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Amendment to Winkler Women's Perspective Margaret G.
(Includes motivation)

Statement of the Revolutionary Tendency

Party and Program The Leninist Tendency

Draft Program The Leninist Tendency

Note; The NC documents, minutes etc. run to around 250 pages. The labor documents and women's documents will be printed in special bulletins which we hope to have out the week after the present bulletin is mailed out. The documents by Casey and Powers on Transitional Program will have first priority in the next bulletin.

CORRECTIONS AND AMENDMENTS ACCEPTED AND/OR PASSED FOR ILENE W. DOCUMENT:

Corrections:

- p. 4, para. 3 is garbled--the point is that the move into the DP by NOW is a further refinement of their strategy, not a decisive break
- p. 10: for retyping, please move section on I.S. work (p. 16-19) to go in after SWP section
- p. 11, last para: should have read that women played important support roles in 1930s.
- p. 12 IMPORTANT: the word "some" was left out of para. 2, the sentence in ()'s. It should read "some white working-class women"
- p. 19: next to last para: change "nuclear family" to "bourgeois family"
- p. 30: para about local coordinators is left out

Amendments accepted:

1. Page 20, after "Where to Industrialize" insert:
Industrialization

Our primary route to women militants at this point lies in industrialization. Yet, not all women militants are located in our major industrialization priorities, nor are they all located on the shop or office floor. Organization in these major unions however--UAW, CWA, AFT, AFSCME--will do most to draw out other women militants, by providing both a political and organizational pole, so it is here that we must concentrate our resources. It is clear that our interest in building groups in these major areas is not only to advance the needs of those particular women, but also for the role they can play in the consciousness and activity of other women militants and the rank and file movement as a whole.

2. Page 21, line 4: "We believe socialist women...other women." Change to:

We believe socialist women have a particular role to play in providing leadership to other women workers, so while we do not oppose women industrializing into situations where they will be isolated from other women, our overall thrust must be to industrialize women into job situations where they can be in contact with other women, preferably on the job, but at least within the union local. This is key to carrying out our perspective on convincing women militants to take the lead in a fight to make the unions take up the fight for the rights and needs of women and on politicizing the entire working class on the question.

3. Page 21, second full paragraph, line 10, after "...to reach the militant women in industries," insert "and unions".

4. Page 23 after program insert:

The Unions and Industrial Organization

As the only institution of the working class it is the unions that we call on to take up the struggle for women's liberation. We believe that the formation of women's caucuses in the unions drawing support from rank and file groups will be necessary to effect this demand.

The approach of the union bureaucracy toward the democratic struggle of women for equality cannot be understood apart from their general strategy of business unionism. While this has been challenged by the "progressive trade" union bureaucrats, it remains the dominant strategy. Such a strategy seeks to make gains for a limited section of the workforce through parleying with the capitalist class.

Wages are supposedly maintained through limiting the supply of labor and through increasing productivity at the expense of working conditions. Such a strategy endangers even the better off sections of the workforce and surely cannot win gains for women. To the extent that this section of the bureaucracy has taken any interest in the question of the oppression of women, it has limited itself to contract bargaining demands and the endorsement of legislation. While the progressive bureaucrats have taken a more serious attitude toward the concerns of organized women, often their base, their program is a limited one. While they may call for organizing the unorganized more often than the conservatives, their basic strategy is to rely upon lobbying in the legislature for progressive legislation and supporting Democrats to protect the interests of unorganized women. They take little more interest in the unemployed and housewives than do the conservatives. The situation of unionized women workers is conditioned by the fact that the vast majority of women workers are unorganized and the majority of women housewives, underemployed, or unemployed. This is a fact which many women unionists are well aware of and the volatility of this issue should not be underestimated.

Because the progressive trade union bureaucrats are the only organized political tendency fighting for the rights and needs of women or calling for the independent organization of women is tied to a critique of their strategy.

5. Page 24, before Male Workers and Socialist Men, insert:

Shop and Local Union Organization

While women militants will look to the unions at this point as a means to spread the struggle through its visibility and direct contact with other militants, their relationship to rank and file organizations will be somewhat different. In some cases individual militants and groups will develop in the context of general rank and file organization (especially where the workforce is integrated). Here we will encourage women militants in the context of our general program for rank and file organization (outlined in MacKenzie) to take the lead in pressing for the organization to take up the needs of women in the industry and union. Whether or not and at what point this means organizing a women's caucus in the organization cannot be predetermined. Socialists must be cognizant of the social relations of men and women that tend to force women out of activity and call on rank and file organizations to take measures to overcome them.

Where individual militants and groups develop separate from general rank and file organizations, while building these groups among women workers we attempt to educate them to the activity of the general rank and file movement and encourage them to solicit the support of other groups for their program. As has been said, our conception of class unity is not a narrow organizational one but is based on common struggle and program.

Central to any fight in the unions or attempt to affect the rank and file movement will be the organization of women on the shop floor and in the union local. Such organization will initially cohere in different ways in different situations. It would be a mistake to press for the organization of a group solely around women's rights when that does not appear to concern the women, or to drop the question because it does not appear of concern and organize a group solely around general shop and union questions. Our program for the organization of any group of workers is based on an analysis of the objective situation facing them in their industry and the role of their unions. We attempt to elaborate a strategy for overcoming this situation

and with women militants we point out the role that they have to play in the unions and in the rank and file movement. How and when we do this is a tactical question based on an assessment of the consciousness of the workers and whether or not we will be understood by anyone. There is no point in an organization's adoption of a program which no one save for the IS'ers can defend. Nor is there any point to IS'ers building and participating in workers' organizations if they do not attempt to cohere and educate a layer of far-sighted leadership. In many instances we can put forward steps which some workers will agree are necessary, but for reasons less broad than those we put forward. The struggle is still advanced, while more advanced militants are educated to the broader tasks of the movement. Forces are developed that can intervene when questions become more critical and most workers begin to understand the needs for "30 for 40", a program addressed to blacks, a labor party, or whatever.

Even more than working class militants in general we will find that women militants are short on the skills necessary to call and hold democratic meetings, form organizations, intervene in unions, write leaflets, etc. Such training will be an important function of IS'ers.

6. Page 21, at the end of Where to Industrialize, insert:

Given the heterogeneity and scattered nature of women militants the importance of establishing a social presence for the IS in order to reach them cannot be underestimated. Our press is the most important tool for this, but its use has tended to be limited by its narrow focus on the activities of rank and file caucuses on the one hand and international questions on the other. If it is to be a useful tool in bringing us into contact with women militants and educating them to the central issues it will have to take up broader social questions and attempt to draw more general lessons from its discussions of rank and file activities, discuss racism, the housing crisis, the activities of NOW and women trade unionists, etc.

7. The motivation (first four paragraphs) and Parts I and II of the Proposal for the IS Women's Commission in Celia Emerson's document was also passed, with the exception that the following was substituted for Part II, Section D:

The NAC is instructed to carry out the proposal in the Workers Power document to add a staff writer (part of full-time as available) to undertake a column on basic questions of women's liberation. The Women's Commission will also contribute frequent articles about women workers, the women's movement, Black and Third World women, struggles involving welfare and tenants' movement, etc. The Editorial Board has political responsibility for ensuring the publication of Women's Liberation material in Workers Power and putting forward the central political line of the I.S. on women's liberation questions. (The same understanding applies to Theoretical Journal articles and pamphlets.)

AMENDMENT TO WOMEN'S LIBERATION PERSPECTIVES

Margaret B.

Capitalist Development, Democracy, and the Oppression of Women.

The advent of class society guaranteed the decisive subjugation of women. What had once been public work, the maintenance of the home and the care of children, became a private service. Once an equal participant in society, the process of the reproduction of life, the woman became a subordinate adjunct, a prisoner in one way or another to marriage and family.

Yet it was not until the advent of capitalism, a particular form of class society, that women en masse rebelled against this position. This is because it was precisely capitalism that had to make the most decisive breach in the traditional position of women and the traditional tasks and relations of marriage and family, even through they suited capitalism.

By transforming all things into commodities, it dissolved all ancient traditional relations, and for inherited customs and historical rights it substituted purchase and sale, 'free' contract. . . But the closing of contracts presupposes people who can freely dispose of their persons, actions, and possessions, and who meet each other on equal terms. To create such 'free' and 'equal' people was precisely one of the chief tasks of capitalist production. (Engels, Origins of the Family. . ." Marx and Engels Selected Works. International Publishers: New York, p. 514.)

So the conflict between the movement of capitalist production, the promises of bourgeois democracy, and the reality of the oppressed position of women gave rise under capitalism to movements demanding amelioration. The ideologues of the bourgeois revolution promised "equality" and "freedom" (Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite). Regardless of accidents of birth, all are to have the same opportunity in life. All human relations are to be based on "absolute freedom." One of the implications of this is that there shall be no discrimination or oppression based on class, race, sex, age, religion, etc. The French Revolution itself raised a myriad of democratic demands pertaining to women.

The promises of the bourgeois democratic revolution are circumscribed and limited from the beginning by the demands of capitalist production itself. This is particularly true with respect to women. Nevertheless, among movements for women the call for formal equality --for democratic rights - has often been the central programmatic thrust. Yet the question of the oppression of women is not simply a question of democratic rights. The denial to women under capitalism of democratic rights (formal equality) is only a reflection of her oppressed or subordinate social position which results from the demands of capital: While bourgeois democracy promises "equality" and "freedom," promises to sweep away all but the naked exploitation of wage labor by capital

(and capitalist production itself lays the basis for this), the process is an uneven and contradictory one. In a paraphrase of Engels, Draper summarizes this relationship of the bourgeois democratic revolution and capitalist production to the oppression of women.

It (capitalism) arises contradictorily. On the one hand the dominance of bourgeois private property reinforces the prevalence of the marriage of convenience, and of 'marriage . . . determined by the class position of the participants.' (Engels) On the other hand, bourgeois ideology, especially in the Protestant countries, emphasizes freedom of contract and equality of status for the freely contracting parties. As happened with 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' not to speak of 'democracy,' the ideological extrapolation is in conflict with the economic reality - of bourgeois society. The ideology reinforces at least lip-service to individual sex love, freely and equally accorded, as the foundation of monogamy. But the bourgeois economic reality in which the man is still the economic master, maintains the marriage of convenience, the limitation of possible partners by class strata, the restriction of women's economic independence and therefore their dependence as human beings, etc. ("Marx and Engels on Women's Liberation," Hal Draper, International Socialist (Berkeley) July-August 1970.)

Never able to expand the productive forces sufficiently so as to be able to draw all sectors into its realm, equally and stably, the bourgeoisie retains and reinterprets pre-capitalist institutions such as traditional marriage and family and pre-capitalist ideologies such as sexism, to perpetuate and justify its rule. At points in its history the bourgeoisie has challenged traditional conceptions of the role of women, of marriage and family, and sexism. Capitalist production itself has by drawing women into commodity production and at points providing partial alternatives to the family for the maintenance of the home and the care of children. Nevertheless, it has never been able to do this in a thoroughgoing fashion. Even in advanced capitalist countries the majority of women remain excluded from full and equal participation in production and saddled with the daily drudgery of housework and childcare, dependent upon men, and personally degraded in one fashion or another. Thus the uneven and contradictory development of capitalism has left an entire sex oppressed. The character and degree of this oppression varies from country to country and in different historical periods.

The denial to women of democratic rights (the case in even the most advanced capitalist countries) is only a reflection of this, i.e., of her oppressed social position, demanded by the peculiarities of the development of capitalism, of the domination of wage labor by capital. Thus real equality and freedom for women, presupposes the overthrow of capital by wage labor. It remains the tasks of the

working class in its revolution to fulfill the promises of bourgeois democracy.

The Radical Middle-Class Women's Movement, Its Analysis, and Program

It has been the notion that formal equality - democracy - was not enough that has distinguished the radical middle-class women's movement from the reformist one. Yet, fundamentally, this movement has never gone beyond the limits of the reformists. It has confined itself to raising democratic and partial demands on the one hand, and utopian ideas such as "abolition of the family" and "socialization of housework and childcare." It is analogous to the classical minimal/maximalist approach of the social-democracy, which of course on a day-to-day basis resolves itself in the direction of minimalism/reformism as the maximalist/utopian ideas gain little hearing.

Today and in the past, in an effort to go beyond the reformists, the radical middle-class women's movements have focused on the question of the family, its relationship to capitalism, and its oppressiveness to women. Yet these analyses have in one way or another reified the institution, obscuring its historically determined nature, its class nature under capitalism, and hence obscuring the class nature of the oppression of women.

It has already been noted that the family structure and the position of women in it changes in accord with the demands of capital, in different countries and in different historical periods. The RMCWM for the most part has been unable to come to grips with this because it has seen the bourgeoisie as simply ideologically committed to sexism and consequently to the family. Thus the mode of production, "the uneven and combined development" of capitalism as the historical determinant in the oppression of women is obscured.

Secondly, families stand in different relationship to the means of production. There is the bourgeois, middle-class, and working-class family. The worker is paid more or less his exchange value, i.e. what is necessary to maintain and reproduce himself which is a remuneration to the family as a unit. Working class women and children subsist on the wages paid to the class. Bourgeois women and children subsist on the surplus value of the class. Perhaps the most sophisticated version of the RMCWM obscurantist analysis of the family and women is that put forward by Margaret Benston and later women members of NAM. They see women as those who are responsible for the production of use values as against men who are responsible for the production of exchange values. However, it is the working class which produces value and the bourgeoisie which expropriates it. (For a full discussion see Women and Capitalist Society, Laurie Landy.) The production of use values is marginal. So through this the class nature of the oppression of women is obscured.

Consonant with this type of analysis is the movement's demand for the "abolition of the family." The precise meaning of this has not always been clear. Some have seen the abolition of the family as a unit of inheritance as the sine qua non of women's liberation. Yet, as was noted, the ideologues of bourgeois democracy in their fight against the aristocracy opposed on paper the inheritance of rights and property through the family. Others have seen the nuclear family as a living arrangement as intrinsically oppressive to women. Hence they have demanded its abolition as a living arrangement. Such a demand is neither democratically nor revolutionary. If it can be likened to anything, it can be likened to Stalinist forced collectivization. Engels called for the quality possessed by the individual family as being the economic unit of society to be abolished, not for the abolition of the individual family as such.

Utopian Democracy and Class Program

The best of the RMCWM has seen that the full and equal participation of women in production, the prerequisite for her real equality on all levels, demands social responsibility for housework and childcare, which in turn means that this responsibility not possessed to a greater or lesser extent by the family will be abolished. Yet, the call for social responsibility for or socialization of housework and childcare, when raised in isolation from a call for worker's revolution and an end to class society, is a utopian idea. Like the withering away of the state, the family, and socialization of distribution, it will occur under socialism but it is not part of a program toward that revolution.

Marx points out in the Critique of the Gotha Program that the class nature of distribution follows the class nature of production. The call for socialization of distribution presupposes the socialization of production. Housework and childcare is not part of production but part of distribution in the broad sense. Thus to call for socialization of housework and childcare by itself is utopian.

Although it has been rarely concretized by the RMCWM, as an idea socialization of housework and childcare can head up a series of demands such as childcare centers, dining halls, laundries, etc. Yet these demands in and of themselves are partial and well within the confines of the ideology of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Like demands for public education they express the notion that all should be equal regardless of birth. If pressed in this epoch they are a challenge to bourgeois society. Nevertheless raised in isolation in the manner of the program of the RMCWM they are utopian and misleading.

As demands of the working class, they can be demands for a greater share of value produced, but they do not in and of themselves challenge the control over surplus value. As the working class struggles for these demands, revolutionaries intervene to argue that their realization requires a struggle for nationalization of industry and the ranks under workers' control, a workers' government, expropriation of the expropriators.

Such democratic and partial demands are part of our progra. Placing special emphasis on them in presenting our program to women is particularly important in drawing the masses of women to the revolutionary banner. This must include pointing out their relationship to class demands. Lenin points out the difference between this approach and that of petty-bourgeois democrats in an argument against the Kautskyists.

Not only the demand for self-determination of nations but all the items of our democratic minimum programme were advanced before us, as far back as the seventeenth eighteenth centuries, by the petty bourgeoisie. And the petty bourgeoisie, believing in 'peaceful' capitalism, continues to advance all these demands in a utopian way, without seeing the class struggle and the fact that it has become intensified under democracy.

. . . In contrast to the petty-bourgeois democrats, Marx regarded all democratic demands without exception not as an absolute, but as an historical expression of the struggle of the masses of people, led by the bourgeoisie, against feudalism. There is not a single democratic demand which could not serve, and has not served under certain conditions, as an instrument of the bourgeoisie for deceiving the workers. . . In practice, the proletariat will be able to retain its independence only if it subordinates its struggle for all the democratic demands (not rights). . . to its revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. (Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions)

The analytical and programmatic approach of the radical middle-class women's movement is far closer to that of the petty-bourgeois democrats that Lenin describes than it is to the approach of revolutionaries. Despite the fact the ideas of the movement that go beyond the reformists require revolution for their fruition, the movement has tended and tends in a rightward direction.

The Rightward Dynamic of the Middle-Class Women's Movement

The ideas of the movement that go beyond the reformists, "abolition of the family" and "socialization of housework and child-care" by themselves are utopian and demand a working-class program for their resolution. Yet, the recent RMCWM defined itself as a women's movement in the narrow sense. Revolutionaries see that because women are at the bottom of society that each oppressive aspect of capitalism affects them more cruelly than other sectors of society.

So for revolutionaries the woman question is every question facing the oppressed and exploited yet magnified meaning of Trotsky's remark that "In order to change the conditions of life we must learn to see them through the eyes of women."

Against this, the RMCWM sees the concerns of women as those that supposedly pertain only to women. It would take up only the "special" demands of women, cutting its own throat so-to-speak with the respect with respect to the fulfillment of those of its ideas that go beyond those of the reformists and are shared by the revolutionaries. As some may take issue with this statement, let us return for a moment to the genesis of the now defunct women's liberation movement. It emerged in 1967, containing under one roof New Leftists (including from the first days pro-working-class radicals), radical feminists, and separatists. A reading of various manifestos will show that it was anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and anti-racist. In terms of positive action, it was agreed only that women should have their own organizations, own movement and that these organizations would organize women around their own concerns. Their anti-capitalism found little practical expression in their day-to-day organizing (of which there was not much). It looked much like that of the reformists. While this disturbed some, it was nevertheless the dominant mode and conditioned the approach of the entire movement from its right, the separatists, to its left, the pro-working-class radicals.

This is an inherently unstable and self-contradictory phenomenon. Women do not exist in a vacuum and a program and movement for their liberation, radicalism notwithstanding, which seeks to limit itself to demands of special relevance to them, i.e., democratic and partial demands and maximal/utopian ideas, will shift to the right in the absence of working-class leadership. (That is, a mass working-class movement posing the question of state power, making the question of its class as that which can resolve the oppression of women concrete and demonstrable.) The struggle of women as such is not a "transitional" one. This is the meaning of the statement that the struggle for women's liberation per se is a transitory phenomenon. Any movement which defines its sole goal as the liberation of women resolves itself either in a reformist (bourgeois democratic) or a revolutionary proletarian direction, thus ceasing to be a struggle for women's liberation per se. As was noted, the "struggle" for its maximal/utopian ideas such as "abolition of the family," finds its fullest fruition in the struggle of the working class for socialism thus negating itself as a struggle for women's liberation per se, by transcending itself. Barring this it finds its own negation as a movement which tacitly accepts the limits of bourgeois democracy, thus ceasing to be a struggle for women's liberation at all. It is a question of bourgeois democracy versus socialism (not feminism versus radicalism or the like) because these are the only programs for women's liberation, because there are no other "classes-for-themselves," consistent class interests under capitalist society than those of the bourgeoisie and those of the

proletariat.

Consciousness, Program and Class

The attempt of the women's liberation movement to construct a movement independent of both classes around only the special demands of women is a peculiarly middle-class radical phenomenon. To understand it as such demands an understanding of middle-class radicalism in general.

Politics and "programs" are expressions of classes. Radicalism is the political expression of the middle-class as it finds itself increasingly disturbed by the symptoms of capitalist decay. It can take a right or left direction. Not tied to property in the same manner as the bourgeoisie, it can afford to be "anti-capitalist," "anti-bourgeois" rule. Yet as the political expression of a class with no consistent interests as a class and no power as a class, radicalism is a transitory, NOT transitional, phenomenon. Generally, the middle-class cannot launch a stable politically independent effort.

Radicalism can have no fundamental program of its own. In modern capitalist society, there are only two programs for society² - that of bourgeois democracy and that of revolutionary socialism as there are only two classes that can act as classes-for-themselves. Characteristically, as an expression of the plight of the middle-class, radicalism combines the program of the left bourgeoisie (reformism) with the anti-capitalist sentiment of the working class, but not with the revolutionary program of the class. This is inherently unstable and in the absence of demonstrable revolutionary working class leadership resolves itself in a rightward direction.

This is what happened to the radical movements of the 60's which grew in response to the failure of liberalism, but could provide no alternative to it. While sections of these movements were subjectively revolutionary, their program was not; again for the most part limited to democratic and partial demands. While they played an important role in challenging the legitimacy of the system and in so doing contributed to the consciousness of the class, they left in their wake only ardent reformers, firmly committed to the Democratic Party and a much smaller revolutionary socialists.

This should come as no surprise to us. "Being determines consciousness." The "being" or existence of the middle-class does not push its consciousness in the direction of revolutionary socialism. Their struggles are not transitional. Revolutionary socialist consciousness on the part of middle-class elements requires a qualitative break in consciousness, quite different from that required of the class. The existence of the middle-class, radicalism notwithstanding, leads it to vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the working class, depending on who appears to be able to deliver the goods. Only when the working class is at front and center stage as contender for power, do significant sections of radical middle-class movements follow its lead. In the absence of such leadership by the class, individuals and

²Here and elsewhere in the document I do not take up the "program" of Stalinism when it might be appropriate to do so. Its appeal to the middle-classes is obvious and to sections of the w.l. movement as well, but it is beyond the scope of this discussion.

groups may go over to revolutionary socialism, but the majority move to the right.

It is only the working class whose existence pushes its consciousness in the direction of revolutionary socialism and whose location enables it to effect socialist revolution. It is the struggle of the class that is a transitional struggle. It is for this reason that Marx located the working class as the agent of socialist revolution. Revolutionaries intervene to lead the working class to comprehend this historic task. Without this it cannot happen. To take anything to the class but revolutionary socialism represents to one extent or another the imposition of an alien class ideology on its consciousness. While other politics may develop the consciousness of the class with respect to particular aspects of the oppressiveness of capitalism, they do little to aid the working class in developing class consciousness, which it lacks, or in comprehending its historic tasks and fulfilling them. At worst they present obstacles to and injure the ability of the working class to do so.

With the above, the political, programmatic, and class nature of the attempt of the women's liberation movement to construct a movement independent of both classes around only the special demands of women becomes clearer:

The Women's Liberation Movement as a Radical Middle-Class Phenomenon.

Again, "Being determines consciousness." The existence of middle-class women is a contradictory one, yet an interrelated configuration of their class position and womanhood. Caught between the two powerful classes, with little commonality of interest in their class, nor power in their class, their identity as women becomes temporarily raised above all classes. The "program" that flowed from that - reformism on the one hand and "abolition of the family utopianism" on the other, was a reflection of this consciousness which was in turn a reflection of their alienated existence. The existence of middle-class women in general does not push their consciousness in a revolutionary socialist direction. Their struggle is not transitional. Middle-class radicalism, sentiment for liberation, and comprehension of capitalism as responsible for the oppression of women may make one middle-class woman more open to revolutionary socialism than another. It still requires a break in consciousness qualitatively different from that required of the working class. Barring this break, this temporary elevation of identity as women above all classes will collapse and they will move toward the bourgeoisie.

The existence of working class women is less contradictory - particularly in the context of class struggle - a reinforcing configuration of their class position and their womanhood. Their consciousness is an expression of this. Thus it is difficult to imagine masses of working class women coming up with the same combination of answers to their situation as the radical women's movement in history has done so.

Their very existence makes them open - particularly in the context of class struggle - to the appeals of revolutionary socialists in a way that radical middle-class women are not.

Pro-Working Class Radicalism of the Women's Movement.

Thus the limitations of the pro-working class radicalism, the best that the women's liberation movement produced, should become clear. What distinguishes it from middle-class radicalism in general is that it (1) has a deeper comprehension of the fact that there are classes; (2) that the working class is oppressed; (3) that the working class has power.

Yet, it takes more or less the same program to the working class as radicals do anywhere; the minimal demands of the reformists on the one hand and minimal utopian ideas on the other. It does not comprehend the class as a class, its program and its historic tasks. The analysis and program of Bread and Roses (printed in Leviathan in 1969), perhaps the largest and best of the pro-working class qua socialist women's organization's, is a good example. Its working class orientation was sentiment rather than politics. This can certainly provide no leadership to the class - that is, develop its consciousness as a class, understanding of its tasks, strategy, tactics, etc. - for it brings to the class more or less the program of an alien class. Pro-working class radicalism, like middle-class radicalism in general, must go over to thoroughgoing revolutionary socialism (and here the chances are more likely) or it must return to reformism.

History, Prediction, and Leadership

The dynamic of middle-class radicalism in general, pro-working class or otherwise, and the dynamic of the independent women's liberation movement could have been predicted from a general Marxist understanding of classes and the relationship of class forces. While it is only with hindsight that dates, time spans, and water-sheds in movements become clear, Marxists must understand the general trend before it occurs, so as to be able to lead.

There was little reason to believe, particularly in the context of the waning of radicalism in general, that in the absence of a working-class upsurge that the dynamic of the women's liberation movement would have been any other than a rightward one. And this is exactly what occurred - from the initial battles of the New Leftists and radical feminists in 1967-68-69, through the dominance of the radical feminists in 69-70, to the temporary hegemony of the SWP (less sectarian, more experienced than radical feminism) in 71, to the total hegemony of the reformists in 72. Pro-working-class radical groups were spawned from the beginning. Yet given the general direction of the movement, there was little reason to believe that these groups could sustain themselves, much less themselves spawn a significant pro-working-class wing in the movement and influence the movement. Nor should there have been the notion that such groups could lead working-class women.

Abstractable from general Marxist notions, these understandings are also historically demonstrable. It has only been in periods of a mass working class upheaval that a women's movement has emerged that has been able to sustain itself and grow around a program independent of the capitalist class. While radical middle-class movements have emerged, they were over time politically transformed.

William L. O'Neill in Everyone Was Brave describes the process of conservativization that the "feminist" movement (which emerged around 1848) during the Civil War and the period of reaction following it. Most are probably familiar with Susan B. Anthony's speech following the National Labor Unions rejection of her appeal for support. "Laboring Men were the worst enemies of women." The movement reemerged in the 1890's as thoroughly respectable, with much the same personnel, rid of its earlier attacks on the oppressiveness of the system and the family. While the 1890's saw the greatest industrial depression to that date, the populist risings, and the Homestead and Pullman strikes, the National Woman Suffrage Association pursued its narrow program of state-by-state ratification of the right to vote. Many of its appeals for support were openly racist and it advocated scabbing to gain positions. While this is not surprising, what is significant is the direction: from an anti-capitalist, anti-family feminist movement to a narrow right-reformist one, with some of the same personnel.

Even in periods of general social upheaval when radical middle-class organizations were strongly flavored with pro-working-class democracy, such as in the Pre-WWI period, international capitalist crisis has left revolutionary socialists as the only defenders of the rights and needs of the masses of women. These movements have become not just deficient ones, but more movements betraying the class.

With the rise of Progressivism in the early 1900's "social feminism" (that section of the movement which concerned itself with somewhat broader questions than the "feminists") gained adherents. There were a number of organizations formed around a variety of reforms. Perhaps the most significant being the National Consumer League and the National Women's Trade Union League. The latter was an organization initially of upper-class women to forward the interests of poor and working women. It was a most significant force in the endorsement and building of the September 1909 Triangle Shirtwaist Company Strike and through this strike its membership and resources increased tremendously. However, by 1912 thoroughly embroiled with the Gompers's AFL, it reluctantly cut off its aid to the strike of textile workers in Lawrence, Mass. when the AFL began attacking the IWW and the left-wing of the Socialist Party that were left to defend the interests of working women. While neither the NCL nor NTUL were initially enthusiastic about the war and continued to agitate for progressive legislation, they like all others save conscious revolutionaries sought to avoid activities that might link them to "Bolshevism." They took posts in government commissions and thought that by being loyal during the war women would be rewarded. A similar development occurred in England where a good

many in the movement took posts in the government commissions and baited draft evaders, in contrast to Sylvia Pankhurst, who organized what became the British section of the 3rd International.

At the same time as the bourgeois feminists were cooperating with their warring governments, revolutionary socialists, such as Zetkin, Kollantai, Armand, were organizing demonstrations and conferences to protest the war.

What remained of the more narrow feminist movement, the National Woman's Party, joined with industrialists, right-wing organizations, and some business and professional women to attack the protective legislation which for women had been won between 1911 and 1921. The National Woman's Party hailed the defeat of the minimum-wage movement as a victory for equal rights. It concentrated all of its efforts on campaigning for the Equal Rights Amendment, which would strike down protective legislation.

IS Intervention in the Women's Liberation Movement

While this is in no way a complete history of the struggles of women in the U.S., it should be enough to note that radicalism - even the best pro-working-class radicalism - cannot provide leadership for the working class. Nor can it sustain itself as a movement independent of the capitalist class and gradually move in the direction of socialism. We "underestimated" the importance of revolutionary socialism as the only consistent defender of the rights and needs of women and the class struggle.

Whether one agrees with the above analysis or not, one must certainly agree that the organization should have addressed itself to the best elements in the movement and attempted to win them to us. Some may feel that the logical conclusion of the analysis presented here is to tell them to pack up and go home or join the IS, but this is not the case. The best elements in the movement would not have responded to such an appeal nor would it have moved others.

In our propaganda, we should always have explained the contradictory nature of the dominant politics and program of the women's liberation movement. We should have warned them that in the absence of a resolution of these conflicts that a road for the hegemony of the reformist would be paved. We should have argued for our program and the working class as the only class that would consistently fight for it.

While objective conditions determine what our program is, the consciousness of a group determines how we present that program.

We should have attempted to appeal to the positive content of the consciousness and desires of the best elements of the women's liberation movement. We do not counterpose ourselves to the positive content. (This means, for example, that generally one's response to discussion about the need for the liberation of women should not be "well, men are oppressed too.") We make clear our support for the positive content, and argue for our program as the only means of fulfilling that. This is different from basing one's program on the backward consciousness of a group and ingratiating oneself to it

through its backward consciousness. This is what the SWP did: presenting its 4 point program of democratic demands as a "real women's program" in the narrow sense, arguing against broader approaches as inappropriate in a "women's movement", sniping at men who happened to walk through meeting rooms.

In order to win the best elements to us, it was necessary to have attempted to win them to a working class program through, in the course of actual struggle, linking demands that are specifically addressed to women to those that are specifically addressed to the needs of the working class as a whole. While at a point it was correct to call on the movement to take up agitational campaigns addressed to the needs of working women, they should have been argued for in the context of a general class program and working women as the best means to reach the class. They should not have been motivated on the basis of working women as the only stable base for an independent women's movement. Such a motivation appeals not to the positive content of the consciousness of the best elements, but to the backward content. The positive content is the desire for a road to liberation and to involve poor and working women. The backward content is the desire to build a women's movement in the narrow sense, rather than a movement which will liberate women. Thus it is only when working women are understood as the means to reach the entire class - the only class that will liberate women, that one moves beyond pro-working-class radicalism.

In the fall and winter of 1970-71 the movement made a decisive shift to the right. The bankruptcy of the independent radical movement (its nationwide expulsion of the SWP and attempts to turn its organizations into "cadre" organizations) laid the basis for the temporary hegemony of the SWP. The SWP attempted to substitute itself for the less militant NOW by organizing broad coalitions around a four-point program of democratic demands and "mass actions." Finding that the action was not mass enough, it dissolved these coalitions into the abortion coalition. While in retrospect we can see that the attempt to organize an opposition in WONAAC was in vain because the organization itself collapsed, the crucial mistake was the political focus. While it was confused, what stood out was the call for the campaign to be a "women's liberation" campaign and Free Abortion on Demand as a slogan because this is the only way it will be accessible to working and poor women. Again this was not an appeal to the positive content of the consciousness of the best elements. While the slogan was not incorrect, we should have placed it in the context of a class program. We should have argued that everywhere democratic rights are limited by the exigencies of capital, particularly in periods such as the present, and that it is only the working class who will not respect the limits of capital and carry through the socialist revolution necessary to the achievement of women's liberation. The Free Abortion on Demand slogan should have been specifically linked to Taxing Corporate Profits to Pay for Clinics, and at least No Support to Capitalist Parties. This

approach would have provided us with a political bridge to the IS and its activities.

It is today apparent that the organizations of the independent women's liberation movement are bankrupt and that there is no strategy for building these organizations. We state this in our propaganda and point out the way in which the politics of the radical movement paved the way for the hegemony of the reformists. We point out that the way forward lies in the struggle of the working class and that it is working women who will take the lead in advancing the demands of women in the working class movement and in organizing a mass movement that will challenge the reformists and be discontented with bourgeois democracy.

In the immediate future we will recruit women's liberationists primarily through our education and propagandistic work - press, forums, literature tables, etc. - rather than through participation in their organization and joint campaigns or the like. Some will certainly think that the above is a sectarian approach. But sectarianism is not telling people what is and what to do about it. Sectarianism is refusing to appeal to the positive content of consciousness in doing so, and refusing to put forward specific proposals for common activity so as to be able to work with people over time. Branches that have the resources for the latter should be encouraged to do so. We point out to radical women that revolutionary socialists, while not perfect have been and are the most consistent defenders of the rights and needs of women because they do not respect the limits of capitalism and the logic of their politics demands it. We seek to win them to our politics and organization as the nucleus for a revolutionary party - without which a revolutionary socialist women's movement will be for naught.

* * * * *

NOTES:

A program represents the conscious crystallization of one's comprehension of reality and what to do about it. Thus it is an indication of how stable sentiments are, because in the absence of understanding a means of changing whatever one is hostile to, one tends to suppress the sentiments. Thus the statement that there are only two consistent programs for society is based on the reality of a class-divided society in which there are only two classes that can do anything about the crisis that that produces. Since reality shapes consciousness and a program is an expression of consciousness, a program that does not comprehend that reality will collapse. As such it does not represent a program in the sense of something that guides one in one's actions, tells one what to do. It is not a solution.

The analysis in this document while applying in essence to the black movement cannot be applied in quite the same way to blacks as to women due to the greater weight of the working-class within the black population.

MOTIVATION TO AMENDMENT TO WOMEN'S LIBERATION PERSPECTIVES

Margaret B.

The author of the Women's Liberation Perspectives indicated at the NC and in the national bulletin that she agreed with none of the amendments I put forward on the family, the middle-class movement, and our approach. This indicates that the lack of clarity and contradictory character of her discussion on the m.c. movement is more a reflection of a political approach than an oversight. Her discussion of the working-class movement, despite the sections on party and program, suffers from a similar ambiguity. It is for this reason that the amendments and motivation have been revised and expanded.

The politics of the IS have been profoundly influenced by its emergence as a national organization through the intervention of local groups in the radical middle-class movements of the 60's. While most discussions of this influence have focused on organizational questions, the most serious effect of this influence has been on the organization's politics. Activity in any arena is bound to lead to some accommodation. This was particularly true with respect to the women's liberation movement. The political approach that the organization took to this movement exacerbated this accommodation. It is crucially important to review this because it has its negative impact on our work in the class.

The position passed at the 1970 convention saw the struggle of women as a "transitional" one and our tasks as creating an "outwardly-oriented, direct action, pro-working-class wing" of the movement.

One of the most important roles we can play at this point is to present a 'transitional program' to this movement which will not only enable it to go beyond this beginning level of the development of consciousness but will educate it to see the relationship between the oppression and exploitation of women, and the need to link up with and actively participate in the struggles of working women. . . . while we do not hesitate to fight for our conception of socialism, and to recruit women on the basis of our full politics, we are primarily concerned with the building of an outwardly-directed, action-oriented, pro-working-class movement.
(1970 T&P)

An amplification of this viewpoint presented at the May 1971 NC (3 months after the national wide expulsion of the SWP and the all but total collapse of radical organizations) by a supporter of the 1970 position, called for building a national women's organization on the basis of groups which would "seek to maintain an open alive atmosphere with active political discussion in a broad radical spectrum" and "come to recognize that working women will be the only group to give the women's liberation movement the stability, strength and social weight it so desperately needs." (Draft Resolution on Women's Liberation Perspective, Judith S.) The motion was defeated with the leader of the 1970 convention majority abstaining.

The motion passed was put forward by opponents of the 1970 Convention resolution. At the 1970 convention they had argued that while pessimistic about the future of the women's movement, that the IS should try to crystalize a pro-working-class, left-wing.

To do this we push our full analysis and program, showing the necessity of understanding the need for socialism for women's liberation and the strategic concept of the power of the working class in achieving that end. We continually push that movement to become explicitly socialist, to relate to the working class on the basis of socialist politics, while attempting to recruit socialist women to the IS on the basis of our full politics. (1970 T&P document from The Band.)

Their passing resolution at the 1971 May NC argued that there was a growing sentiment in the movement to build a "women's movement around the power and needs of working women." Further, that Working Women's Committees that brought women from the women's liberation movement together with working-class women militants around a common program and action "would appeal to large numbers of women disillusioned with the do-nothing character of the movement. The resolution complained that the WWC in New York looked like a sect and that "Phrases like 'as socialists we should' are used, discussions increasingly focus on how the group can bring a certain line to struggles, and on what that line should be." Nevertheless, the resolution argues "our hope is that we can reorient the group so that it will be possible to bring working-class women to meetings; we still feel it is possible to reverse this trend. . . in spite of all the difficulties, we still feel that the basic orientation we have outlined is correct. . . ." (Perspective for Building Working Women's Committee, Rose V. and Anne G.)

An amendment was put forward by Margaret B. arguing for these committees initiated in the WLM to be motivated on the basis of the entire class as the agent for women's liberation, and reaching working women as the best means to affect the consciousness of the class on the question. It was defeated with no support from the authors of the passing resolution.

Thus, the organizations faulty assessment of the assessment of the movement and the pragmatic nature of its line is demonstrated in its resolutions. It held the conception that it could move significant sections of the movement step-by-step from radicalism, to pro-working-class radicalism, then on to revolutionary socialism and into the IS. This is obvious in the 1970 resolution. While the defeated one was better, the sectarianism of the full program / full politics / explicitly socialist line could provide little real guidance and appears to have led to its opposite.

A reading of the various pamphlets published will show that the propaganda was little better. The analysis of the family and the oppression of women under capitalism was generally simply a more sophisticated version of the best that the WIM produced. In terms of program, they rarely put forward more than the "special demands of women," generally taking whatever issue the WIM was into and calling for it to organize working women around that issue.

These political weaknesses led to little success and the little success led to abstention. We failed to win the best elements of the movement to our organization, leaving them for others or to cynicism. While some of this can be attributed to the youth of the organization, if it is to mature it must face its past squarely. The Winkler document does not do this. It does not come to grips with the past, so it will not be able to well guide our intervention in the working class in the future.

While it refers to the inevitable tendency of declassé movements to decline in the absence of a working-class movement, it refers in other places to the potential of the radical movement, not just a section of it, to move in a pro-working-class direction.

While it refers to the contradictory politics of radical women, it seems to suggest that they, unlike the reformists, might have provided leadership to working-class women.

The document refers to the difference between being pro-working-class and understanding the centrality of the class struggle. It refers to the difference between a "program" to end exploitation and oppression. Yet it does not conclude from this that we should have placed more emphasis on this than we did - arguing for a class program and placing emphasis on the role of the entire working class rather than on simply working women.

The document's discussion of the WIOC, the SWP, and WONAAC is a reflection of these contradictions. It suggests that the main thing wrong with the WIOC was that it didn't attract working women. It also says that we didn't provide leadership.

What kind of leadership should have been provided? Clearly as these were pro-working-class radicals we should have attempted to win them to our view instead of complaining that they said "as socialists we should". The campaign that we called for the group to initiate was directed at women in telephone who were in the midst of the company's attempt to split the women against the men. But the leaflet addressed to them said little of this and was centered on special women's demands. Was that correct? Did it aid them in understanding the centrality of class program and

class struggle? Did it attract women in telephone? If there is a difference between being pro-working-class and understanding the centrality of the class struggle, why not use the interest in WWOC's to further that understanding, rather than accepting the pro-working-class radical conception of working as those who are more oppressed and have the power.

The document's discussion of the SWP and WONAAC does not comprehend the fact that it was the bankruptcy of the independent radical movement that paved the way for the SWP's hegemony. Fighting among themselves, with no strategy whatsoever, the radical movement tapped almost none of the pro-WLM sentiment that existed. In fact, it was the SWP that initially tapped that sentiment. That it got as little response as it did to its 4-point program of democratic demands is indicative of the impossibility of attempting to maintain a movement independent of both classes - i.e., a radical movement, as much as it is indicative of the SWP's sectarian manipulative approach.

This of course led the SWP to shift to the right as the "left" pressure on it weakened, building a base and paving the way for the reformists. This led to growing opposition inside the SWP. Only a class program could have provided an alternative. Thus putting ourselves forwards as the "real women's liberationists" could only appear to SWP oppositionists as defense of the movement that had just expelled them. Not even we could fool ourselves that working women would become significantly involved in a Free Abortion on Demand fight. Thus, the aspect of our intervention that called for taking the abortion campaign to working women provided little more leadership to SWP oppositionists, radical sectarians, and pro-working-class radicals, than did the "real women's liberationist" aspect.

Finally, the various references in the document to capitalism, the family, and the oppression of women do not clear up the organization's view point nor distinguish it from that of others. It states

"Because of the role played by the private family under capitalism the oppression of women is as integral to the capitalist system as is the exploitation of the working class."

Capitalism is defined by the domination of wage labor by capital, the exploitation of the working class. It is the demands of capital that shape the family structure and the oppression of women. Yes, it is integral. But when half the organization voted for a document that says the struggle of women is transitional, such comparisons between an oppressed sex and a class do not aid clarity. It goes on to say "Socialists therefore do not consider women's liberation to be a "middle-class" or a "reform" question." True - except for the "therefore." It is not a reform question because it cannot be resolved through reform. It is not a middle-class question because

half of the working class is women. Finally, it says that "the destruction of the bourgeois family will be as important a part of the socialist revolution as the destruction of the bourgeois state." If what is meant by this is denying the right of the bourgeoisie to inherit property through the family - yes. The bourgeoisie will be expropriated. If smashing the family in general is meant - no. The state will be destroyed. An alternative to the family as an economic unit will be developed and the family as we know it today will wither away.

Why carp on all this, one might ask? After all, the women's liberation movement is pretty much dead and gone, and we can straighten up our analysis of the family. Sure, we made some mistakes, but it's water over the dam. Unfortunately, this is not the case. It has already injured our ability to relate to working class women militants.

The organization has tended to see consciousness and action around the oppression of women as the sine qua non of working-class women's militancy. This was a problem in the first draft of the Winkler document, not wholly unresolved in the section on the working class in the second. Thus the organization has looked for this in seeking an advanced strata of women, and has under-emphasized or ignored other varieties, particularly in the past that of Black women who are responding to a broad range of issues. Thus in presenting our program to working-class women we have placed too much emphasis on special women's demands, rather than seeking to link whatever these women militants are concerned about to whatever broader understanding is lacking in their consciousness. This includes an understanding of the oppression of women and the necessity of organizing a movement to end it.

Secondly, the organization has reified the "independent organization of women." This This found a mild expression in the section of the Winkler document on the working class. From an obvious development given the segregation of the sexes and a necessity to draw the masses of women to the banner of the working class, it has become a "Colgate Shield" against some future decay of the workers' state. We are cautioned "women must organize independently today and after the revolution to insure that the revolution includes their demands, that it liberates them." Revolutionaries orient toward the class's seizure of power. Mass organizations of women under the banner of the class are necessary for that. Let there be no doubt. We are not for backsliding. We support organizations of women. We call for organizations of women. We fight for our program. The formation of such organizations is a key part of our strategy. They are necessary after the seizure of power to implement our program. In the trade unions today, it is a tactical question. In general, we advocate it. In rank and file groups, it is a tactical question. As small as they are, we probably don't generally advocate it. The organization must develop a more reasonable approach on this

question. Women's organizations are a means to draw them into the class struggle and insure the implementation of the revolutionaries' program for women. It is in the self-interest of the workers' state to liberate women, because the state is the class, and women are 50% of the class. Every cook must govern. Lenin points this out in Can the Bolsheviki Retain State Power? If the workers' state excludes 50% of itself it won't be able to govern. If this is not expressed in the consciousness, program, and organization of the vanguard then it must be corrected. But this must come from inside the vanguard; not from the pressure of women organized independently outside of it to supposedly "keep it on its toes." Any other approach is to call on the more backward to lead.

Finally, and most fundamentally, this accommodation is related to the IS's underestimation of the significance of revolutionary leadership. Rather than seeking out the most advanced strata of women, whether they are moving around "women's issues" or not, winning them to our program and training them to lead others, we have tended to see ourselves today "mobilizing" numbers of women. Because of this conception of our tasks, the presentation of our program to women has been too limited. If we do not put forward the broader aspects of our program, at the same time as we put forward immediate approaches, we are likely to end up building a base for some militant women bureaucrats to hop on. Just as important we will miss the most politically advanced women leaders who will go elsewhere.

Winning these women leaders is essential if we are to build a revolutionary party which can actually lead the class and the oppressed masses in the coming period. Such women will be intimately involved in the class struggle and vitally concerned with the relationship of women's liberation to that struggle. We will not win them to us by abstract rhetorical flourishes like the "independent organization of women", but by concrete analysis, program, and strategy. It is the latter that they will seek, for it only these that enable one to lead.

STATEMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCY

At the present time, the world is entering a pre-revolutionary period, a period marked by conjunctures of massive social upheavals on all continents. Based on the deepening stagnation of U.S. and world economy, the period places before the revolutionary Marxists the fundamental task of the historical epoch, the construction of a world revolutionary party. Such a party, built upon the vanguard layers of the working class and tied closely to the working class as a whole, is the precondition for the successful consummation of the workers' conquest of state power. Without such a party, without such a revolutionary leadership of the working class, all pre-revolutionary, mass-upheaval situations are doomed to dispersal and defeat.

Consequently, the starting point for the work of conscious revolutionaries is and must be the struggle to build the revolutionary party. Just as the working class can only come to comprehend its true historic interests and fit itself for power through the class struggle, the revolutionary party steels its cadres around its program and fits itself for the leadership of the working class through the same struggle.

Basing itself upon revolutionary Marxism and its continuation, what have been called Leninism and Trotskyism and in particular the summary statement of these principles in the form of the Draft Transitional Program, the Theses of the first four congresses of the Communist International, the world revolutionary party develops its own transitional program, its determination of the present period and the tasks that flow from it, through a scientific analysis of the objective conditions of present-day society and world political economy. The revolutionary program makes the party, define its direction, and binds it into a cohesive whole. The party is the materialization of the revolutionary program, the transformation of the program in an organization of conscious revolutionaries, organizing and building the leadership of the working class. Without the party, the program remains an abstract expression of the historic interests of the working class. Without the program, the party is no party, but an agglomeration of individuals bound together by a subjective desire for revolution and by its de facto acceptance of the non-proletarian ideology, that is, the level of consciousness of the milieu from which it springs and in which it works at any given time.

In order to become material, the program must be internalized by the cadres of the party through continual internal discussion and by constant intervention in the class struggle. In this way, the program is tested, refined, while the cadre becomes hardened and disciplined. Just as the level of class struggle is reflected in the organization and leadership of the working class, culminating in the hegemony of the revolutionary leadership, so the struggle within the party is reflected in the parallel development of a leadership characterized by Marxist combativity and audacity, bound

by a thousand democratic threads to the cadres of the party and enjoying the latter's confidence and trust. The building of the Bolshevik Party and its Leninist leadership were two aspects of the single process of the construction of the revolutionary leadership of the Russian working class.

Until now, the IS has not come to grips with the fundamental task of the construction of a revolutionary leadership. Instead it has absorbed itself in vain attempts at "galvanizing" mass struggle on the basis of reform and democratic demands and adapting its program to fit the illusions of the elements it has sought to "galvanize." Instead of approaching the building of a world revolutionary party and its U.S. section as a task that has to be approached consciously and aggressively, instead of realizing that such a party could only be built on a common program, the IS has muddled around with no agreed-upon program nor common method. Without a common program all its efforts to become a democratic centralist organization are guaranteed to fail.

In order to pursue the struggle for a revolutionary program and leadership for the IS we are organizing as a tendency within the majority on the basis of this statement. As a summary of our struggle for revolutionary program, we fight for the following points:

1. Our central strategic task is to build the world revolutionary party and its U.S. section.
2. Such a party must be based upon the method and approach of the draft Transitional Program of 1938. We stand in relation to that Program as the Bolshevik-Leninists of the 1930's stood in relation to the Theses of the first four congresses of the Communist International and the Bolshevik Program of 1917. Our understanding of the Transitional Program and our relationship to it are outlined in the document "On the Transitional Program."
3. We base ourselves on the understanding that a Marxist transitional program is fundamentally counterposed to all other programs, centrist, reformist, anarchist, fascist, etc. Only the Marxist program represents the real historic interests of the international working class and therefore of humanity. All other programs, all other currents in the labor movement represent alien, that is, non-working class politics.

4. The central slogans of our program are transitional demands, such as For a Workers' Government, Nationalization of Industry and the Banks without Indemnification under Workers' Control, a Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours, etc. These slogans address the needs of the working class and the oppressed sectors as a whole and are specific applications of the methods of the proletarian state formulated as demands under capitalism.

5. We support all partial and democratic and trade union demands that increase the confidence and combativity of the working class. The struggle for and achievement of these demands will convince the workers that their fundamental problem is not the lack of democracy nor a poor price for their labor power, but capitalism itself. The course of the struggle plus the intervention of Marxist revolutionaries will demonstrate that complete and genuine democratic and reform victories can only be assured through the struggle for transitional demands and the conquest of power by the unified class-conscious proletariat. In all the partial and democratic movements of the oppressed "they (i.e., the Communists) bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time." (Communist Manifesto, p. 76 of the Chinese edition)

6. It is especially important to stress the transitional demands and the struggle for a workers' government in work amongst the most oppressed layers. These workers, with little or nothing to show for the years of "prosperity" with no fundamental stake in the present, are those whose needs most immediately correspond to the task of the proletariat as a whole, the overthrow of capitalism. As a result of their strategic position in the economy, their history of struggle and their present consciousness, Black workers constitute a major portion of the developing vanguard layer of the U.S. working class. The job of revolutionaries is to help instill in these workers their self-consciousness as the leading fighters for the class demands of the entire proletariat. The black struggle for democratic demands reveals the inadequacy of a struggle limited to a struggle for the right to equal participation in a capitalist economy.

7. Women are among the most oppressed groups in modern capitalism. Their needs and aspirations immediately require the struggle for the transitional demands and the revolutionary transformation of society. In contrast to the radical middle-class women's movement, which emphasized the special demands of women, that is democratic and partial demands, in isolation from the class demands of the proletariat, Marxist revolutionaries unceasingly demonstrate the interconnection between the special demands of women and the revolutionary class program of the working class. Stressing the centrality of transitional demands as the program for women's

liberation, we seek to channel the struggle for democratic and partial demands into a struggle for the transitional program. The revolutionary working class stands for the liberation of all the oppressed, blacks, latinos, native Americans, women, gays, etc. As the most consistent defenders of the rights and needs of these groups, the revolutionary proletariat unceasingly points out that those leaderships that confine the struggles of these groups to the struggle for partial, democratic and utopian demands, inevitably capitulate and betray those struggles and those demands.

8. It is not sufficient merely to give lip-service to these programmatic concepts. It is not enough to proclaim the need for building a revolutionary leadership in internal documents and speeches. We must seek to advocate and explain our ideas to the workers. Given our size and circumstances, this task is largely propagandistic. Those who attempt to skip over this stage in order to act like a mass party, in order to "galvanize" the masses, will inevitably adapt themselves to the less-advanced elements of the working class. Those who refuse to raise our more advanced programmatic ideas for fear of being "sectarian" and of "isolating ourselves" will do likewise.

9. Our struggle for revolutionary leadership requires an active intervention in the struggles of the working class. No ultimatic approach will work; we seek to utilize the experiences of the workers themselves to convince them of the capitulationist role of all reformist and centrist leadership and the correctness of our revolutionary program. Flowing from this approach are the Leninist tactics, such as critical support, the united front, etc., through which we engage in joint struggle with reformist workers, and seek to win them to our program and leadership. In the United State, an application of this approach in the political arena is our call for a labor party based upon our program. Central to this intervention, critical support, the united front, etc., is the right and duty to maintain an independent policy, openly addressing the working class, never hiding our criticism of reformist and centrist leaderships. This means that the fundamental counter-position of the Marxist program to all other programs, revolutionary leadership to all other leadership, must never be hidden, although the manner in which this counter-position is raised may vary with different situations.

10. The fight for revolutionary leadership of the working class parallels the development of a leadership within the revolutionary organization itself. The failure to understand that revolutionary leadership in the working class does not develop inexorably from the historic process but must be fought for, will be reflected in a similar attitude toward building the leadership of the revolutionary organization. Just as leadership must be fought for within the working class, a leadership in the revolutionary organization must be struggled for, it will not occur spontaneously

A serious democratic centralism is not therefore primarily an organizational structure but a process involving the development of a democratically elected leadership and an educated rank and file, both of which have common programmatic assumptions and understand the importance of serious internal political debate and the necessity of coherent implementation of majority decisions.

Marxist ideas are not simply "good ideas." The struggle for programmatic clarity and precision is the struggle for ideas which represent the inherent interests of the human race. Without leadership, without a clear program and an unstained banner, no socialist revolution is possible.

In the process of creating a combat party, the IS is crucial; consequently the struggle within the IS for a revolutionary program, leadership, and intervention is utterly serious. Keeping together the IS as one big family having a leisurely intellectual discussion is promoting a fraud. The IS has always had serious disagreements, always obscured by murky discussion. Maintenance of such a situation may keep an organization in one piece, but would only be an organization that would crumble with the first big upsurge of the working class.

We organize in order to convince the IS of the need to accept a common program and method. We openly proclaim our willingness to take leadership based upon the politics and methodology outlined in the documents, "On the Transitional Program," the two National Secretary's NC reports of Comrade Landy, the two MFD documents by Ron T., the Draft Auto Perspective and "Theses on the UNC" of Ron T., Amendments by Margaret B. to the Winkler Women's Liberation Perspective, the Landy document on SWP recruitment. The consistent outlook and approach of these documents, as opposed to the tactical aspects of these positions, represent the basis for our tendency together with the present statement. Shortly, a more elaborate statement will be presented to flesh out our approach.

Either the IS forges a serious cadre based on precise fundamental programmatic agreement, and a leadership willing to fight for this, or we will return to the IS of the lotus-eaters and confusionist amateurs. We have had our fill of leaderships that put forward no perspectives or that refuse to lead. The clique that is now the Transformation Caucus leadership has a history of non-programmatic, non-leadership and an adaptation to backward levels of consciousness, capitulation to black nationalism, "revolutionary feminism," etc. The Brian M., Ilene W., Gay S., Bill H., bloc has a history of formal acceptance of transitional program.

coupled with a practical rejection of the centrality of these demands and the need to fight for and proclaim the need for revolutionary leadership. Unless they change their present direction, these groups cannot lead in the work of the construction of a revolutionary party based on the ideas of revolutionary Marxism and as extended and elaborated by Lenin and Trotsky. In the course of the struggle for revolutionary politics in the IS, a thorough-going re-examination of Shachtmanism and its degeneration will be necessary.

We want only those who wish to actively intervene in the class struggle to join our tendency. Only through such intervention can our propaganda be made alive, our identification with the workers' movement made real, and our cadre forged into a compact team of self-reliant leaders.

(Initial statement issued by

Sy L.
Ron T.
Chris H.)

PARTY AND PROGRAM

The Present Debate and its Meaning-- The Viewpoint of the Leninist Tendency

The content, clarity, and polarization apparent in Bulletins 37 and 38 signal a turn in the factional developments within the IS. Tabor's document on the Transitional Program, the exchanges on the Miners for Democracy, the shadow of a forthcoming struggle on IS perspectives toward the United National Caucus--all these reveal, at the highest theoretical level and in possibilities for application in practice, sharp differences in the present national leadership. This leadership is again divided into the three tendencies which have been the dominant feature of the International Socialists since the founding convention on Labor Day 1969. Regroupment of individuals and whole chunks notwithstanding, the same three groups remain the major forces. The debate has been enriched by the increased maturity of political views, and the experiences gained in direct working class activity; and thus it is also more polarized, more polarized we think than any previous debate in the IS.

Our tasks in this short article are deliberately modest, but focused: We wish to analyze the differences as we see them, helping, we hope, to add additional clarity as well. We want to explain our view that the differences as they exist today are not yet decisive, as the supporters of Tabor et al still stop short of a fully Trotskyist position. But then it is necessary to explain why so much controversy is being generated.

This document will briefly take up the questions of practice being posed most sharply now; but this brief discussion article is no substitute for a trade union document presenting our views, a document which will be forthcoming in the next months. It is in this area that we see most clearly the drawing back from the full conclusion of the analysis which Tabor presents. But behind the questions of practice in dispute are the questions of party and program, of what revolutionary leadership is, and how it is built.

We are not contributing this article to comment on a struggle which we stand outside of. We wish to take sides. But at present we cannot support Tabor despite the excellence of the document on the Transitional Program (the clearest exposition on this subject we know to exist) and despite the fact that it represents a clear attempt to break with Shachtmanism. It falters at a crucial point. We regard our position as the logical extension of Tabor's. But history, alas, is not Aristotlean. Logic alone will not make

Bolsheviks. So we put forward our position, and compare it to Tabor's, as the differences appear before the Easter NC. This NC should lead to additional differentiation and sharpening, and a new evaluation will be needed at that time.

The Positions Stated

The Transformation Caucus

The position of the Transformation Caucus and its periphery has been quite clear since the appearance of the Geier documents on the eve of the last convention. "Essentially we are in a reformist period," and in a reformist period programmatic answers are of strictly limited use, because they can only be used for propaganda, and propaganda, even for a self-styled propaganda group, is a bitter chore, a marking of time. All further discussion of program is just decorative, then. (Such as the quite full description of some possible program for caucuses at some unspecified future time, found in the Weber Auto Perspectives, Labor Bulletin # 2.) Our real task is that of ginger group, urging on "broad" left formations, because they are a "step forward." If we have to substitute ourselves for militant liberal trade unionists in order to attract a small periphery, so be it. As for the revolutionary responsibility to tell the truth, we do so in low voices to a few around us, and think perhaps of "socialist" shop bulletins in the future. In light of the Transformation Caucus' stated positions, we do not understand how they could be insulted by the appellation "maximal-minimal."

The I.S.(G.B.)

Sharing, in more developed fashion, the outlook of the Transformation Caucus, is the IS(G.B.). Not accidentally, they too have adopted the same workerist approach the TC has made the basis for its existence, an attempt to go around the political tasks facing revolutionaries today. The organizational successes of the IS(G.B.) have developed illusions in all sections of our organization, as has their softness on third world Stalinism, which many have mistaken as a "left" position. Both space, and our lack of complete information prevent us from exploring the practices of the British IS in depth here, but as internationalists we regard it as vital.

The IS(G.B.) shares the Geier outlook on the task of revolutionaries in a reformist period--that is, to be the best reformists. Sharing Geier's empiricism, but possessed of more prolific writers, International Socialism has presented us many conflicting statements on the future since its inception. But we presume that Geier shares with Michael Kidron, a leading member of the IS(G.B.), the view that the "reformist period" will grow over smoothly, and with it the sincere reformists will evolve into us. "The potential revolutionary of tomorrow and the active reformist of today," Kidron writes in IS 28, "are increasingly indistinguishable, while the

instabilities of the permanent arms economy insure that revolution becomes simply a phase in the activities of all sincere reformists." (!)

MacKenzie

MacKenzie and his supporters are not as easy to describe. They have a preference for standing on orthodoxy more than the Transformation Caucus, and in place of the TC's audacious denial of revolutionary, Trotskyist, method they substitute a certain smoothness and appearance of setting up a "golden mean" which is very misleading. We will avoid the question of who amended what to whose document, raised in Bulletin 38, in evaluating whether MacKenzie lies closer to the Transformation Caucus or not. We think, as a matter of fact, that the choice of amending Jones' document did mark some sort of turning point, but an evaluation of practice would have revealed that long before. We will explain this in depth in the section below "On Critical Support" when we discuss the editorial of United Action of CWA 1101 on "Vote Dempsey But Keep Your Eyes Open", which we are assuming represents an approach typical of the MacKenzie group at critical moments. MacKenzie clearly believes, as Tabor notes, that critical support is support with reservations, a muted cheer, and he evades all the central questions so that he can advocate almost almost the same things as the Geierites. For the Transformation Caucus' boldness he substitutes a certain sophistication which differentiates them, but the desired practice is far closer than apparent differences. The MacKenzie group wishes to float between two viewpoints which the period is forcing apart.

Tabor and our Viewpoint

The Tabor document starts from the defense of the necessity to begin with a program which will resolve the economic crisis in the interest of the working class, to begin with objective necessity, to speak the truth. It further emphasizes the value and centrality of propaganda tasks in this period and the importance of the fight for revolutionary leadership. But despite the clarity and forcefulness with which this is argued, there is an incomplete acceptance of Leninist methods for building that leadership and a drawing back from the conclusions for actual practice. In the document itself this is represented for example by a mere aside, in the paragraph at the bottom of page 20. There we are told that the method of the transitional program does not consist of constructing caucuses in the unions based on the transitional program.

The core of our tendency's difference with Tabor on this one point may be stated as this: While a caucus may raise demands, "not all at once, but as occasion arises, first one and then the other", the caucus itself needs to possess that program.

On that same page 20 Tabor mentions in passing "building rank and file opposition caucuses on a principled class program." But what is the basis of that principled class program? We believe that it is the same as the program which would resolve the crisis in the interests of the working class, that is, come version of the Transitional Program.

This is only one point of difference. These differences stem from a difference in approach and method, which will be developed further.

This rather bluntly lays out the spectrum of views as we see it. As we move from the Transformation Caucus to the Leninist Tendency we find more emphasis on revolutionary leadership, on winning cadre to our program, on the centrality of propaganda in this period. The differences between the groups are thorough-going, if the edges of the debate are still blurred.

Many basic questions have been raised in the course of the debate. We believe the starting point for the differences between the groupings is the question of revolutionary leadership and inextricably linked to this the question of how consciousness is changed. From this flow the questions of practice.

We do not argue for our position on the epoch and the period in this document. Our position is simply stated in our draft program, in particular point II. This is not because we regard the question as secondary. We have much to say on this, on what we think, on what Lenin and Trotsky thought, on what others think. Our views on this must be the anchor for our scientific approach to the seizure of state power. But we assert that it is not the nature of the epoch and the period which is behind the differences in principle and practice under consideration here.

On each topic we seek to lay out the differing viewpoints, to put forward and support the viewpoint of the Leninist Tendency, and to indicate why the position and/or practice of the Tabor grouping differs from ours. We do this not to artificially differentiate ourselves from these comrades, but because we regard these differences as important.

On Revolutionary Leadership

The Transformation Caucus

The question of revolutionary leadership, and the construction of a revolutionary party, in fact a revolutionary International, has only been backed into in the course of the

debate. The Transformation Caucus would prefer to ignore the question for now. The only thing which they insist upon is that they not be embarrassed by the "pretentious" notion that the IS is the nucleus of anything. As for Leninist ideas, they are very nice, and belong in classes and such.

The closest to a description of the tasks of a group like the IS today which is to be found in the Transformation Caucus' writings is in the Weber document on "The Propaganda Group and its Tasks" whose main thrust is that propaganda is not really very interesting. It argues this in the same manner that Tabor exposed in Geier's writing on program of the same vintage: A bland Marxist truism is followed by a number of "warnings" which deprive it of any content.

The clearest expression we can find of the TC's viewpoint on how revolutionary leadership will be built is in this document. It is the concept that the revolutionary party will be "crystallized out of a working class that is already generated institutions and methods of struggle which are beginning to carry out or at least pose the need for struggles on a class for itself basis and which thereby concretely pose the need for a revolutionary party." It is a central rationale for Transformation Caucus practice, and it is a key point to which we must return. It has nothing in common with Leninist ideas they would restrict to the classroom.

The IS G.B.

The IS (GB) has developed this split between profession of revolutionary orthodoxy and actual practice even further. The most formed example of this is the Party and Class collection of four essays published by their Pluto Press, which most IS-ers have seen. It contains, on the one hand, the genuflection to orthodoxy of Chris Harman, the title essay of the collection, which the IS(US) has reprinted. Strengthening that is Trotsky's very sharp "The Class, The Party, and the Leadership." But to make sure no one is worried by this we have essays by Hallas and Cliff, many of whose statements go against everything on the party Lenin and Trotsky stood for. Cliff, in particular, does "homage" to Trotsky by picking up on one of Trotsky's pre-Bolshevik comments about the "danger of substitutionism inherent in Lenin's conception of party organization" taking this an example of Trotsky's prophetic genius.

This wisdom of Cliff's is of a piece, of course, with his admiration for Luxemburg's ideas on party organization. Cliff seems not to have absorbed, despite his brilliance, the simple fact that Luxemburg's tragic end was due precisely to the fact that she did not understand Lenin's conception of party-building, and with the fate of the German revolution then and in the years immediately beyond that, the fate of the Russian Revolution was pretty well sealed. Trotsky, to his credit, became a Bolshevik, losing this "prophetic genius" to see the seeds of Stalinism in Leninism.

Cliff goes on to warn us that to avoid substitutionism we need freedom of discussion in the open before the whole working class, declaiming, "Let the mass of the workers take part in the discussion, put pressure on the party, its apparatus, its leadership" -- which means, of course, let the Stalinist workers, the reformist workers, those who still have only trade union consciousness, put pressure on the more advanced! That troublesome discussion is in fact cut short by Cliff even within the organization is beside the point here. The real point is that Cliff presents a view in which the party is subordinated to the class, a version which he regards as an improvement on the outmoded and dangerously substitutionist Leninist and Trotskyist version. (He names it by the mystification subordinating the party to the relationship between party and class.) Socialist consciousness must apparently be introduced into the party from the outside!

MacKenzie approaches the question of revolutionary leadership in a disinterested manner, and Tabor dissects well his comment that a revolutionary leadership is a "timeless" notion.

Tabor and the Leninist Tendency Compared

Tabor has begun to pose the question more sharply than comfort can bear for the IS. Many ISers, after all, were recruited to the "exciting" and "unique" IS politics which included an implicit rejection of ideas about the vanguard, a semi-syndicalism. And Tabor has underscored the importance of a common understanding of tasks and events, a common program. This in an organization which used to delight in its diversity, scorning strivings for political homogeneity, as if they were equivalent to monolithism. Tabor has even come to idea that we must (conceptually) counterpose ourselves and our program to leaderships such as that of the MFD.

Tabor has moved toward a focus on propaganda as the central task for today, though we believe that at least in the major document on the Transitional Program an unrealistic prospect for agitation is still to be found, on page 20. [We will say it, even though it should be unnecessary: we believe opportunities to engage in agitation, real agitation, are to be seized, and participation in day to day struggles is in fact a necessity. But to believe that genuine mass agitation is generally possible today, or should be central to our work, is self-deluding, unrealistic, or else, as in the case of the Transformation Caucus, an excuse for doing what is in reality propaganda for reformism, not agitation for reforms.]

And finally, Tabor has openly talked about propagandizing for revolutionary leadership. It is, though, in the area that hints at how the party will be built that we still have differences. In particular, we believe that his conceptions of "organizing and training the advanced layer" lies midway between the theory of crystallizing out a section at some future date (the Weber notion) and ours: We believe that in the course of building a revolutionary party we will have to confront head on all alternative leaderships, both those who pose as revolutionary and those who are more straightforward reformists. We must fight to split apart reformist groups, winning sections to the forces of the revolution. Our tactics for doing this can be flexible, even "tactful," if our will is solid and our cohesion adequate, but we must be clear on this. A perspective of splits and fusions is still treated with

amusement in the IS. The idea that we wish to split and wreck every alternative leadership is regarded with disdain or embarrassment. But if you can't accept that idea, you have one of two choices: a belief in some process of evolution in which a uniform solution will be produced, into which we will insert our chemicals to crystallize out the revolutionaries, or a perspective of linear recruitment. The former belongs to Weber, and to a lesser extent MacKenzie; the latter must be attributed to Tabor (as MacKenzie does) until he openly accepts the Leninist perspective.

In sum, we believe that all Tabor's ideas are significant moves away from Shachtmanism, falling short of the logical conclusions.

The Answer of the Transformation Caucus

To Tabor's ideas on program and leadership, and presumably to ours, the Transformation Caucus has one basic answer "program is no use unless it is taken up by the masses." Reasoning (correctly) that the masses will not be taking up the Transitional Program today, they believe it correct to try to recruit numbers to a reformist program, rather than future cadre to a revolutionary program.

We believe, to start, that such a perspective is unrealistic. It is what lies behind the TC's faith that industrialization is a panacea, rather than simply a clear prerequisite for future work. (And it is primarily this faith which has allowed them to wrap the mantle of industrialization around them.) They probably hope to repeat the successes of the IS(GB). Now, we regard the IS(GB)'s present success as no more a vindication of their trade union strategy than the SWP's success a vindication of their anti-war strategy. But we also caution against hopes that a similar story can be repeated on the very different soil of the United States.

But we oppose this strategy as not just doomed, but not revolutionary. To explain this we must go into the whole philosophy of a "step in the right direction" which has been the central strategy of the Shachtmanite movement for decades.

"Step in the Right Direction"

The step-in-the-right-direction metaphor is a good example of the "tyranny of words." The implicit framework it establishes is linear and reformist.

We may view many events as "steps in the right direction" without advocating them. When a group of workers decides to become explicitly political, and talks about its being necessary to "reward friends and punish enemies" at the polls, this is a primitive sort of class consciousness, entirely captured within the bourgeois framework. If they were to attempt to "take over" a bourgeois party's apparatus, this too would be an "advance." Were they to form their own reformist labor party, that too is a step. In each case we have less and less to argue about. The workers are more conscious and organized. Yet in each case to have advocated doing what they did would have been wrong.

The same applies to analyzing the steps taken by rank and file caucuses and movements. Of course all ferment in the labor movement, even among bureaucrats, gives us openings. However, we must look at the total picture. Although the rank and file remain subject to the pressures of capitalist society, and logically should proceed to the next step when they see that the existing step does not solve their problems, we must remember that reality isn't "logical" -- not Aristotelian in any case. The institutions thrown up in the process of taking that step now have a life of their own. The leaderships advanced in the course of that struggle may well have solved their social problems. The process of taking that "next" step may well have put up enormous obstacles to taking another one.

In every instance we must analyze that step forward, and ask if it will also fix the working class in the new position gained, and if so, how firmly?

To want to organize and "be the best builders of" broad, stable, reformist organizational forms is to adhere to the theory which lay behind the Second International. The German Social Democracy achieved the massive organization of the German working class, and then led them in to the slaughterhouse of war and later fascism.

In retrospect the organization of the European working class by formally orthodox, in reality reformist, parties was -- despite the historic advance such organization represented -- to prove a gigantic obstacle to the further advance of the class, the proletarian revolution. Only in Russia, where the split between reformists and revolutionists took place long before the opportunity to seize power, did the politicization and organization of the workers not prove a simultaneous advance and obstacle. In retrospect, such a split should have occurred everywhere else.

To want to repeat the experience of the 2nd International -- and that's the method implicit in the "next step" theory, with quotes from Engels to make it clear -- is nothing short of criminal. Yet that is the logic of the position of the Transformation Caucus.

On Critical Support

To further examine the method of the step forward, and the attitudes toward revolutionary leadership, it is valuable to take up the debate over critical support which has been going on. It is clear that the Transformation Caucus regards critical support as support with reservations. MacKenzie does the same. Tabor analyzes this in his discussion article on pages 6-7 of Bulletin 38. A more telling analysis can be made if the "United Action" issue # 15 (September 13, 1972) is examined. (This is the newsletter of the United Action caucus of CWA Local 1101.)

Its lead article is "Vote Dempsey -- But Keep Your Eyes Open." We have made the assumption that this article is an example of what MacKenzie would mean by critical support. Here is what it says about the left-most of the three contending bureaucrats (who eventually won).

"Ed Dempsey is the only alternative. More importantly, Dempsey represents a direction for 1101 that is our only hope. The three most important aspects of that direction are his willingness to fight the company by building a strong stewards' organization, his willingness to fight Beirne's leadership, and to a less extent an openness to including the ranks in the life of 1101. The positive side of Dempsey is stated in this platform, particularly the points calling for an alliance of big city locals to reform CWA and his call for a delegates assembly. For these reasons alone, it is crucial that Dempsey be elected. At the same time, no one should close their eyes to the problems of Dempsey and his group.

"Dempsey calls for an alliance of big city locals to reform CWA, but he doesn't say what those reforms are, or what his 'priorities for bargaining' are. We think a big city alliance should be an opposition, whose first reform is to throw out Beirne and his crew. The reforms should be direct elections for delegates, District officials, and officers. Bargaining priorities should center around gaining control of our jobs, standards and working conditions, as well as money matters. What does Ed think of these? Dempsey is for a delegates assembly, but will he be willing to make it a real rank and file body with legislative power? He is for a strong stewards organization, but his own is thoroughly undemocratic. Also, Dempsey has a habit, all too common among labor leaders, of backing off from a fight if it appears dangerous to his career. To his great credit, Dempsey led out-of-state picketing and the fight to put it on a permanent basis, but at too many times, Ed was missing when that extra push was needed. Similarly, Ed pretty consistently fought Carnivale and his do-nothing policy during the strike, but Ed always resisted including the ranks in that fight. He backed off from making things too public. In short, Ed has often been too cautious when audacity was needed...Dempsey is too hesitant to include the ranks in real decisions. The ranks of 1101 will have to pressure Dempsey to carry out his program, and will probably have to fight their way into active participation.

"UA believes that 1101, CWA and the labor movement generally has to be rebuilt and revitalized along militant democratic lines. This is a long fight. Dempsey may or may not play an aggressive role in that process. But it is clear that Carnivale and Smith (that's spelled B-E-I-R-N-E) are road blocks to that fight. Get 1101 off dead center, elect Ed Dempsey."

It is our belief that this excerpt, which we have deliberately quoted at length to fend off charges of quotes out of context, substantiates our view that MacKenzie does not share the idea that critical support is a weapon of struggle, not support with reservations. We know that the Transformation Caucus would probably emphasize Dempsey's "shortcomings" less, and perhaps not be so forthright as to say that someone "may or may not play an aggressive role in that process." We are not sure why Tabor did not take up this particular example, but we feel it may be that it is because he, too, would have supported Dempsey if not in the same way.

This leads us to a problem in evaluating where Tabor does stand with regard to the questions before us: His statement on critical support as a weapon of struggle is one we support. Yet he states that critical support is "only justified when the elements we are

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supporting the rank and file. Whom can that possible exclude? No other criterion is given.

We believe, in fact, that Tabor's desire to extend critical support to the MFD leadership, and the reasons he gives in his NAC motion, reveal that he is still tied to the "step-forward" concept, and that this necessarily confuses the correct position of critical support he explains. This is revealed more clearly in the Langdon document on the MFD in Bulletin 39. Langdon, who stands between MacKenzie and Tabor, gives away his notion of critical support when he notes that "The Wall Street Journal decided tactically to give critical support to the MFD." Even though the metaphor is dealt out tongue in cheek, it is revealing. Tabor reveals his approach by emphasizing that we welcome the MFD victory, and that if the MFD victory sparks a wave of union reform movements like it in other unions that will be great, and we welcome that. In this, the step at a time method remains, and our comments on that in the section above apply.

We note that the latest UMW Journal (April 1st) contains a letter from the ACLU explaining that it has been so inspired by the MFD that it will shortly launch a project for further intervention of the state into the labor movement. (In the "interests of the rank and file," of course.) Does Tabor also welcome that, a very logical result of MFD? We hope not.

Langdon notes that the question of critical support to MFD does not involve a principle--and this is correct, in the sense that no class line is crossed, in the way that it was in the entire NAC's support for the French Popular Front slate. But neither is it a question of "mere tactics". When and where critical support is extended reveals a more fundamental approach. In this case the question is whether we welcome (Tabor's word) reformist leadership as something close to a necessary step.

Our Position On Critical Support

The Leninist Tendency has evolved the following general position on the application of the tactic of critical support in this period. We are fully aware, however, that no abstract formula will replace an analysis of the concrete situation and the relationship of forces. It is our method, a rejection of the step forward framework and its replacement with Leninist tactics of struggle, that we emphasize.

Critical support, in the familiar Leninist metaphor, is a weapon, support "like a rope supports a hanged man." To probe the metaphor further, we note that a rope around the neck of a bureaucrat is dangerous to him only if he is moving along a trajectory from which he must make a sharp turn.

To us, the tactic of critical support within the working class movement would thus be applicable when some rival contender for leadership mobilizes support on the basis of some section of that program which is properly ours, that is, can only be carried through by us. This program must be more than the traditional militancy-honesty-democracy of reform bureaucrats--it must contain some hard programmatic point or points, the betrayal of which will stand out in bold relief. His supporters must be able to be shown his betrayal at the time it occurs, so that we, who also share that programmatic point, will have a chance to inherit his base.

In other words, a critically supportable bureaucrat must contain in his program a live, hot contradiction between the program he stands on, and his ability to carry it out, to give us a lever to intervene. Militancy-democracy-honesty, entirely within the bounds of bourgeois trade unionism, gives us no such lever. The MFD is a classic case of this sort of trade union program, without a lever. Dempsey's campaign is another.

On Trade Union Caucuses

The Transformation Caucus

Once again, on this point, the question of the role of leadership, and the question of how consciousness is changed emerge as prominent. The TC wants to build the broadest caucuses possible, and seeks above all, to be the loyal left wing of formations like TURF or the UNC, if only they are viable. Viability is the sole criterion.

That such caucuses may well become viable without us is also blithely ignored by the Transformation Caucus. In fact, it used to be an IS desire to build caucuses that could get along without us! To extend this Pabloism-from-below to bureaucrat or aspiring bureaucrat-led caucuses can only fulfill Trotsky's warning that "we become the squeezed lemon of the bureaucrats." The first clear warnings of that can be found in Art Fox's letter, which the Workers League chose to print in an article attacking the UNC, in the BULLETIN of March 26th. While he kindly omits the IS from the long list of "sects doing their own little, very little thing" in comparison to his big time stuff, he does say that the amendment on the Labor Party "was not aimed at helping to educate the class, but instead was introduced to score "points" against political opponents." The only gratitude the IS gets for introducing the notion he excoriates as "abstentionist" and "negative" is that he doesn't attack us by name. The Transformation Caucus may choose to respond to this attack on its mildest of mild "transitional approaches" by further softness. Other ISers may conclude there's not much in the UNC for us, perhaps on solely pragmatic grounds. Either way, it will be demonstrated that the fruits of opportunism and tailism are bitter indeed. Unless the lesson is learnt it will become a familiar taste.

MacKenzie

MacKenzie's method, to our knowledge, is little different, except that he wants us to be "known" for our notion of the Transitional Program, sort of in the way the CP is "known" for its notion of the "Anti-Monopoly Coalition."

Tabor and His Supporters

We do not now know where Tabor and his supporters stand today. We only know they do not share our approach, as summarized in our program, especially point III. We have a problem in that we have many reasons to believe that the past positions of Tabor and his supporters are no different than the TC and MacKenzie, and these positions have not been repudiated. Yet we hesitate to stick Tabor with positions he has rejected. We will take up these past

positions in the hope that clarification on any changes will help the debate.

For example, in the July Tasks and Perspectives we find that the caucuses we seek to build should be "relatively broad, stable organizational forms" with "organization built at the lowest and most basic level, on the shop floor." (This is accompanied by an analysis of shop floor struggles more typical of Geier.) (Bulletin #24, Page 27.) We find that the only caution on program is that a "caucus cannot be organized on the basis of trade union democracy taken by itself."

More recently and significantly, in discussing TURF in the "MFA Document Discussion" of Industrial Bulletin #2, Tabor says "It should be clear, however, that the MFA document implies at least part of a perspective; that is, it projects attitude toward the existing national rank and file organization in the IBT. It is for building TURF, not destroying it, or raiding it." But since "we should be considering means by which we can influence TURF and move it in a positive direction....It is with this in mind that we tentatively proposed the idea of building a caucus within TURF. This is not meant to be a declaration of war on TURF or its present leadership."

Even more importantly, members of the majority, including an NC member, whom we understand to support the Tabor viewpoint, have put forward and acted on a position within the AFT which we cannot conceivably describe in a comradely fashion. (The relevant documents are to be found in Labor Bulletin #1.) Using a left-sounding cover about program, they argue that even a course of "critical support" for Mieser would be impossible, since we are locked into being the most loyal of UAGers, and that instead we vote for him and keep our mouths shut until "after the convention and in personal contacts." (Miller, Labor Bulletin #1, page 6.)

Wayne Price has a tactical difference with Miller, he is for "quietly abstaining." "We can explain to people "individually and in our newspaper that we oppose Mieser and are disgusted with him." He likens this to support for the MFD, as a "lesser evil," not as a way of struggle. We would like to know where Tabor, Landy and Hobson stand today on the debate in IS Labor Bulletin #1, in which the Transformation Caucus comes out looking like the left wing, since their appetites are toward lower levels of leadership than the top bureaucracy in this instance.

On Breaking With The Old Methods

There is an IS habit of quietly changing positions, but refusing to acknowledge the wrongness of the old ones. It's the period that has changed, is the ready excuse. Thus for community control, for example. We would urge on Tabor that if the new course is to be taken up, the old one be broken with fully. In Tabor's case there is a tendency to read into past documents the new positions, or, as in the case of the article in Bulletin 38, to fail to note an important change in position. (He now believes that we do counterpose our program to that of the MFD.) For example, Tabor

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apparently chooses to continue to stand on his July Tasks and Perspectives. That document also confuses epoch and period and does not call for the labor party to be based on the Transitional Program. Yet on page 1 of this TP document Tabor states that his program, contained in the Tasks and Perspectives document of last year contained "the call for a labor party based on the T.P." and on pages 7-8 he successfully exposes Geier's sliding from epoch to period and attacks it sharply.

(For references: see pages 24-5 of Bulletin #24 for the original version of Tabor's program, pages 31-2 for further elaboration on the labor party; the first section on the economy is, of course, relevant to the question of epoch and period. In addition, there is the fact that it was Geier himself who added the amendment "For a Workers' Government" to the program, which until then was a bridge which did not reach to the other shore.)

In fact, it was these failings which led to Judith Shapiro's statement on the draft Tasks and Perspectives, which is to be found in the NC minutes of last April (National Report 3-4). Items 1 and 2 deal with the confusion of epoch and period; item 4 with the labor party question.

We refer to Judith's hasty and condensed statement not to claim priority to what are, after all, basic principles. Such a claim is neither here nor there, especially in light of the fact that a document with our views was not, in fact, produced.

Rather we wish to underline that all inconsistencies with previous theory and practice must be openly acknowledged by all. That it is the only road forward out of the confusion which is so characteristic of IS politics, and wreaks such hardship on the rank and file earnestly seeking to discover just what is the line, let alone to understand it.

We have other, smaller, differences with the Tabor document which we will present at other times. But above all, as we have noted, we believe our program embodies its logical extension. Caucuses without a transitional program and an understanding of that could not engage in the sort of "critical support" Tabor outlines, that is, Leninist "support." They could not tell the truth. And we, if trapped as loyal left wings, will be swept up when the fight for power is posed, as it will be, not in a fight for reforms, but a fight for reformism. You can welcome this only if you believe that reformism is necessary, a desirable stage on the road to revolutionary consciousness, which you therefore assist and fight for.

We believe too that if one wishes to take Trotsky as a central authority on both method and tactics, then at some point one must confront the entire history of the Shachtmanite movement, which broke with Trotskyism not only on the Russian Question, but also on the relation of Party to Class, because of the Shachtmanites' inability to resist the "current consciousness" of their milieu. The subsequent evolution of the Shachtmanite movement up to the present dispute (in which the Transformation Caucus are the true heirs of Shachtmanism) must be dealt with.

Conclusions

We have summarized our views on this critical debate, and put our finger on what we think are the vital questions. In brief, we think the central questions of party and program are basic in this struggle. The TC wishes to become one with the class, and abandons any role for the revolutionary organization, except "ultimately." With that it abandons program. It proceeds from present consciousness "a step at a time" and deludes itself that genuine agitation will be generally possible in this period. It successfully poses as the real defender of industrialization because it presents that view as a panacea, and projects the shop-floor struggle as a short cut around the unavoidable problem of confronting the present and would-be rotten leaderships of the working class. Since there is no such short cut, when the problem becomes too intense the TC ends up tailing the reformists. MacKenzie occupies a distinct intermediate position. Tabor and his supporters have revived the importance of program based on objective necessity, and the importance of leadership; they have correctly pointed out that our tasks will of necessity be propaganda tasks, and that shortcuts are generally not possible. But they still have not confronted the tasks of taking on the present leaderships, viewing the new wave of reformists as a phenomenon to be welcomed. And while they fight for the Transitional Program they refuse to accept that a trade union caucus, an embryonic leadership, needs that program too, and that however tactfully and skillfully we raise that program, it is necessary to do so now, not "ultimately."

The politics of the IS has consistently been the politics of confusion. There is much clarification needed, and the debate reveals all too clearly the lack of shared assumptions which a revolutionary organization absolutely must have. Thus the debate will be ragged and wearing. But if it is not completed now, it will surely arise again soon. The tensions of the new period we are entering are pulling on the IS too and they will not lessen in intensity. It is, in fact, in the polarization that is occurring, that we find the potential for an historical turning point in the IS tendency -- a return to Trotskyism after 33 years. It is the only revolutionary road forward.

--April 15, 1973

DRAFT PROGRAM OF THE LENINIST TENDENCY

I. We consider the question of the revolutionary party, its tasks and nature, the central axis for revolutionary politics today.

We work to build the revolutionary vanguard, in the United States and internationally, with the aim of creating a democratic centralist world party of socialist revolution, the rebirth of the Trotskyist International.

We reject all views which see today's revolutionaries as part of the "process," presumably semi-spontaneous, which will form the new vanguard at some future, unspecified, date.

"The whole history of the struggle between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks is dotted with this little word 'process.' Lenin always formulated tasks and proposed corresponding methods. The Mensheviks agreed with the same aims by and large, but left their realization to the historic process. There is nothing new under the sun."

-- Leon Trotsky, 1935

We regard those would-be revolutionaries who insist that they are not the vanguard, but instead search for new forces who somehow will become the vanguard, as believing in Pabloism-from-below.

The revolutionary vanguard is that political current which bears the programmatic knowledge necessary to implement the historic goal of the proletariat, the socialist revolution. Its possession of that knowledge is demonstrated in past and present political practice. The vanguard is not necessarily "always correct" but rather correctable -- it is for just such correction that internal democracy exists.

The vanguard strives to become the dominant leadership of the entire working class, struggling to defeat bourgeois ideology within the class and to destroy opponent political tendencies, which are necessarily the organized expression of bourgeois ideology.

The vanguard may or may not lead a significant section of the class at any given instant. Its possible small size, social composition, or isolation from the working class do not necessarily deprive it of its ability to bear the revolutionary program, despite objective pressures toward programmatic deformation thereby created. Such weaknesses are rather barriers which this vanguard must overcome if the program is to be carried out.

The vanguard's programmatic knowledge, socialist consciousness, does not arise spontaneously or organically from within the working class, but is brought into the class from the outside.

It advances in struggle against the bourgeois parochial consciousness of the class.

This knowledge is not simply deducible from first principles but has been developed historically and verified, positively and negatively, in struggle. The elaboration and codification of that knowledge occurred after the October Revolution, in the documents of the first four Congresses of the Communist International, and was defended and carried forward by the Trotskyist movement, and by it alone. Trotskyism is thus no special personal or esoteric doctrine, but rather the revolutionary Marxism of our epoch.

We reject the idea that the future revolutionary party can comprise tendencies -- from reformist to revolutionary -- organized into permanent hostile factions, glued together by common activity and place in the leadership of the class. A revolutionary organization must aim to be ideologically homogeneous, achieving this through internal struggle.

The right of internal struggle, that is, of a minority to seek to replace the existing leadership, is a basic defense against political degeneration. Thus the right to factional democracy, even under exceptional circumstances, can only be modified, preserving its essential content.

Side by side with full internal democracy must go full external unity. We reject the idea of "discipline in action" only, as if the only important work of the party in the class were "actions." Since a major and central part of our work in the class necessarily consists of propaganda, winning individuals to a complex set of ideas, we must have unity, subordination of minority to majority, at this point too. A relaxation of this policy can only be permitted under exceptional circumstances.

A mass revolutionary party, whose tasks will be primarily agitational, and whose separation between members and non-members will be less enforceable than those of a small propaganda group, will naturally have less ability and reason to restrict the "external" expression of minority views.

The revolutionary organization must be strictly centralized, with its leading bodies having full authority to direct all public political work by lower bodies and party members. The organization must have a total monopoly on the public political life of its members. In deciding on organizational fundamentals we are guided by the principle that the organization must fit itself to lead the revolutionary struggle, and not try futilely to incorporate guarantees against a possible post-revolutionary degeneration. The victory of the world revolution is the only guarantee against such degeneration, and thus revolutionary politics, not organizational safeguards, are central.

We believe fully that the crisis of the era is the crisis of leadership; we see this verified around the world today.

"The chief historical instrument of our epoch is the party of the proletariat. This instrument must be forged of the best steel, well tempered and sharply ground. Only if such an instrument exists is it possible to work successfully upon the raw historic material."

-- Leon Trotsky, 1934

II. We have left behind the post World War II period of relative capitalist stability, a period allowed in history largely by the criminal betrayals of the Stalinists and Social-Democrats, and the weakness of the revolutionary forces. Thus the surface appearance of the epoch, the epoch of world wars and revolutions, of imperialist decay, is being decisively stripped away. But we do not expect the oncoming crisis to be immediately precipitous. Rather we foresee an era of increasing difficulties for the world and national economies, deepening stagnation, intensifying attack on the working class, increasing social crisis and turmoil. As Trotsky pointed out in 1921, as long as capitalism continues to exist it will inhale and exhale. Thus we do not project a smooth downhill slide. Rather we project -- as Trotsky did then -- a period in which "upswings can be only of a superficial and primarily speculative character, while the crises become more and more prolonged and deeper-going." As crises sharpen, so do the tasks of the revolutionaries, who have the mission of raising the subjective consciousness of the working class to an understanding of the objective necessities. We must draw the conclusion to the working class that capitalism cannot solve its problems, and offer a program which will, a program for struggle which will bring the working class to the realization of its historic task -- the conquest of state power. This transitional program will in the future be a program for agitation. Today the tasks of revolutionaries and revolutionary program are primarily propaganda. A common and dangerous delusion is that genuine mass agitation is generally possible today. This is either a cynical ploy or a serious and energy draining misapprehension.

We do not believe that the masses can be tricked or prodded into struggle by clever public relations. The task today is primarily the forging of a revolutionary cadre within the advanced layer of the working class. This cadre must struggle to win the authority within the class which will enable it, in periods of spontaneous mass upsurge, to lead massive class struggles. The basic purpose of all work among the masses undertaken by the vanguard at this time must be to win future cadre to the full transitional program. Unless a layer of revolutionary proletarian militants is created by the conscious vanguard during this period, the new upsurge, which must take place, will be crushed, dissipated, or channeled by the reformists back into the camp of bourgeois consciousness. We counterpose our propagandist approach to the phoney and patronizing "agitationists" and their hypocritical charges of "abstentionism."

Our primary responsibility, as always, is to speak the truth. We adapt the style of our presentation, but not its content, to the period. Our isolation will be overcome, not by opportunist maneuvers, but by the imperatives of history.

We have presented our estimate of the immediate period. We further believe that the epoch as a whole will again present, perhaps for the last time, the alternatives of socialism or barbarism to the working class. It is thus to our generation that the awesome challenge to lead in the liberation of mankind is presented. To be capable of meeting that challenge is the reason for our existence.

III. "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."

-- Leon Trotsky, 1929

The trade unions in the United States are the only mass organizations of the working class. Though trade unions can never be said to represent the whole working class, and are defensive organizations only, the winning of the trade unions from the present rotten leadership is nonetheless posed as a central task for revolutionaries.

We reject all open and half-hidden theories which project our growth in the trade unions as coming from our reputation as "the best militants." Being the best militants is necessary for our very existence in the unions, but our growth within them will be as a result of our winning fellow militants to our full political program, a program which will often be counterposed to the ideology of simple militant trade-unionism.

We reject the view which looks forward to the replacement of the present labor lieutenants of capitalism with a more sophisticated brand of left-talking reformist long known to European workers. As long as unions accept the boundaries of capitalism they cannot serve even their defensive functions adequately. Thus we see the objective necessity for revolutionary leadership in the unions, combined with a great subjective backwardness on the part of the rank and file. The coming period will give us enormous opportunities to educate this rank and file and expose inadequate leaderships.

Yet revolutionary forces are far from being able to contest directly for power within the unions. There are years of patient base-building to do, combined with party growth outside the unions, before the question of actual power will be posed in more than a few exceptional cases. To be able to seize these opportunities when they do arise, revolutionaries must already have been in the unions, have a base and a history.

In trade union work, a vehicle is needed through which the revolutionaries can project their views, attract and educate sympathizers, and eventually bid for power. The word "caucus,"

although usually applied to power-seeking coalitions of divergent elements, is an adequate and useful name for such a vehicle, as it both bears the promise of an intention to struggle for leadership, and renders the revolutionaries internal to the life of the union. The basis of such caucuses is the program by which they are distinguished from other trade union groupings, the transitional program for working class power. However, the specific style of presentation of this program will be adapted to the conditions the caucus is working in. Of course, these caucuses will also vigorously struggle over immediate issues and democratic rights, taking the lead where they can.

Apart from the traditional elements of the transitional program applied to the unions, including the demand of the workers' government, we stress opposition to all forms of intervention by the bourgeois state in the unions. We sharply condemn any attempt to involve the state in the workers' movement, no matter what the immediate tactical advantages and exigencies may be.

In the course of building a revolutionary opposition in the trade unions, entries and blocs may be principled and desirable. Today our estimate is that such combinations necessarily would lead to opportunism, since the revolutionary forces -- operating from a position of organizational weakness in the union -- could wield little independent weight and could be nothing but a left-cover appendage of the larger bureaucratic formation. Moreover, the current "broad" formations are not only unsavory, but rarely can claim to lead large groups of workers. We would give critical support to such formations, or to competing bureaucrats, only if there were some sharply prominent programmatic demand held by one side -- going beyond the simply promises of militancy, honesty, democracy -- such that its base can recognize its betrayal at the point when it occurs. We would then stand a chance to inherit the base, as the only consistent fighters for the betrayed programmatic point. Such cases will be common in the future, but they are rare now.

In all combinations we do engage in, whatever the circumstances, we are guided by this principle, expressed by Trotsky:

"The various agreements, (blocs, coalitions, compromises) with other organizations, unavoidable in the course of the class struggle, are permissible only on the condition that the party always turns its own face towards the class, always marches under its own banner, acts in its own name, and clearly explains to the masses the aims and limits within which it concludes the given agreement."
--1931

IV. In all struggles of the oppressed we point the way toward victory through class struggle. We firmly reject the notion that there can be a "classless" women's or Black movement, or a classless national liberation movement. We oppose nationalism and feminism as reactionary ideologies. As a way of breaking through the nationalism of oppressed peoples we support the right of self-determination of nations. We point out that the only road to national liberation in the 20th Century is through permanent

We do not characterize Blacks in the U.S. today as a nation or national minority, but as an oppressed caste, segregated in the lowest levels of American society, and overwhelmingly at the bottom of the working class. Our main programmatic emphasis for Black workers, whose consciousness is at present far ahead of that of white workers, is the raising of demands which can lead to united struggle, not further division. For this reason we counterpose "Equal access to all jobs, equal work for equal pay, jobs for all" to the divisive scheme of preferential hiring. We reject the anti-class concept of "Black control of the Black community," which in its concrete applications can only be either utopian or outrightly reactionary. The Black question is a central question for the American revolution and recruitment of Black Trotskyists is vital for a revolutionary organization in the coming period.

V. The oppression of women is deeply rooted in class society, and the liberation of women a vital part of the revolutionary Marxist program. While we work constantly to integrate the woman question into every aspect of our work, we do not adapt to feminist ideology, but seek an uncompromising class struggle approach. We are strong opponents of the idea of women's caucuses within revolutionary organizations, a repugnant anti-Leninist concept, and a barrier, not an aid, in the struggle.

A central part of our conceptions on the liberation of women is the idea that the workers' power will have no material interest in the exploitation of women, and will necessarily be hostile to their oppression. Thus the victorious revolution will immediately begin to undercut that oppression and begin at once to provide the material basis for the replacement for the necessity of the family. Although male chauvinism will not disappear "automatically" -- what does?-- we counterpose this view to the vision of a protracted and bitter struggle, with victory an open question, by "independent" women's organizations after a triumphant revolution.

VI. We stand for the unconditional defense of the USSR and the other Stalinist states against imperialism, while remaining implacable enemies of the bureaucratic caste which governs them. We characterize the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers state, in which the working class once held power, and we identify China, Cuba, North Vietnam, North Korea, Outer Mongolia, Yugoslavia, Albania, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Rumania, and Bulgaria as deformed workers states. We believe the achievement of a nationalized, plannable economy to be a victory for the working class, as it is the mode of production appropriate for the rule of the proletariat and for it alone. We thus defend this conquest against imperialism and the threat of capitalist restoration.

We recognize no third camp in the battle between Stalinist countries and capitalism, declaring that it is not a matter of indifference to the international working class whether capitalism is restored in the Soviet Union or the deformed workers states. This in no way leads us to adapt to the Stalinists. We recognize the qualitative gulf between Stalinist states and workers states as they will be

after the political revolution, which we strive for. Our unconditional defense against imperialism never deflects our hostility to the Stalinist bureaucracy, which threatens the conquests internally and through the betrayal of international proletarian revolution, as surely as capitalism threatens them from without.

VII. We characterize the International Socialists as a centrist organization which we work to win to Trotskyism. We understand the essence of the history of the tendency to which it belongs, Shachtmanism, as a history of adaptation, opportunism, vacillation. We see as a basic characteristic the willingness to drop key parts of program when it seems opportune, and we note a literally congenital inability to recognize the class line.

This is a sharp indictment. But once again, to quote Trotsky's judgment of a similar group, "We do not at all mean to say that a group carrying upon its shoulders such a heavy burden of opportunistic crimes against the revolution is doomed once and for all." To change requires a complete re-evaluation and rejection of its past. That is the task to which our tendency is committed.

The Leninist Tendency:

Dick Edwards
Anna Hall
Doug Hayes
Bill Sanders
Judith Shapiro

This draft program is the basis on which we have formed our tendency. We do not, however, regard it as finished, and not just in the sense that no program is ever finished. We put it forward at this time not just to state where we stand, but to encourage others in the IS to communicate with us, indicating their points of agreement and differences, so that we may begin an exchange. It is our hope that such communications, combined with an intervention into the present debates, can cohere a national tendency in the IS to fight for Trotskyism, that is, principled revolutionary Marxism.

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