class, but in the youth. Could it really be possible that Comrade Hansen himself lived through the 1939-40 struggle with the petty bourgeois opposition without once grasping the real meaning of Trotsky's concept of a proletarian orientation?

Comrade Hansen goes on to chide the United Secretariat for not "making a concrete contribution on such poli-

tical questions as how to draw the masses of revolutionary minded urban youth closer to the Trotskyist movement and how through them to come closer to the masses of urban workers." (p. 11) Two things are apparent from this statement. First, since these masses of urban youth will only help us come closer to the masses of urban workers, they themselves must not be urban workers, but some other kind of youth. We assume they are students, which we already suspected from Hansen's description of student struggles in his demonstration of the importance of "youth." Secondly, Comrade Hansen proposes that in the midst of a developing prerevolutionary situation the revolutionary party moves closer to the workers through the student movement. In other words, the party does not have to consciously penetrate the working class, even in a prerevolutionary situation. The party, instead, may adopt a movement-to-movement strategy -- closer to the workers (not even into, but merely closer to) via the students.

This new strategy is further described in the "Youth Radicalization" document, which says that "students tend to become a transmission belt for revolutionary ideas that find a receptive audience in the working class." (p. 5) Trotsky warned (and the 1965 SWP organizational bulletin repeated) that the students are a transmission belt for the introduction of alien, petty bourgeois influences into the revolutionary party. Now we are told the exact opposite -- that students are a transmission belt for revolutionary ideas into the working class. Not only that. The working class is a "receptive audience." In the past, of course, if the working class was a receptive audience for revolutionary ideas, then the party redoubled its efforts to penetrate the class and to provide leadership on the basis of those revolutionary ideas. Now the party is supposed to take the transmission belt of students, reverse its historic direction, and utilize it to send revolutionary ideas to the working class. This, again, is the concept that the party must relate to the working class not by becoming part of the class, but through the intermediary of the students.

This is an entirely new strategy for the Trotskyist movement. If adopted, it would have to replace the Transitional Program, which calls for the development of a proletarian party, based in the working class, which struggles in its day-to-day activity for the leadership of the workers, and which relates directly to the class, not through some other section

of society. The strategy of the Transitional Program is that the party talks directly to the workers, becomes part of the workers, and then, from its base in the working class, talks directly to other sectors of society. According to the new movement-to-movement strategy, the party never talks directly to the workers, let alone becomes part of the workers. Instead, the party becomes part of the students and talks directly to them. Then the students, not the party, talk to the workers and try to link, relate, and transmit what they have learned. Sooner or later, BANG! All this transmission, don't you see, sparks a revolutionary uprising of the workers.

In real life things don't work that way. The workers will acquire the consciousness required to lead the socialist movement only through the diligent day-to-day propagandistic work of a Bolshevik party composed of fellow workers. Likewise, the party will acquire the confidence of the working class only if it is rooted in the class. These are the lessons of history.

2. May and the Student Movement
The pragmatic genuflection before the student movement reached a new high around the May events of 1970. Les Evans, in his article in the final Intercontinental Press of 1970 said: "On May 4 national guardsmen shot and killed four students at Kent State University and the country was plunged into the deepest crisis of this century." (p. 1,099)

Such an assertion goes hand in hand with Comrade Breitman's contention in his speech at the Oberlin Conference, reprinted in the October, 1970 ISR, that the current radicalization is "the biggest, the deepest, the broadest..." of the century. (p. 7) Comrade Breitman then asks how this can be the deepest radicalization of the century when the working class is not actively involved, and answers by saying that "The radicalization of the thirties did not begin with the working class." (p. 27) That's fine as far as non-answers go, but the fact is that the radicalization of the thirties did not reach anywhere near its full depth until the working class had begun to actively participate, and no radicalization poses a serious threat to the ruling class unless it includes a politically active working class.

Comrade Waters tells us, in her Oberlin speech, reprinted in the November, 1970 ISR, that:

The student strike in May 1970 was the biggest in world

history, showing the political weight and the potential of the American student population -- a potential that went far beyond what the students themselves believed they had.... May 1970 proved that an entire generation has been actively involved in the massive opposition to the imperialist war in Southeast Asia. (p. 47)

Certainly the May, 1970 student strike was important. It was a strike with a political focus and of unprecedented scope and depth. However, it did not prove anything about "an entire generation." If we remember that there are class divisions in society, and not only age divisions, we will remember that many people of college age are not students. They are workers, most of whom have never been on an antiwar demonstration. May also proved nothing new about the "political weight and power" of the students. The strike merely reaffirmed the basic political powerlessness of the students. The students took over the universities and the capitalist machinery of production didn't even sputter.

At least one leading comrade, however, seems to think the party should not emphasize the students' lack of political power. For example, Comrade Breitman, who once used to write documents on the necessity of day-to-day work in the trade unions, and who as late as 1965 said it would be "folly" and "inertia" for the SWP to fail to take advantage of the new situation in the unions, has now decided to make up for his "old" ways fast and furious by praising students and implying that they can lead and accomplish most of the fight against capitalism. Here is what he has to say:

In this connection I would like to make a comment on the frequent explanations some of our student members make to their fellow students about the relative lack of social and political weight that students have in this country. I understand the purpose of such explanations -- to remind the students that they must link up their struggles with those of the workers, oppressed minorities, etc., if they want to stop the war and win other demands. But sometimes I get the uneasy feeling that in promoting this correct aim, these explanations seem to be underplaying the role of students. It's true that they will never be able to do the whole job by themselves, that

they need to seek allies among the exploited and oppressed and that they must conduct their struggle in such a way as to make it easier to win those allies. But students have already done a great deal by themselves -- far more than anybody expected a decade ago -- and they haven't exhausted their potential by a long shot. I am sure that we can oppose student elitism or vanguardism without simultaneously underplaying the real potential of this growing sector of the population, whose college component alone is now twice as large as the number of American farmers. (ISR, Oct., 1970, p. 25 our emphasis)

It is interesting to note that Comrade Breitman feels that the students have only to be "reminded" that they must "link up" their struggles with those of the workers. It appears that in the midst of all their unprecedented activity the students "forgot" this little task. How much easier this makes it for us, the vanguard party, since we need merely remind students of their tasks -- surely we no longer have to teach them!

In addition to underestimating our tasks in relationship to the students, Comrade Breitman makes at least three more departures from Marxism. The first, and most obvious, is that here again we find a traditional formulation about the role of the working class in the revolution, with students substituted for the working class. We have always said that the workers are the leading force in the revolution, but that they must seek allies among the exploited and oppressed. Breitman, by saying that students "will never be able to do the whole job themselves," directly implies that they can do most of it, and he advises the students to seek allies among the exploited and oppressed. He clearly implies that students now have the leading role in the revolution -- that it will not be the working class, but the students who provide the revolutionary leadership to the rest of the population. Perhaps this is the "political weight" and "power" Comrades Waters and Evans mentioned.

We, however, maintain that the working class still has the leading role in the revolution, by virtue of its relation to production, and that the current student radicalization does not indicate any new social power on the part of the students. What we are witnessing today is merely a rustling of the leaves, always indicated by a radicalization of intellectuals prior

to the movement of the working class. Comrades should not confuse the rustling of the leaves for the shaking of the tree itself. The fact that there are more leaves today than there were in the 1930's has apparently caused some comrades to not see the trees for the leaves.

Comrade Breitman seems to derive the power of the students from their numbers. Comrade Waters does the same when she says,

There are eight million college and university students in the United States today. That's more people than there were on the island of Cuba at the time of the revolution. That's almost as many students as there were industrial workers in Czarist Russia in 1905.... (ISR, Nov., 1970, p. 48)

What does this association of three words -- students, numbers, revolution -- imply? Less than eight million people made the Cuban Revolution. Slightly more than eight million industrial workers existed in Russia when the Russian Revolution was made. Eight million students exist in the U.S. today...therefore?

Comrade Waters says that "One of the similarities of the May events here and the French May-June events was the fact that in both cases the small size of the organized revolutionary party prevented the next crucial steps forward from being taken." (p. 49) This is not entirely correct. It was not merely the small size of the party that prevented the next crucial steps from being taken either here or in France. It is the absence of a revolutionary party rooted in the working class that prevented a showdown.

The lesson of the Russian Revolution is precisely that even a working class which is a small minority of the population can make the revolution. It is relationship to production that counts, not numbers. The history of the Third International shows, as we have said before, that class composition alone is not sufficient to make a revolution -- the party must also have the correct program. But the program alone will not make the revolution -- the party must be rooted in the industrial proletariat. The two indispensable ingredients for the revolutionary party are program and composition.

Thirdly, Comrade Breitman speaks of students linking their struggles with those of the workers. This point was also emphasized by Comrade Evans,

who said that "the student antiwar movement was able, through the strike, to forge its first significant links with the labor movement." (Intercontinental Press, 1970, p. 1,099) Here again we have the notion that what is important is not that the party root itself in the working class, but that the students "link up with" the workers. Even more appalling, in this case, is the belief that the students achieved "significant links with the labor movement." They did not. There were no indications that the May student strike, as differentiated from other student actions, affected the consciousness of the working class.

The so-called labor demonstration in New York was mainly a manifestation of an intra-bureaucratic feud. The bureaucrats and piecards who endorsed various actions did so mainly for their own political motives -- not out of any pressure from the rank and file. The bureaucrats do not constitute "significant links" from us to the working class. They are "significant links" from the working class to the bourgeoisie. It is our task to destroy these links, to melt them before the eyes of the working class. When union bureaucrats endorse antiwar actions, the party must utilize their endorsement to speak to the rank and file, but the party must clearly distinguish itself from the bureaucrats.

The fact is that the rank and file (and that is who the party should be concerned with, not with the misleaders) are in most cases still very much apart from the antiwar movement, despite their opposition to the war. To deny this is an attempt at self-delusion which can only serve to keep us from the task of appealing directly to the rank and file.

A logical extension of this self-delusion can be seen in the YSA political resolution's assertion that

While the May strike fell short of touching off a generalized social upheaval, it came close enough to let the ruling class see the outlines of a social revolution in this country. The capitalists were so frightened by what they saw that the threat of another May has become a permanent factor for them to consider before making any major moves in their continuous campaign to crush the world revolution. (YSA, Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 4)

To say that the student strike bothered the bourgeoisie is one thing -- to say that it frightened them is

another, and to say that it showed the bourgeoisie the spectre of social revolution is still another.

These panegyrics to this classless force called "youth" result, as we have shown, in the substitution of "youth" for "working class" in the party's strategical declarations. Comrade Hansen, in his speech to the last YSA Convention, published in the February, 1971 ISR, said:

I think that the youth of today by the hundreds of thousands are coming to realize that it is up to them to lead humanity into the new world of socialism. No one else will do it. And they will do it because on the one hand the risks have become too great to defer it any longer, and, on the other hand, the forces with which to carry out the task are already assembling. (p. 23 Hansen's emphasis)

Comrade Hansen is dead wrong. It is not the "youth" that will lead humanity to socialism. It is the working class that will do this. History has shown that it is the youth of the class that first awakens to its task. As Comrade Cannon, in his speech entitled "Sixty Years of American Radicalism," also published in the February, 1971 ISR, tells us that Lenin said: "It's perfectly natural that youth should predominate in a revolutionary party, since this is the party of the future, and the future belongs to the young.... We will always remain the party of the youth, of the most advanced class, i.e., the working class." (p. 38) Notice that Lenin utilized a class analysis, not merely an age analysis.

3. Trade Union Work In elevating student work to such fantastic heights, what has the party done with its traditional area of work -- the trade unions? In discussing the role that the unions will play in the revolution, Comrade Breitman says:

We cannot predict with certainty what is going to happen to the unions as the radicalization continues, nor do we know what role unions will play in the coming revolution. It seems likely that some unions will be radicalized[!]: it would be most odd if these institutions proved immune to radicalization when almost everything around them is affected by it. Some unions will be radicalized, some won't but that by itself will not determine whether the workers are radicalized.... Much in this respect will depend on when the revolution occurs, I

think. (ISR, Oct., 1970, p. 28 Breitman's emphasis)

What Comrade Breitman should know is that the revolution won't be made until the workers make it -- without them, the when is impossible. The unions are the workers' defensive organs of struggle against the encroachments of capital. While we do not know exactly what role the unions themselves will play in the coming revolution, we do know that the class which must lead the revolution is in the unions, and it is our job to be there with them. Instead of even attempting to become part of the workers' movement, however, the party contents itself with being a commentator. The Militant is full of little stories about new rifts, splits, and openings in the trade unions, but the party ignores its task of getting into these openings.

Comrade Breitman gives us "some words of caution against leaping to conclusions on this matter of workers radicalizing." (p. 29) "The truth is," he tells us, "that we don't have many ways of assessing the process until it is near maturity.... The truth also is that we don't know how many workers have already begun to be radicalized. But I wouldn't be astonished if it hasn't at least begun among millions of them." (p. 29)

Expressed here are two common themes of the party's assessments of the current situation in the working class: (1) we don't really know what's happening among the workers, but (2) we are sure millions of them, especially young and third world workers, have been somewhat affected by the radicalization. Both assertions are true, of course, but the party does not follow up from there. It is our job to know what is going on in the ranks of the workers, and if we don't know, it is our job to find out. Since there is no doubt that the radicalization has begun to affect the working class (actually, some of the conditions that have caused the radicalization among the students are beginning to affect the consciousness of the workers), then it is our job to enter the working class, to establish ourselves in the class on the basis of our program, to give political direction to the radicalizing currents, and to begin the recruitment of the vanguard of the class to the party.

The party does not discuss these obligations at all. Instead, Comrade Lovell tells us that "The sale of Militants at plant gates makes it possible for us now to recruit young workers directly from the shops."

(Internal Information Bulletin, October, 1969, p. 12) If young workers are so advanced that we can "now" recruit them "directly from the shops" on the basis of Militant sales, think of what we could do if we worked side by side with them and set an example for them in the unions.

The fact is, however, that by and large, young workers are not that advanced. Furthermore, the party press exists as the means by which we present our views publicly. It should go without saying that there must be regular sales at factory gates. This has been true throughout the history of Bolshevik organization. Yet sales of the paper have never, until now, been construed as anything approaching a substitute for the systematic penetration of the class by the party. Sales serve merely as a valuable auxiliary to this process. When we began having ease selling Militants on the campus, we did not restrict ourselves to hoping to recruit from the sales at the campus gates. We got on the campus. The same example applies with infinitely more importance to the factories.

What seems to be overlooked in the current party attitude toward the trade unions is the fact that the working class will not come to the correct political conclusions spontaneously, on the basis of its experience alone. It is absolutely necessary for a party rooted in the class to develop lessons from experiences and provide political leadership on that basis. But the party's current attitude is summarized in the headline to Comrade Lovell's article in the Militant of December 4, 1970 -- "How a Labor Party Will Be Sparked in the U.S." In fact, a labor party will not be "sparked." It will be built on the basis of long, hard, systematic propaganda within the trade unions. If it is "sparked," it will be sparked by the political motivations of the bureaucracy and will result either in a booby-trap like the American Labor Party of 1936, or in a party rigidly bureaucratically controlled from the beginning, in which communist work will be extremely difficult.

But Comrade Lovell does not mention the need for propaganda and education around a labor party. He tells us in his article in the November 27, 1970 Militant that "When the union finds itself at cross-purposes with Congress or with some local government, or when some judge elected as a 'friend of labor' rules against strikes, union members are quick to tell their officials to change the brand of politics." This statement has no basis in facts. If it were so it would indicate that the

workers are at a high level of understanding and involvement in politics, and that the propagandistic tasks of the party are not so great after all. This is what Comrade Lovell apparently wants to believe so that he can say, "The labor party movement may well be sparked by the successful efforts of the Raza Unida Party or the organization of an independent all-Black mass party." The workers, don't you see, will automatically follow the examples of Blacks and Chicanos.

Comrade Morrison puts it this way in the December 4, 1970 Militant: "Pursuing these actions [for immediate withdrawal and community control] will give rise to mass independent parties in the Black, Puerto Rican and Chicano communities. And eventually, the working class as a whole -- Black, Puerto Rican, Chicanos, Asian-Americans, Native Americans and white -- will see the need for independent, anti-capitalist political action." There is apparently no need for conscious direction and education by revolutionists.

Comrade Lovell does say in his article that "The labor party will most likely develop within the union movement, and probably through the political machinery already established by the unions, led by rank-and-file militants and serious worker revolutionaries." What he doesn't tell us is where those "serious worker revolutionaries" will come from.

Comrade Lovell presents another specious argument in this regard. "Conversely," he writes, "neither are the strident abstract calls by radical sects outside the union movement who proclaim themselves 'revolutionists' likely to bring forth a labor party." What does this mean? Isn't the party's call for a Black party a "strident abstract" call by a group outside the Black movement? Comrade Lovell might answer that the call for a Black party is not abstract because it is based on a program of transitional demands and meets the most pressing need of the movement. But the exact same answer is applicable to our call for a labor party. If it is the fact that this call is raised from outside the union movement that bothers Comrade Lovell, then the obvious solution is to get inside the labor movement.

A final example of the effect of the composition of the party on our trade union work can be seen in the party's attitude toward the union bureaucrats. In the past, the party had considered that the struggle in

the unions will begin with the question of union democracy. In their desire to confront the bosses more squarely and directly, the workers will have to break the restraining power of the bureaucrats. Today, however, Comrade Breitman maintains that "...the radicalization of the working class" is "more likely to occur around efforts by the employers to break the unions." (ISR, Oct., 1970, p. 28) Comrade Lovell, in his summary of the Oberlin Trade Union workshop, says:

The reports emphasized that we do not regard this as a big campaign against the bureaucracy. We try to avoid fights of this kind at this time. We do not consider the bureaucracy the main danger. The bureaucrats are not our first enemy. The enemy is the boss. And if you operate in the unions, this is what you must remember at all times. If issues are properly raised, very often we find that some of the bureaucrats without in any way identifying themselves with us and our broader aims will support particular issues. This is happening today with the increasing support of unions for the antiwar movement and the mass demonstrations. (1970 Socialists Activists and Educational Conference Reports, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 22)

It is certainly important to warn comrades against forming internal power blocs in the unions, like the United National Caucus in the UAW. It is entirely wrong, however, to imply that the "proper" way to raise issues is so that the bureaucrats will support them, or to equate the bureaucrats with the unions, as Comrade Lovell does in his last sentence. (It is the bureaucrats, not the unions, who are supporting the antiwar movement.) In fact, while we recognize that the employer is the main enemy, we must also recognize that to get to him, we must first knock over his agent, the union bureaucrat. Comrade Cannon put it this way:

The main weight of the struggle for the socialist transformation of society is not in the direct struggle of the workers against the bourgeoisie. The workers are such an overwhelming majority and their strength is multiplied so many times by their strategic position in production that if they were united to act consciously in their own interests their victory over the bourgeoisie would be a mere push-over. But they are not united, not class-

conscious. The reason for this is the influence of bourgeois ideology in the interests of the workers.

This influence is carried into the ranks of the workers in various ways, but its most direct representatives are the labor bureaucrats. That is why our main struggle against the bourgeoisie takes the form, in the first place, of a struggle against their agents in the labor movement. Nobody ever improved de Leon's classic definition of the conservative labor fakers as 'the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.' Lenin was especially pleased with this striking characterization. And nobody ever emphasized the primacy of the struggle against these labor lieutenants of the capitalist class more than Lenin did.

The fight for socialism is unthinkable without a fight for the revolutionization of the trade unions. That is what gives party trade union work such transcendent importance. (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 12, p. 53 our emphasis)

4. Antiwar Work An adaptation to the union bureaucrats is most apparent in our work in the antiwar movement. Practically the entire effort of the party to involve the labor movement in the antiwar movement has been in securing the support and endorsement of union bureaucrats for various actions. Solicitation of support from these bureaucrats is valuable only if it is used to open the door for a massive campaign directed at involving the rank and file. Otherwise, such solicitation will only serve to identify us with the bureaucrats in the eyes of the rank and file. The party must publicly demand that these bureaucrats utilize the union apparatus to aid the rank and file in the organization of contingents to antiwar actions. The party must call for massive leafletting of plant gates by the antiwar movement. Most of all, the party must be inside the trade unions to organize and direct the antiwar sentiments of the rank and file.

The Militant often ascribes the bureaucrats' support to the antiwar movement to pressure from the ranks. This pressure, in most cases, does not exist. If it did, there would obviously be large union contingents

in antiwar demonstrations and the rank and file would be involved in the building of the antiwar movement. The fact is that the rank and file must still cross the bridge between opposing the war (which they do) and acting against the war (which they don't). When the bureaucrats for their own reasons provide trains and/or buses and mobilize their rank and file for a march on Washington, this is not a rank and file action, it is an action of the tops -- the two do not represent the same thing. The bureaucrats are involved in the antiwar movement for their own reasons, as they were in the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington, where they provided buses and trains to bring the rank and file, too. If, as Malcolm X stated then, "Reuther and those other three devils should get an Academy Award for the best actors because they acted like they really loved Negroes and fooled a whole lot of Negroes," then Schrade, Woodcock, and the other bureaucrats should get an oscar for their performance now, which seems to be fooling an awful lot of people.

The bureaucrats take antiwar positions for four major reasons: (1) their jobs are threatened by the agitation in the ranks caused by the war-induced inflation, (2) they seek to recruit to their social-democratic political positions from the student movement, (3) they pursue a realignment policy of class collaboration, and (4) they want to keep under thumb and control any possible development of a desire in the ranks to actively participate in the antiwar movement and other movements for social change.

The last two points are the most important aspects of the union bureaucrats' political perspective. The misleaders of labor are scampering to keep up with the liberal wing of the capitalist class, which they serve obsequiously. If the McGoverns and Hatfields want to show a little muscle, the Woodcocks and Gormans had better deliver. But in the process, the bureaucrats have to be careful to keep the ranks carefully in line. What the labor skates fear most, and try to thwart and impede in every way they can, is the independent organization of the rank and file around political questions like the war.

It is precisely that independent organization that the SWP must encourage and aid. While we must utilize the antiwar positions of the bureaucrats to reach the rank and file, we must at all times clearly differentiate ourselves from the union bureaucrats and aid in the process of their downfall.

The party has also adapted to its petty-bourgeois milieu on the

question of the draft. We view the GI's from a position not as part of the class being called on to bear the brunt of the fighting, but merely as part of the antiwar movement. From having comrades in the forefront of the GI movement in 1968, we now are nothing but publicists for defense cases. During the last year, especially, we should have launched an aggressive campaign to politicize the growing discontent in the armed forces, but we did nothing. In the first three months of 1971, the Militant carried just three more articles on GI's than on homosexuals, and most of them were on old defense cases.

5. Black and Chicano Liberation Struggles Potentially the most explosive section of the working class today is the Black and Chicano workers, concentrated in ever greater numbers in the basic industries -- auto, steel, trucking, and in urban transportation and service jobs. The "Transitional Program for Black Liberation" passed at the last convention states, "Because of the role they play in production, Black workers are potentially the most powerful sector of the Black community in the struggle for liberation." (SWP, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 9) The PC memorandum on "Black Caucuses in the Unions" says of the activities of these Black caucuses:

The consequent impact within the union tends objectively to counteract race prejudice among whites. The process implies the generation of black and white class unity. That in turn foreshadows the rise of the broadening pattern of united opposition to the union bureaucrats. (SWP, Vol. 27, No. 11, p. 25)

Furthermore, the memorandum states:

In the changing objective situation we can anticipate new openings for party interventions aimed toward building a class struggle left wing in the unions.... [Reuther's attack on the Black caucuses in the UAW] signifies a new opening for us in a key trade union. At present our intervention takes place mainly through our press.... As the situation unfolds we can anticipate new opportunities to extend support to anti-Reuther militants -- both Black and white -- in various ways. Out of it all should come an advance in forging a class struggle left wing, in whatever given forms, within the UAW. And implied in this specific development is the opening of comparable oppor-

tunities for our party in other trade union situations. (pp. 26-27)

Vague promises about taking advantage of opportunities "as the situation unfolds" not only do not suffice as an assurance of intention to intervene in the unions, but they fly in the face of facts. The situation is unfolding now, and the party is satisfied with occasionally selling our press.

The heightened consciousness of Black and Chicano workers is a reflection in the unions of the general radicalization of the Black community, and it presents the party with an extremely important area of work. The increased political consciousness of the most oppressed section of the working class, a consciousness caused by the rise of nationalism, is actually the most significant difference between the current radicalization and previous ones. It is the party's obligation to send comrades -- Black, Chicano, and white -- into these unions to aid in the development of the struggles of Black and Chicano workers and to build support for these struggles among white workers. Yet here again the party has assumed the role of a sideline, abstentionist commentator. By failing to take part in the union struggles of Black and Chicano workers, the party is missing its most important opportunities to build the "multi-national" party we so often hear about.

6. Women's Liberation The party's orientation toward women's liberation is almost totally confined to the petty bourgeois milieu. If we take seriously the demands for equal pay for equal work and free child care centers, we must take these demands to that section of women which has the most reason for seeing them implemented -- i.e., working class women. If we take seriously the slogans for equal opportunity in jobs and job security, we again must relate these to the women who are most affected -- those who work. If the struggle for these demands is to be successful we will have to introduce other demands such as a shorter work week at no cut in pay so as to provide jobs for all. This can be done most effectively by our participating in working class "consciousness raising" among the women workers, whether they be in the factory (over four million), services (six million), or white collar jobs (fourteen million).

Capitalist inflation is forcing more women, particularly married women, into the work force, and we must be a part of this process. Trade union work

is not just a task for male comrades. We have the task of sending our comrades into the garment, textile, electrical, auto, and other industrial fields as well as communications and service industries, and any other areas where there is a concentration of women workers. We must promote working class "sisterhood" by organizing, educating, and leading the struggle of the most oppressed sectors of our sisters who work for their daily bread. By winning them to our banners, we not only teach them to hate the "Man," but how to get rid of him as well. There will be many reformist leaders who are women, and the only way we can fight for the allegiance of the workers is by being on the job with them and bringing our revolutionary transitional program with us -- we can't send it out to them in a mailing.

The organizing of women factory workers in the South and other areas is not just a man's job -- it is most of all a revolutionary woman's task. Our comrades must not abstain from this task. If the working class will be the vanguard of the revolution, working class women will be the vanguard of the women's liberation movement. If we don't know how to talk to them, we had better learn -- and nothing beats on-the-job training. If the burning of bras is an important symbolic act, the workers' control of the factories that produce them is an even more important symbolic act.

We can aid the struggle for women's liberation by bringing the working class into it and, hence, to the revolutionary movement to smash the oppressive machinery of capitalism.

The errors we have outlined in this section flow from the lack of a proletarian orientation. Isolation from the working class and the party leadership's failure to address itself to this question are the most prominent features of this incorrect orientation. As Trotsky said in an article published in Writings, 1937-38: "Marx has said that it is impossible to judge either parties or people by what they say about themselves. The characteristics of a party are determined considerably more by its social composition, its past, its relation to different classes and strata than by its oral or written declarations." (p. 162)

SECTION V: BACK TO THE WORKING CLASS

A. Analysis

In Lessons of October, Trotsky warned:

A revolutionary party is sub-

jected to the pressure of other political forces. At every given stage of its development the party elaborates its own methods of counteracting and resisting this pressure. During a tactical turn and the resulting internal regroupments and frictions, the party's power of resistance becomes weakened. From this the possibility always arises that the internal groupings in the party, which originate from the necessity of a turn in tactics, may develop far beyond the original controversial points of departure and serve as a support for various class tendencies. To put the case more plainly: the party which does not keep step with the historical tasks of its own class becomes, or runs the risk of becoming, the indirect tool of other classes. (p. 27)

Based on the SWP's actual relationship to the working class, and despite feeble bleats to the contrary, we maintain that the party is not successfully resisting the pressures of its milieu and composition and is not keeping step with the historical tasks of the working class. The party has transformed a tactical turn toward a petty bourgeois milieu into a permanent orientation. Unless it reverses this direction and turns its face back to the working class, the SWP will not meet its historical tasks.

B. Proletarianization The most urgent task now facing the SWP is a systematic colonization of the strategic sections of the working class, consciously directed by the leading bodies of the party. "Underestimation of the basic task -- the development and strengthening of the proletarian character of the party -- here is the basic trait of opportunism." (First Five Years of the Communist International, Vol. 1, p. 15) We must begin now to penetrate the working class. We readily admit that we do not know when the power of the proletariat will next explode, or what specific event will trigger the explosion. That is all the more reason why we must begin now to enter the class and to prepare to provide political leadership when that next upsurge does take place.

Opponents of various stripes -- Stalinists and Social Democrats -- are in the unions now. Admitting this, Comrade Lovell says that we don't have to worry about it because the Stalinists are unable to make any gains in the unions. And the YSA says that the YWILL is only in the unions because it can't compete in the student arena. The fact is that the more firmly our opponents

establish themselves in the unions in our absence, the more difficult it will be for us to wrest the political leadership of the workers from them.

Events like the Oberlin Trade Union panel do not prove that the party is indeed taking advantage of openings in the unions. They prove exactly the opposite. The panel heard reports from eleven comrades, only three of whom were members of industrial unions, and none of whom had ever been involved with a Black or Chicano caucus. That pitiful showing wouldn't be so bad if the party were doing something to correct the situation, but nothing is being done.

Comrade Lovell justifies our basically abstentionist policy on the grounds that "The most important consideration for us at all times is what must we do right now, under present circumstances." (1970 SAEC Reports, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 25) But as Trotsky tells us in The Third International After Lenin, "To lead means to foresee." (p. 264 our emphasis) "The strength of Marxism lies in its ability to foretell." (p. 198) We must plan ahead. We must utilize all available resources now to prepare for the future developments in the working class.

Every comrade should be considered for this work. The leading bodies of the party should choose which comrades to send into the factories. They must also give general encouragement to all comrades to enter. Comrades should be discouraged from entering white collar fields and should be encouraged to get jobs in specific industries or occupations arranged in order of priority through discussion between the national and local leadership. Except in special cases, comrades engaged in this work should consider trade union work their primary field of activity.

C. Program

We must return the demands of the Transitional Program to the forefront of our propaganda. As the political resolution of 1965 stated (but did not carry out):

Briefly summarized, a general program for the building of a left wing in the unions should be put forward along the following lines: a 30 hour week at 40 hours pay. A massive public works program designed to meet general social needs and to assure full employment under union conditions. Government operation of idle productive facilities under workers

control. Unemployment compensation at full union rates for all jobless persons 18 or over, whether or not they have been previously employed. Union organization of the unemployed into their own autonomous union. Rank and file control over all union affairs and union control on the job. A sliding scale of wages and compensation payments to offset rising prices. Unconditional support to the Freedom Now movement. A definitive break with the capitalist politics and the establishment of an independent labor party. (SWP, Vol. 25, No. 2, p. 13)

This program of demands must be expanded to include support to the struggle of national minorities for liberation and immediate withdrawal of troops from Indochina. It must also include the demands for equal pay for equal work; free, community controlled child care centers; and free abortions on demand, no forced sterilization. Based around these demands, our propaganda must be geared primarily to the working class.

The party's job is to present its politics to the working class. The chief emphasis of our election campaign should be placed on presenting workers with an alternative. Instead of crass adaptation to the petty bourgeois milieu with the publication of article after article on homosexuals, the Militant needs page after page on the plight of the working class and the socialist alternative.

D. Education

The party must undertake an educational program around the basic theoretical and historical works of Bolshevism -- the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, and Cannon, with special emphasis on what Comrade Hansen described in his introduction to The First Five Years of the Communist International as "the whole history of the Marxist movement" -- "the history of the struggle between proletarian and petty bourgeois politics." (p. xiii) A thorough assimilation of the history of Marxism is an integral part of the proletarianization of the party.

Whatever successes the SWP has had during the last decade have not been the result of the abilities of exceptional individuals, but of the correctness of our program. The reason the party was able to survive the demoralization and witch-hunt of the fifties was that its cadre had received a thorough education in the program and history of Marxism. The only way we can build a cadre capable

of withstanding the pressures and setbacks to come is through a thorough education of the ranks in the basic works and history of our movement. Classes on the current movements with a smattering of optional classes on the classics will not suffice.

Comrades recruited in the last five years, who have known only the success and prestige of being student leaders, must be steeled for the difficulties which will probably confront the party in the future. Statements such as Comrade Waters' comment at Oberlin that "...it is now clear that before this radicalization ends, the question of power, the question of which class will rule society, will be posed in this country," (ISR, p. 24) are common in the party today. They are, however, totally empirical and undialectical. They arm comrades with the view that the course from here to the revolution is a straight, upward line. In fact, the only way the question of power can be posed is through the political mobilization of the working class: and it is not at all clear that this will be accomplished before this radicalization subsides.

The whole history of Marxism teaches the dialectical development -- the ups and downs -- of the revolutionary process. It is this perspective that the party must be trained in.

Education for a Bolshevik, of course, is not confined to books. There is plenty of opportunity today for comrades to gain experience in the functioning and activities of the party. However, to accomplish the historical necessity of the proletarianization of the party, comrades recruited from the petty bourgeois milieu must be re-educated by work in the proletarian milieu. As Trotsky said in In Defense of Marxism:

Assuredly, without the conquest of the proletarian youth the revolutionary party cannot develop. But the trouble is that we have almost an entirely petty bourgeois youth, to a considerable degree with a social democratic, i.e., opportunist past. The leaders of this youth have indubitable virtues and ability, but, alas, they have been educated in the spirit of petty-bourgeois combinationism and if they are not wrenched out of their habitual milieu, if they are not sent without high sounding titles into working class districts for day-to-day dirty work among the proletariat, they can forever perish for the revolutionary movement. (pp. 146-147)

E. Conclusion

The SWP today is approaching a crossroad. It can take maximum advantage of the gains in human material from the last decade of campus work, or it can waste these gains. It can take advantage of the ongoing recruitment from the campus by beginning and continuing a systematic penetration of the working

class -- or it can continue to isolate itself from the working class. It can begin sinking roots in the proletariat and begin the long process of establishing its cadre as political leaders in the unions, or it can face the future like a rootless tumbleweed in a windstorm. In order to have any hope at all of leading the working class to victory, the SWP must begin to establish itself as a party of the working class -- NOW.

April 5, 1971