

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
February 25, 1971

TO ALL MEMBERS OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Dear Comrades,

Attached are copies of letters received from Mariana Hernandez and Evelyn Sell in Austin along with the replies from the national office and excerpts from Austin Executive Committee minutes. This material is for Political Committee information only.

Comradely,



Joel Britton
National Office

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1412-B Hartford
Austin, Texas 78703
February 6, 1971

Farrell Dobbs
SWP National Office
14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 10014

Dear Farrell,

It is a truism in our party that growth brings its own set of problems. And we have grown considerably in many ways during the last decade. During the last months I have become more and more aware of a particular growth problem and with the National Committee Plenum coming up soon I wanted to call this problem to the attention of the National Office.

The problem is simply: members of the party and members of the National Committee do not have a clear picture of the structure and functioning of the National Office. Comrades who wish to communicate with appropriate persons in the n.o. do not know to whom to write because we don't know who is in charge of what or who is no longer in charge and who has replaced the previous person, letters addressed simply to the National Office appear to go into limbo, letters addressed to one person are answered often by another, etc. These are small and minor points actually but they indicate an understanding and communication gap between the branches and the Center. Somewhat more important is that we don't know (but hear rumors of) which national fractions are actually functioning, which are no longer functioning, which are temporarily suspended, which are being set up, which were supposed to be set up but have not been, etc. The unfortunate series of events concerning the recent change in membership policy pinpoints some of the communication problems which have existed for some time now. I'm sure you can appreciate how party members felt about non-party members knowing about internal changes in membership policies before National Committee members or party members had any inkling that such a discussion was taking place (i.e., the change was discussed by non-party persons at the SMC gathering before any word reached National Committee members, etc.).

The National Office is growing and will continue to grow as our political needs enlarge. This is appropriate, however, if the lack of understanding grows along with these changes, there will be increasing alienation between the Center and the branches. I think that this is a problem which can be easily handled if it is recognized as a problem and dealt with immediately.

I suggest, first of all, that at the upcoming Plenum there be some provision for written materials and verbal explanations clarifying the present functioning of the National Office and projected changes in the near future. This should cover national fractions and assignments as well as departments. Such information could take the form of

organizational charts and/or lists outlining the areas of responsibility, comrades in charge, comrades assigned, etc. Additional materials should cover the inter-relations between departments, fractions, decision-making bodies, etc. in the Center. These materials should be designed not only for the information of the National Committee but for use in the branches to help answer the many, many questions comrades have at this point about the National Office.

Of special interest, is the Administrative Committee and how it functions. There should be some kinds of regular communication from the Administrative Committee to National Committee members and branch organizers. At one time, receiving the minutes of the Political Committee was sufficient. This is no longer true. If the Ad. Committee meets regularly and keeps minutes, these should be sent out along with PC minutes. If such minutes are not available, then we should receive monthly reports from the Ad. Committee.

This has been very general with a few examples. Of course, I have many more detailed thoughts. I would be glad to write further along these lines in much more concrete form and discuss it with appropriate comrades at the Plenum. Right now it appears to me that some new organizational forms, procedures and assignments are necessary but I am so ignorant of what is going on that I feel a clear picture is needed before much more detailed suggestions can be realistically presented.

I will look forward to hearing some kinds of response to this letter before the Plenum.

Warmest regards,
s/Evelyn Sell

cc: Jack Barnes

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New York, N. Y.
February 15, 1971

Evelyn Sell

Dear Evelyn,

Thanks for your letter about relations between the center and the party branches.

We are aware that some problems have developed and we intend to go into the matter in the organization report to the plenum in which attention will be focused on the new circumstances resulting from the party's gratifying progress.

Barry Sheppard is scheduled to make the organization report to the plenum so I am turning your letter over to him.

I am sure he would be glad to receive directly from you any further thoughts you may have in mind with relation to the problem.

Comradely,
s/Farrell Dobbs

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1412-B Hartford
Austin, Texas 78703
February 7, 1971

Jack Barnes
SWP National Office
14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 10014

Dear Jack,

Please, arrange to have some time at the Plenum to discuss some items with the Texas people. We will want to talk about personnel and I, at least, will want to discuss the points made in the enclosed letter.

Is there any way that Mariana can be invited to attend the Plenum? We will be having our branch elections very shortly after the Plenum and it appears highly likely at this point that Mariana will be our next branch organizer. For this reason alone, it would be good to have her at the Plenum. In addition, I believe it would improve her understanding of national political priorities and goals and perhaps positively affect the alienation she currently feels in regard to the national office. I'm not suggesting we break any rules in inviting her or setting new precedents. I just wonder if it is possible to do such a thing.

Comradely,
s/Evelyn Sell

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14 Charles Ln.
New York, NY 10014

February 18, 1971

Evelyn Sell
AUSTIN

Dear Evelyn,

We will definitely set aside time during the plenum for informal discussions with you and Tom and Paul about our perspectives in Texas.

I also will set aside a meeting so we can discuss with you the situation in Austin and some of the points you raised in your letter to Farrell.

I don't see how we could invite Mariana to the plenum without, as you say, breaking any rules or setting new precedents. If we made an exception in her case many other exceptions could legitimately be proposed.

Comradely,
s/Jack Barnes
National Office

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February 20, 1971

Dear Comrades,

You will note that a section has been added to the 2/2 executive committee minutes by Mariana because she felt the report she gave was not accurately noted in the minutes taken by myself. Neither the minutes nor Mariana's addition will really give you a picture of our e.c. discussion probably. Mariana was quite critical of the party, nationally and locally, and what she felt was our lack of a clear position on the Chicano movement. She has had some written exchange with comrades in the n.o. so you are probably aware of some of her feelings.

You will read in her comments that all other e.c. members disagreed and felt "it was not our role to begin to formulate a position or to ask for help to build San Antonio and southwest ..." What was pointed out was that a branch cannot adopt a national policy but that must be done through the appropriate bodies and with the party convention coming so soon, it was the business of the convention to define our position which has been in the process of being formulated over the past 2 years. We stressed that our responsibility as a branch was to be involved in the movement, to send reports to the n.o. and Militant, to get as much information as possible, to let the n.o. know what our attitudes and evaluations are so that these can be taken into account when a national position is adopted. We are definitely asking for help in building a branch in San Antonio and doing work in the southwest. I have already written that I wish to meet with appropriate comrades at the upcoming plenum to discuss our work in this area -- and building a branch in San Antonio is a major part of what I want to discuss because comrades in both Austin and Houston feel this is of major importance.

There are differences in attitudes in the e.c. on the question of Chicano work and evaluation of the Chicano movement. Frankly, right now from what has been said at meetings or written down, I am not exactly sure what those differences are. I hope the ideas become clearer as we discuss these matters further. Certainly the pre-convention discussion should help clarify things.

Comradely,
s/Evelyn Sell

The following are excerpts from the minutes of the Austin Branch Executive Committee.

January 19, 1971

4. Third World. Report by Mariana on MAYO chicana meeting. A tasks and perspectives report on the Chicano struggle will be presented by Mariana at next full e.c. meeting.

January 25, 1971

7. Third World. Cesar Chavez to speak for Economy Furniture strikers Feb. 6. Definite plans to be discussed at next e.c.

February 2, 1971

8. Third World. Report by Mariana on Chicano struggle with following recommendations: that n.o. assign people to build a branch in San Antonio, that we have local reports and educationals on Chicano movement, that regionally we place emphasis on this work and send material into Militant and ISR, that nationally we should request n.o. to send reports to areas on Chicano developments, that externally we work with Chicano groups such as MAYO, MECHA, WRO, Economy Furniture strikers and build their actions. Extensive discussion. Evelyn suggested we decide specific local activities at next e.c. meeting.

Chavez meeting plans outlined. Boutelle tour discussed.

February 8, 1971

1. Minutes read. Mariana felt section on Third World report was not accurately reflecting her remarks. She will write out comments and these will be inserted in minutes. Rest of minutes accepted.

10. Third World. Continuation of discussion from last meeting. Mariana reported on communications received on California events and Angela Davis defense. Proposals:

- 1) Set up educationals covering nationalism, history of Chicanos, history of Blacks, relations between two groups;
- 2) Assign someone from Third World Work Fraction to work with Regional Committee (Terry);
- 3) Mariana become involved in Houston Chicana Conference to be held in May;
- 4) Mariana join MAYO and become active in it;
- 5) Attempt to help with Angela Davis defense work locally;
- 6) Build support for La Raza Unida;
- 7) Regular reports to branch;
- 8) Participate in High School Conference of MAYO in Austin in March. Fraction assignments discussed. Major goals: a) recruitment; b) help build and support Chicano movement. Motion to accept proposals.

Carried. Goals and tasks to be reported in the Executive Committee Report at next branch meeting.

Section added to February 2 minutes by Mariana.

8. Third World. Section added by Mariana because she felt minutes did not accurately reflect her report.

"Report by Mariana H. in which she stressed that the SWP had no clear position on the Chicano question, that is, that it is conceivable that our publicity on Chicano work is with the Black people in mind (independent political action by Chicanos will encourage the 'very vanguard' to develop an all black party outside of Democratic Party). It is Mariana's contention that Chicano movement has far more revolutionary implications than that although the role it plays in showing Black people what an independent political party can do is very important.

"Because of the strategic role that Chicanos can play in coming revolution it is essential that we build a party branch in San Antonio and should advise the national office of our opinion.

"All executive committee members disagreed; they felt our position is quite clear and that it was not our role to begin to formulate a position or to ask for help to build San Antonio and southwest in general (because of Chicano movement.)"

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
February 25, 1971

AUSTIN
Evelyn Sell

Dear Evelyn,

We received your letter of February 20 along with the recent minutes of the Austin Executive Committee. Your letter was helpful for following the evolution of the discussion on Chicano work. As Jack pointed out in his recent letter we will set aside time during the plenum to discuss our perspectives in Texas.

Comradely,

s/ Joel Britton

January 1971

Comrades:

This letter is written in order to get a clarification on our position regarding the Chicano struggle. It is not intended to state or ask that the political committee state that the Chicano struggle is the vanguard -- for that formulation I believe to be incorrect not only with regard to this struggle but others. Rather the intent is to determine what role the Chicano struggle already has and will play in the revolution. This question is being asked in the movement (and of us) not only from a personal involvement point of view, but from a growing awareness of what is necessary to achieve liberation and also a suspicion that we (socialists) do not fully understand the nature or weight of the Chicano movement.

Will the Chicano people be in the vanguard or will this movement play an interesting, but insignificant role? We have stated our position on the Black struggle: "They are designated by their whole historical past to be, under adequate leadership, the very vanguard of the proletarian revolution." (my emphasis), *The SWP and Negro Work*, 1939. This was reiterated by Comrade George Breitman in discussing Black radicalism in a recent ISR: "...it is better able to fulfill the role of vanguard which was assigned to it in Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution applied to the United States." (my emphasis). What is our position on Chicanos? Our position seems to be that it's a nice thing, but not significant. In a report to the SWP Plenum Comrade Jack Barnes prefaced his statements on Chicanos and Puerto Ricans in this way: "...What Trotsky explained it often takes a victorious revolution to do, that is bring out with a rush the struggles of the most oppressed and the smallest minorities, has begun prior to a revolution in this country. This is one of the verifications of the depth of the current radicalization." In other words, the Chicano movement shows how deep the radicalization is -- comparable to homosexuals or natural food advocates -- but is not anywhere near the importance of the antiwar, women, or the Black movements. This sentiment is echoed by Les Evans. In the December 21 issue of Intercontinental Press Comrade Les Evans reviews a year of revolutionary ferment and covers the new rise in revolutionary nationalism, but does not see the Chicano struggle important enough to mention.

These statement or lack of statements follow if one views the Chicano nation as being insignificant in size (population) and strategic location (i.e., not in industrial areas). This tends to be the current thought among comrades that have been informally polled because the reasons for stating that Chicanos will not play a vital role in the American (U.S.) revolution, nor be in solidarity with the struggles of "La Raza" in South America, Mexico, Cuba, etc. are as follows:

1. Chicanos do not live in the major industrial areas of the country and therefore cannot have the same weight as say, Blacks.

2. Chicanos are a very small minority as compared to Blacks.
3. Chicanos are concentrated in one area of the country rather than spread out all over.
4. Chicanos have not been as oppressed as Blacks.
5. Chicanos are not as "advanced" or as militant as Blacks.
6. Chicanos do not live near New York.

The fourth statement is too ridiculous to even attempt to discuss as it would result in a degenerated conversation comparing oppressions: what is worse, being a slave and considered property or being considered an obstacle in the acquisition of land and therefore something to wipe out or subjugate? The other statements should be discussed because among them are many misconceptions.

Where do Chicanos live and how large is the Chicano community? Labor Department statistics report that "significant numbers" live in Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago (Froben Lozada reports that his forum in Chicago was attended by more Chicanos than in Austin or Houston). These cities are industrial cities as are Los Angeles, San Antonio, El Paso, Denver, and Houston. Migration to these cities continues. Chicanos are not a rural population or farm workers: only 250,000 Chicanos are in agricultural work. Possibly because of the impact of the Delano strike, in the minds of many Chicanos are out in the lettuce, tomato or grape fields. The majority are in cities. 20-25 million people is not an insignificant minority and it certainly is not insignificant when compared to the Black population. Chicanos are the fastest growing minority (birth rate and immigration from Mexico) and one with a very young citizenry (18 equals median age). Government statistics do not include large "colonias" where no one takes statistics, many migrant workers and "illegal" immigrants (last year along 250,000 "illegal" residents were caught and deported). In many areas Chicanos are classified "white" thus further obscuring our numbers.

The fact that Chicanos are concentrated heavily in one area of the country is not a liability, but an asset not only in the growth of nationalist consciousness, but also in development of an awareness of Mexico, South America, and Cuba as part of "La Raza" and thereby developing an international outlook. The importance of this identification is obvious when it is recognized that Latin America is one area in the world in which U.S. imperialism is glaring (everyone has heard and understands Yankee go Home) and in which all indications are that there is a swing to the left. Chicanos more and more see themselves as the "northern-most extension of Latin America." Although predominately in the Southwestern part of U.S., Chicanos are among the most mobile of the minority groups and is one explanation offered for the rapid communication of concepts and actions long before anything appears in the capitalist media.

Another argument often used is that Chicanos are not as "advanced" or

(as militant as Blacks. Chicanos, however, have built an antiwar movement, have formed an independent political party, and recently (see my last letter to SWP NO) Chicanas called a Chicana conference. Criteria of size, strategic location, and militancy can not be used against Chicanos in discussion of what role this movement will play. Yet, we have no clear position on the Chicano struggle. Our hesitancy was reflected in the fact that YSA did not write, print and distribute a Chicano document (Rumor has it that the one given was written on West Coast by an SWPer). It is almost inconceivable that YSA would have failed to write an antiwar document -- but that is because the party has lead the way and stated what the correct position is.

I judge from what I judge to be incorrect or insufficient acts on the Chicano question that the party does not have a clear and correctly formulated theory on the Chicano struggle. If the Chicano movement is of great importance not only in the American (US) revolution, but internationally when viewed as part of Latin America which did not maintain its separate country after invasion by foreign governments, then we should be seeing this reflected in assignments, transfers. Transfers into the major Chicano centers like Los Angeles and El Paso where there is a sizable Chicano community should have been a priority. Establishment of party branches in areas like San Antonio should be high on the list of places to do work in. If the Chicano movement is not important, then it is totally justified that a leading and extremely capable comrade (D. Styron) be sent out of Texas rather than transferred to San Antonio. It is also justified that four comrades were transferred out of Texas in January with no serious discussion of replacement. It is further justified that no one is being sent in to this area with the concept of building party branches in major Chicano areas and that we rely on super emissaries to spread the word. Trail blazing is fine, but building the party in an area where La Raza Unida will be strong and where there is already Communist Party strength (San Antonio) is important. We must be there as active participants or helpers if we are to really help the La Raza Unida and gain the respect of many young people and hopefully recruit to our party and YSA. We cannot continue to send in the "party representatives" to do interviews -- unless of course, the Chicano movement is a minor interest of ours.

At the SWP convention, it was too early, at Oberlin we heard that the party doesn't function that way (ultraleft) and now we approach another convention with vagueness so that leading comrades make statements like "our position on Chicanos flows from our position on the Black struggle" instead of saying it comes from a theoretical discussion of the national question. To many comrades, nationalism equals Black nationalism. For others, the movement just isn't close enough to New York.

(Viewing the Chicano struggle as an extremely important one, Lozada, Diaz and I suggested at Oberlin that:

1) A comrade be assigned by NO to be in charge of reading all newspapers, correspondence on the Chicano struggle, and that comrades working in this area of work be told who is heading up the work. This comrade would coordinate interventions, reports, etc. This comrade should not have 300 other assignments as has been the case in the past making him (her) unable to devote time to the task. An example of our slowness in coordination was our intervention into the Chicano moratorium. I am still answering criticisms from Chicano activists who accuse us of coming in at the very last minute to take over. That's how it looked. Also we would not receive answers from national committee members telling us that "no one in New York is qualified to do this" -- especially when everything (almost) is in English!

2) The NO request reports from the field. These reports should be distributed to other areas for information (example of importance: Froben in Chicago had to answer what Denver comrades were doing in Chicano movement and he ^{did} not know. We must keep on top of things) Reports should be regular and would be much like antiwar reports: what is happening, who are our opponents, etc.

3) A Chicano or Latino comrade be assigned to travel throughout the Southwest on a very regular basis. This would be coordinated by NO with regular reports to be disseminated. This would not supersede persons assigned to break into San Antonio, but it would help in the field and also keep NO informed so that trips from NY would not have to be made just to find out what is happening. The area is extremely large and in Texas almost no money is available to do work required.

A fourth suggestion, not suggested at Oberlin is that every effort be made to assign Latino and Chicano comrades to Southwest -- especially in major Chicano cities. LA for instance had no Chicano comrade during moratorium. Berkeley-Oakland area had 6.

There is no reason to implement or even discuss implementation of these suggestions, if the Chicano movement is not to play a very important role in the revolution. Until a more precise formulation is forthcoming, countless motivations about "opportunities" in the Chicano movement fall on deaf ears. For whether we like it or not, many of us still function on the concept of "authority," that is, if the national office says, if Lenin said, etc. then something is fact.

Please advise me of our position as it would tremendously aid in clearing up confusion that exists.

As a comrade,
s/Mariana Hernandez

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N. Y. 10014

February 18, 1971

AUSTIN

Mariana Hernandez

Dear Mariana,

Your letter dated January 1971 raises the question of what the SWP position is on the Chicano struggle. You ask, "Will the Chicano people be in the vanguard or will this movement play an interesting, but insignificant role?" You say "Our position seems to be that it's the Chicano struggle a nice thing, but not significant." You say that our position is that "...the Chicano movement shows how deep the radicalization is -- comparable to homosexuals or natural food advocates -- but is not anywhere near the importance of the antiwar, women or the Black movements." You go further, stating that "We have no clear position on the Chicano struggle," and "...the party does not have a clear and correctly formulated theory on the Chicano struggle."

Since you raise questions of a serious nature, I will go at some length into our general political line and policies in relation to the Chicano struggle.

Our general line was outlined in the political report adopted by the February, 1970 National Committee plenum. It has been applied in numerous articles in The Militant, and in the International Socialist Review. All of these clearly state our characterization of the Chicano people as an oppressed nationality, our support to the independent political initiatives taken by the Chicano movement such as the Raza Unida parties and the Chicano Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam and our Brown University strategy for the Chicano student movement.

I'm afraid you misinterpreted the point Comrade Jack Barnes was making in the Political Committee report to the plenum. In the paragraph before the quote you selected he stated that Chicanos are one of the "...large national minorities...the second largest oppressed nationality in this country."

Then he said, "What Trotsky explained it often takes a victorious revolution to do, that is, bring out with a rush the struggles of the most oppressed and smallest national minorities, has begun prior to a revolution in this country. This is one of the verifications of the depth of the current radicalization. The radicalization and the example and characteristics of the Afro-American struggle has brought forth a race, group, national consciousness in all the oppressed nationalities; a self-confidence, a militancy, a tendency to grope toward independent militant action; a growing consciousness of the right to self-determination and the need to fight to regain control over their own destinies." (Internal Information Bulletin, July 1970, No. 5 in 1970, page 8.)

Thus Jack was pointing to the vanguard role in the class struggle of the oppressed nationalities (including the Chicano people) moving, radicalizing, struggling before, ahead of, the full complement of forces that would be necessary to achieve "a victorious revolution." He was alluding to the fact that in many previous revolutions (Russian, for example) some oppressed nationalities did not move as vanguard forces before the victorious revolution but awakened only afterward. He was referring to Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. III, Chapter II, "The Problem of Nationalities."

When Trotsky made his statement (in 1933!) about the vanguard role of the "Negroes" with adequate leadership in the socialist revolution he was speaking from "general considerations" of the national question and "upon the arguments brought forward by the American comrades" and from a very limited knowledge of the numbers, location and class composition of the Black people or other oppressed nationalities in this country. It is clear that the democratic right of self-determination applies to other oppressed nationalities and that Trotsky's analysis from "general considerations" applies to them as well. (It is interesting to note in this connection that at several points in the 1933 discussion Trotsky referred to another oppressed nationality in this country, Chinese-Americans.)

Understanding this, and applying the general line of the 1969 party convention and 1970 plenum Derrick Morrison in his talk at Oberlin "The Combined Character of the Coming American Revolution" took the liberty of doing what I am sure Trotsky would do today: "...broaden that statement in the light of recent events. Where Trotsky said 'Negro,' we can insert 'Puerto Rican, Chicano and Black.'" Here is how the statement by Trotsky reads with that change:

"I believe that by the ~~unheard-of political and~~ theoretical backwardness and the unheard-of economic advance the awakening of the working class will proceed quite rapidly. The old ideological covering will burst, all questions will emerge at once, and since the country is so economically mature the adaptation of the political and theoretical to the economic level will be achieved very rapidly. It is then possible that the /Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and Blacks/ will become the most advanced section. We have already a similar example in Russia. The Russians were the European /Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and Blacks./ It is very possible that the /Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and Blacks/ also through the self-determination will proceed to the proletarian dictatorship in a couple of gigantic strides, ahead of the great bloc of white workers. They will then furnish the vanguard. I am absolutely sure that they will in any case fight better than the white workers. That, however, can happen only provided the Communist party carries on an uncompromising merciless struggle not against the supposed national prepossessions of the /Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and Blacks/ but against the colossal prejudices of the white workers and gives it no concession whatever." (ISR, November, 1970, p. 45)

Two analytical articles on the Chicano struggle by Antonio Camejo appeared in the September 18 and October 18 issues of The Militant. They bear rereading in the light of your questions. In the first article entitled "Chicano Struggle Moves to Political Center Stage" Camejo pointed out that: "The police attack on the August 29 Chicano Moratorium in Los Angeles has brought about a sharp confrontation between an enraged community and the ruling class of the Los Angeles area, involving the most massive mobilization in Aztlan in recent history... the Chicano community has moved to the forefront of political life, particularly in the Southwest, but also, to a degree, in the United States as a whole. This last year has seen the radicalization and initial mobilization and independent political organization of the Chicano masses.... August 29 was the largest organized mobilization of an oppressed national minority in the current radicalization." The article lists lessons of the Chicano struggle for other movements -- an example of its vanguard role. Under point five "Anticapitalist struggle: The Chicano people, in a short year or two, have leaped from relative quiescence to the very forefront of anticapitalist political action. Basing itself on the experience of the Black and antiwar struggles, the Chicano movement is now providing leadership and valuable examples to these other movements.

"In playing this role, the Chicano struggle is paralleling the role the Black struggle played throughout the radicalization of the 1960's. Both these nationalist movements, in their time and in their own way, have set a tone, pace and leadership for the class struggle as a whole."

And in the article entitled "Lessons of the LA Chicano Protest" Camejo stated that "The Los Angeles events involved a social confrontation of great importance. This upheaval mobilized tens of thousands and foreshadowed greater social conflicts to come."

Earlier in the year we sought to implement the line taken at the February 1970 plenum supporting the creation of an independent Chicano political party by preparing a position paper for distribution at the Denver Chicano youth conference in March called "1970 -- Year of the Chicano Party." Among other things we said, "A mass, independent Chicano political party could turn American politics upside down and inside out... The massive defection of Chicano voters would create an immediate crisis for all the elements in this Democratic party coalition, not only in Aztlan, but nationally. Without the Chicano vote, the Democrats would be unable to carry whole sections of Aztlan as well as some large cities outside of Aztlan. The Democratic Party's growing incapacity to win nationally would break up this coalition, encouraging Black people and the labor movement to consider independent political action." (ISR, June, 1970 p. 31)

At the same conference we drafted some suggested additions to El Plan de Espiritual de Aztlan some of which dealt with the needs of the Chicanos as workers, as part of the working class. One such addition started off this way, "The urban Chicano workers represents about 85 per cent of our population." We proposed an addition on "the Chicana" which opposed "machismo," pointed to the triple exploitation of Chicanas as part of La Raza, as workers, and as women, and supported "the struggle

of the Chicana for control of her life..." (ISR, June, 1970 pp. 33 and 34)

It is important to remember that we did not proceed on the assumption that "our position on Chicanos flows from our position on the Black struggle." For example we did not simply take our Transitional Program for Black Liberation and cross out "Black" and insert "Chicano." Instead, we started with El Plan, the beginnings of a transitional program for Chicano liberation, and suggested additions that would relate concretely and meaningfully to the oppression of the Chicano people. Many of the programmatic ideas we raised have been incorporated into the program of the Northern California Raza Unida party.

Our participation in the Chicano youth conference last March in Denver, and our involvement in connection with the August 29 Chicano Moratorium and the struggle leading up to the September 16 action in Los Angeles are good indications of our position on the Chicano struggle. These interventions were unprecedented in our history in terms of their size and efficacy. We played a role in objectively aiding the political development of the Chicano movement by supporting the anti-war and pro-independent political party forces in Denver and the pro-independent mass action forces in Los Angeles.

I am surprised that you say it looked like we were intervening "to take over" the Chicano Moratorium. How did it look like that? Our Chicano and Latino comrades assembled in LA from all over the country proposed a mass action perspective as the appropriate response to the brutal police attack on the Moratorium. It is important to remember that democratic mass meetings voted overwhelmingly to adopt the action perspective proposed by our comrades. We along with many militants opposed and stood up to the red-baiters and exclusionists who physically threatened our comrades at mass meetings and demonstrations. We have nothing to be ashamed of or defensive about in connection with that intervention.

We did not come in "at the very last minute to take over." And that is not "how it looked" to anyone in the Chicano movement with an open mind. Of course there were Stalinists, ultralefts, and other factional opponents with a factional axe to grind, who misoriented some activists by red-baiting and exclusionist attacks against us. We supported the Moratorium forces from the time of the Denver conference. We supported and helped build Moratoriums in the following months in Texas, San Diego, in San Francisco. The Aztlan tour of SWP candidates Camejo, Loazada and Hernandez helped build the August 29 Moratorium. In the period immediately preceding the action on the 29th we provided full-time staff help. Yes, it would have been even better if we could have gotten comrades on the Moratorium staff sooner. But our comrades can with pride defend our actions, our proposals, all essential aspects of our participation.

The unnamed comrades you apparently "informally polled," whether near or far from New York, must not have been reading The Militant and ISR very carefully in the last year or so. In 1970 The Militant published 48 issues. In at least 35 of them articles or interviews, symposia etc. appear directly on the Chicano movement, a total of over 100 articles were printed, some of them among the longest The Militant has carried. (This does not include articles such as Frank Lovell's

(on the labor party question where he discussed the significance of the Raza Unida party development. It does not include articles on the anti-war movement in general which reported on Chicano antiwar actions. It does not include items in 3rd World Liberation Notes, Women's Liberation Notes, In Brief items, letters to the editor.)

These 100-plus articles covered virtually every aspect of the Chicano movement with special emphasis on the Chicano student movement, the Chicano Moratorium, and La Raza Unida Party developments in Texas, Colorado and more recently in California, precisely because these represent advanced, vanguard developments which we support.

After stating a number of times that we have no position on the Chicano struggle or an incorrect one but not indicating what your political criticisms are if any of what we have been saying and doing in this arena you reduce the question to an organizational one. "If the Chicano movement is of great importance ... then we should be seeing this reflected in assignments, transfers. Transfers into the major Chicano centers like Los Angeles and El Paso..." You propose the establishment of party branches in areas like San Antonio and apparently El Paso and you object to certain transfers out of Texas. You seem to denigrate as "super emissaries" SWP comrades, who have become well known and influential in the Chicano movement because of their ability to project and popularize our political line.

(You point to some things we should be doing, some of which are out of the question at this stage of our development, including setting up two more branches of the party in two more cities in Texas neither of which has a strong YSA local.

We send out internal reports when we receive them if that is appropriate. For example we recently sent out a report by Antonio Camejo on Northern California Raza Unida party developments. Regular internal reports (which we need more of) will not however solve some of the problems you allude to, namely Froben having to "answer" for what our Denver comrades were doing in the Chicano movement. Even much more regular internal reports would not equip every comrade to answer for every action taken by every branch.

I agree that it is unfortunate and a real handicap to our work that we have no Chicano or Latino comrades in Los Angeles -- the most recent events around the January 31 Chicano Moratorium serve to emphasize the point. We and the YSA National Office have been working for some time on this problem and hope to have a solution soon. Five Chicano and Latino party and YSA comrades have been asked to go to LA in the last six months, but personal problems have so far blocked such a move.

(We have a limited number of Chicano and Latino comrades in the party which puts strict limits on our ability to reinforce areas and to fill important assignments (8 Chicano comrades, 3 Puerto Ricans comrades, and 5 other Latino comrades. Of these 16 party comrades 9 are active in the Chicano movement.)

The transfers out of Texas branches in the one month of January do not mean that we have abandoned the perspective of building the Trotskyist movement in Texas as you seem to imply.

Some of the questions you raised were discussed in Mirta Vidal's report to the YSA convention which was printed in the February ISR. I don't know of the "rumor" you mention about this report being written "on West Coast by an SWPer." A number of comrades active in the Chicano movement were asked to contribute ideas and some did, including comrades on the West Coast. But the report was written by Comrade Vidal. She is an SWPer who is also in the YSA, as are all other comrades who gave reports to the convention.

Pathfinder plans to bring out two more pamphlets on the Chicano struggle, one based on Mirta's report to the YSA convention and the other containing documents of the struggle including El Plan, the material we submitted to the Denver conference, and Northern California Raza Unida party material.

I hope this letter has been helpful in answering your questions and would appreciate hearing from you again soon. I will be giving a report on the Chicano struggle to the forthcoming plenum and would welcome any ideas you might have.

Comradely,
s/Joel Britton
National Office

cc: Evelyn Sell

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
February 28, 1971

TO ALL FINANCIAL DIRECTORS AND BRANCH ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

February 1971 Financial Notes

A number of things have come to our attention about branch books and budgets as a result of recent discussions with the leadership in party branches.

One problem we are having is getting a more accurate picture of the details of branch financial functioning. A situation that has been common to the Atlanta and Philadelphia branches, for example, is that each branch has been budgeting quite a high amount for mimeo supplies, postage and telephone. In each case, the amount has been more than what the branch would justifiably use for city letters and other branch use.

Instead of distilling out of the total expenses for postage, telephone and mimeo supplies the portion that was being used by the election campaign, the youth, the forum, the branch per se, etc., all these supplies were included as part of the general expenses of running the branch. In addition to giving a distorted picture of the actual cost of running the branch, this makes it impossible to figure out accurately how much the forum costs, the election campaign and so on.

There are two steps that can be taken to get a clearer picture of what is happening in each of the branch departments and campaigns. One is to institute a system of cost accounting. The \$10 worth of stamps the branch buys each week are used, for example, \$5 worth by the forum committee, \$2 by the branch for the city letter and other correspondence, and \$3 by the YSA. The branch budget and books should not reflect these expenses all lumped together under postage, but \$5 per week should be included as a calculated forum expense and so on.

Stamps used by the YSA for which reimbursement is expected shouldn't be included in the branch budget at all; the YSA should be billed and then the money receipted as a refund on postage so that end of the month books will show the distilled expenses and income of each branch department after refunds are subtracted out.

Precision in bookkeeping is only a minor reason for using this procedure. Like all other figures that appear in branch books, accurate figures for each branch department are an important indicator of the degree of health of each area of our work.

The other step that should be taken in all branches to tune up the financial functioning of branch departments is to make sure that the comrade in charge of an area of work, forums for example, also be fully aware of how that department is functioning financially. The forum director should keep a week to week record of all expenditures and income on forums and be thinking about how to increase the net gain to the branch from forums. Likewise for sales, etc. The forms on sales being sent out by the Militant business office now should help the sales directors get a better idea of the financial side of their assignment.

* * *

An adequate system for budgeting branch expenses and income has to take into account both short-term and long-term prospects and problems. For example, it is important to know that a big expense for plenum travel is coming in March but it should also have been budgeted into a longer range projection so it doesn't cause any dislocation of branch functioning in the month when it has to be paid out. One way some branches have found it easy to combine these two features of budgeting has been to do a three-, four-, or six-month projection that would list what was actually expected in each income and expense category for each of the months concerned as well as showing the monthly average for each category over the entire period. That way, we can see at a glance whether the branch will be facing any times when expenses will exceed income and try to accumulate reserves to cover those periods. Likewise, we'll be able to see whether the branch is accumulating any long-term excess of income or whether a temporary excess should be viewed as a reserve for an expense coming in a later month. For example, if the branch gets an annual gas bill, money should be set aside all through the year to cover that bill when it comes.

* * *

A number of branches have reported problems with getting internal party bulletins to break even financially. What has worked in some areas is having individual comrades have a prepaid standing order for all bulletins. These comrades pay a few dollars at a time in a lump sum and receive all bulletins until the money they paid is used up. Then they are contacted by the financial director or comrade in charge of internal bulletins to replenish the fund. This will give the branch a more accurate idea of how many copies of each bulletin to order so internal bulletins won't be a financial drain on the branch.

* * *

We still have not received annual summaries of branch, bookstore and campaign finances from many branches. In order for the party leadership to have a full picture of the financial functioning of the branches, we need this material along with the mimeographed questionnaire sent to financial directors in time to get the material out for the National Committee Plenum, March 13-16.

Comradely,
Judy White
Judy White
National Financial Director

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES, Number 21, February 26, 1971

Present: Barnes, Boehm, Breitman, Britton, Dobbs, A. Hansen, J. Hansen, Horowitz, Lovell, Novack, Ring, Sheppard, Stone, Waters

Visitors: Bolduc, Kerry, Seigle

Chairman: Sheppard

AGENDA: 1. World Movement
2. Administrative Committee Report
3. Draft Resolution on Israel and the Arab Revolution
4. Antiwar Report

1. WORLD MOVEMENT

J. Hansen reported.

Discussion.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Britton reported.

1. The recommendation of the Political Committee for convention dates has been approved by the poll of national committee members.

Full Members Decisive vote	Alternate Members Consultative vote	Advisory Members Consultative vote
24 ballots returned	14 ballots returned	5 ballots returned
24 for	13 for	4 for
0 against	0 against	0 against
0 no vote	1 no vote	1 no vote

2. Worcester, Mass. YSA local given permission by Administrative Committee to conduct a 1971 municipal campaign as a Socialist Workers campaign.

3. Correspondence

3. DRAFT RESOLUTION ON ISRAEL AND THE ARAB REVOLUTION

Horowitz reported.

Discussion.

Motion: To adopt the general line of the draft resolution.
(see attached)

Carried.

4. ANTIWAR REPORT

Seigle reported.

Discussion.

Meeting Adjourned.