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CORRECTION
TO "GAY LIBERATION AND CLASS STRUGGLE,"
by David Thorstad
SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 30 No. 2

Page 15, right column, first paragraph, beginning line 3 should read:

"Variations on these two arguments are found in the pronouncements of many of the church Fathers and have found their way into the wording of nearly all the laws against gay sex in the United States today.

"Tertullian called homosexual acts 'frenzies of the lusts which exceed the laws of nature.'"

INTERVENING IN THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT

by David Keepnews, Upper West Side Branch
New York Local

DO WE WANT TO INTERVENE?

Although (as of this writing) the literary discussion has failed to reflect this, it is apparent—from some informal and incidental discussion, and from opinions voiced in the last preconvention discussion—that the question of whether or not the party should intervene at all in the gay liberation movement is one on which there is not unanimity.

The party has already designated the thrust of the gay liberation movement as something we support. At the last party convention, a motion was passed to reaffirm our support for full civil and human rights for gay people, and for the struggles being conducted to win those rights. *Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization*, the political resolution passed by the convention, identified the gay liberation movement as part of the new radicalization. Although there will, no doubt, be differing ideas put forth in the course of this discussion as to the specific political nature of the gay movement—which I do not want to take up here—the party's stated public position is already one of support to the thrust of the gay movement and of support to the specific democratic demands which it has raised.

Of course, there are different ways in which the party could intervene in this movement. To some degree, we have carried out what could be termed a limited propaganda intervention already—through covering it to some extent in our press, through expressing support for gay rights in our press and our campaign, etc. We are capable, however—if the party so decides—of carrying out a much more active intervention: of carrying out a fractional intervention in certain citywide and campus gay groups, of working consistently with other forces in the gay movement to support gay rights bills and defense cases, etc. The former kind of intervention is one which we have carried out for some time now, and which flows directly from our support to gay rights; the latter is one which the party can decide to take up or not.

The Gay Movement is Where We Are

The gay liberation movement is accepted by most young people today as a serious and necessary movement just as they accept the antiwar movement, the Black liberation movement, the women's movement, and other movements for social change. The gay movement can be found where our own comrades are active—in the mass movements, and especially on the campuses. The gay movement is an important political phenomenon on a large number of campuses and high schools throughout the United States. As with the other mass movements, the healthiest and most activist layers in the gay movement come from this arena; the gay movement is thriving and growing on these campuses. The phenomenon of high school and campus gay groups is something which should be discussed at greater length in the discussion on the gay movement which is

to take place in the YSA. It is obvious, however—and it needs to be stated here—that the gay movement is one of the components which make up the political life of an area where the Trotskyist movement is attempting to gain political hegemony.

The gay movement is an intrinsic part of the radicalization and gay activists are an important component on the people whom we are trying to reach with our ideas. The gay movement is composed, for the most part, of the milieu we are currently seeking to reach and recruit to our movement.

Opportunities

The opportunities open to us in the gay movement, should we decide to intervene, are very large indeed. The total absence of almost every rival political tendency, coupled with the unbridled hostility shown toward gay people and the gay movement by almost every opponent of ours—most importantly, the Communist Party and the Young Workers Liberation League—makes our movement the clearest choice for those gay people seeking to join an organization with a full program for changing society. Of course, opposing political ideas—not necessarily reflected in any organized opponent on the left—are strong in the gay movement; we will find no lack of political argument within this movement. With the healthier elements of the gay liberation movement, however, there exist a number of opportunities for collaboration. Through our intervention in the gay movement, we could prove our willingness to build the movement and to collaborate with any and all elements within the movement in order to win full rights for gay people. As with the other mass movements, it is through this process that we will be able to make major gains not only for the movement itself, but—in both recruits and influence—for the Trotskyist movement.

No matter how strongly we support gay rights, however, without showing an active participation in the gay movement, we stand to miss out on a good deal of opportunities. There exist now a number of activists in the gay movement who deeply respect the support we have shown for gay rights, and who tend to agree with us politically, but whom we will not be able to recruit until it is clear to them that membership in our movement does not mean ending their activity in the gay movement. Without our active intervention in this movement it is simply not clear to gay activists that being a member of our movement means continuing to be an activist in the gay movement as well. Therefore, while in the course of being exposed (through reading our press or our campaign material, or through discussion) to our full political program, it is possible—and in many cases likely—for gay activists to agree with our ideas, no large-scale recruitment out of this movement can begin until we begin to intervene concretely and to build this movement.

HOW DO WE WANT TO INTERVENE?

Most comrades will, no doubt, agree that the discussion article submitted by Barry Sheppard, entitled "Concerning the Gay Liberation Movement and the Party's Orientation To It," is a useful and necessary first contribution to the party's literary discussion of the gay liberation movement. What I do find disturbing, however, in his article is the third portion, wherein he presents his opinion of what the party should be doing in the gay liberation movement. He says:

It is my opinion that it would be a mistake to carry out a national intervention in the gay liberation movement at the present time. . . .

The tactical question of how to relate to . . . local developments and local gay liberation organizations will vary from branch to branch and at different times, and should be decided by the branches in light of the general overall political priorities of the party, and the resources of the branches.

The most disturbing part of this opinion is the ambiguity of the term "national intervention." Comrade Sheppard unfortunately does not make it clear precisely what he means by this term. Does he think that we should utilize our press in intervening in the gay movement? Should our intervention be directed and coordinated on a national scale? Should a resolution on the gay movement and our orientation to it be adopted by the party nationally? Unfortunately, he does not make it clear what his opinion is on these questions.

To a certain degree, the terminology is clear. One can assume that a "national intervention" is the kind that we currently carry out in the antiwar movement, the Black liberation struggle, the women's movement and the Chicano movement. In all of these movements, we have discussed and adopted resolutions on a national scale; we utilize our press to intervene in them; our intervention in them is coordinated on a national scale. Therefore, what remains in need of clarification is the *extent* to which Comrade Sheppard feels that the party's intervention should *not* be similar to our intervention in the other mass movements.

Comrade Sheppard is correct in stating that no national gay liberation organization exists at the present time in which we could intervene, and that there do not seem to be any prospects for building one in the near future. In the Black movement and the Chicano movement, however—even though recent openings indicate that this may soon change—there likewise exist no national formations in which we can intervene consistently. Yet we are currently conducting vigorous interventions in both these movements. The last party convention adopted its first resolution on the Chicano movement; the party has adopted resolutions on the Black liberation movement at past conventions, and the last convention heard a report given on the Black struggle. Our press deals regularly with questions facing these movements. Although recent developments in both of these movements point to the possibilities of "national interventions"—in the sense of those we carry out in the antiwar movement and the women's movement through NPAC and WONAAC and the actions called by them—in the near future, the fact

is that the major work of our interventions has been on a branch-by-branch basis. Still, we obviously have taken a position on these movements—their character, their organizational forms, the political questions facing them, the programmatic demands which we propose for them, etc.—on a *national* scale. In my opinion, the same is necessary for the gay movement.

The gay movement is not a phenomenon that has appeared in city after city through coincidence—it is a *national* phenomenon. The gay liberation movement—whether in New York, Detroit, Cleveland, Houston, D. C., San Francisco, or anywhere else—has a single dynamic to it; it is one movement that has taken shape—so far—in many local formations. Naturally, local issues have come up and will continue to do so. Barry Sheppard cites the example of the struggle around the refusal of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents to hire gay activist Michael McConnell; other examples exist—such as the campaign waged for Intro. 475, a bill before the New York city council which would ban discrimination against gay people in housing and employment; or the defense campaign waged following an attack on gay activists leafletting the Inner Circle dinner at the New York Hilton Hotel in April. In all these struggles, we have been able to make limited propaganda interventions around our support for gay rights. These local issues, however, are not really a point of contention. When such an issue comes up—in any movement—in any city, it is obviously the branch in that particular city which decides what form of intervention to carry out and how to go about it. When the right to abortion in New York, for example, was under attack by the "Right to Life" forces, it was the comrades in New York who took responsibility for the struggle around that issue. Or earlier this year, when police invaded Harlem's Muslim Mosque, it was the responsibility of the Upper West Side branch to formulate what response, if any, the party was to make. And yet, on the basis of these local issues, no one would suggest that our intervention in the Black movement or the women's movement should be viewed as something which is to take place exclusively on a branch-by-branch basis. Such should certainly not be the case in the gay liberation movement.

Even though no national gay liberation organization exists at this time in which we could intervene,* the gay movement must be viewed as a national—in fact, an international—movement of an oppressed group of people struggling for their liberation. There are many questions—both political and organizational—which circulate throughout the entire gay liberation movement, to which we could bring a certain amount of clarification. Obviously, very basic questions such as whether the gay movement should build an independent movement in the streets, or support and pressure individual politicians, are ones which permeate the whole gay movement. They constitute very important discussions in which—especially through our press—we can make our voice heard.

*There does currently exist a National Coalition of Gay Organizations, but this is essentially a coalition of already-existing local gay groups which has come together to formulate a strategy for gay activists in 1972—which thus far has meant organizing to influence the Democratic National Convention.

Combating Red-Baiting

Another problem which we will have to confront more directly in the gay movement—and again where our press can be quite effective—is the whole question of redbaiting in the movement. Although I understand New York to be the bastion of this occurrence, it has obvious national ramifications and significance. It is also a question where in the gay movement in particular our opponenets have been able to cloud issues and distort matters especially successfully. Tendencies within the gay movement which have full-blown political disagreements with us have attempted continually to hide these behind, for example, the fact that (according to them) we are "anti-gay" because of our past membership policy. Through the vigorous use of our press, we can dispel much of the rumor-mongering, fabrication and distortion that has been able to sustain a certain degree of hostility towards us among some basically healthy elements of the gay movement. Again, it is necessary to view red-baiting against us as a *national* question in the gay movement, and one which we can combat through one aspect of a "national intervention" in the gay movement—the use of our press.

INTERVENING IN ALREADY-EXISTING GROUPS

As is indicated in the reports on the gay liberation probe which were given at Oberlin last year (and which were printed in *Internal Information Bulletin* No. 3 in 1971)—and as can also be seen from reading a sampling of the gay movement press—gay liberation groups exist in most major cities (and many smaller ones) across the country, including most of the cities where there are branches. The phenomenon of campus and high school gay groups, as I indicated before, is something which deserves to be discussed more fully within the YSA discussion on the gay movement.

In most of these cities, there also exist citywide gay liberation groups. Although—as Barry Sheppard points out in his article—the specific tactical orientation taken toward different groups in various cities will end up being a decision for each branch, certain similarities exist among enough of these groups so that the shape of our intervention into them can be easily discussed in this article, as well as throughout the literary discussion.

Gay Activists Alliance

In my opinion, the party stands to make some important gains through intervening in formations such as they Gay Activists Alliance in New York City. (Organizations similar to the N.Y. GAA have been formed in several cities around the country; many of them go by the same name.) Although in many cases—in New York especially—the GAA-type organizations have a consciously reformist leadership, these groups have become a pole for many of the more serious and activist-minded elements in the gay liberation movement. As was described by many comrades reporting on the probe, many of these GAA-type organizations were formed as a conscious reaction to the ultraleft and inward-turning bend becoming apparent in many of the Gay Liberation Fronts and other specifically "radical" gay groups around the country. Most of them have been formed specifically to be—as the name implies—*activist* gay organizations, counterposing themselves to the social-club approach of many

of the old homophile groups and the get-your-heads-together, "livingroom homophile" attitude of the GLFs.

The GAA in N.Y. engages in several kinds of activities, some of which are social. The most well-known and well-attended of these social activities is their weekly dance, which attracts several hundred people (all the weekly gay dances in New York City total over 1,000 people). Aside from being an important service for the gay community, these dances have some noteworthy political qualities. Firstly, they are consciously publicized as an alternative to the oppressive Mafia-run gay bars. Also, they play an important role in bringing together hundreds upon hundreds of gay people, as gay people, and instilling a certain amount of consciousness among themselves as an oppressed group. The GAA has been able to tie in their dances with political activity quite effectively. One night, for example, they ended their dance an hour earlier than usual, and were able to use those at the dance to stage a protest against City Councilman Saul Sharison's refusal to act on Intro. 475—the gay rights bill—which was then being stalled in the city council committee which Sharison heads.

In New York, the GAA is broken down into various committees. Some of these are responsible for specific functions—such as dances, films, etc. Others—such as its Municipal committee and its Legal committee—have taken responsibility for specific campaigns in which the GAA has been involved, such as the Intro. 475 struggle, and the defense campaign around the attack at the Hilton Hotel. These campaigns, it should be noted, have been—along with the annual Christopher Street Liberation Day action held every June—the major projects to be undertaken by N.Y. gay liberation groups over the past period, and the GAA has headed up building all of them.

Organizations formed along the same lines as the N.Y. GAA—that is, activist-oriented groups organized around the single issue of gay liberation—have sprung up in many cities across the country, some of them as a direct result of a national tour by some N.Y. GAA leaders last summer. In New York City, roughly half-a-dozen local GAA-type groups, in addition to the citywide GAA, exist throughout the New York metropolitan area. The GAA-type organization—as is recognized even by many of its opponents—is clearly the dominant form of organization within the gay movement.

In Conclusion

As stated previously, objective conditions dictate that any active intervention which we undertake in the gay movement will be done almost entirely on a branch-by-branch or citywide scale. It is, however, through recognizing the gay movement as a national (and international) movement, composed mainly of serious, radicalizing young people—and acting on that recognition—that we will aid the success of this movement and make major gains for the party. Regardless of whatever problems in organization or leadership the gay movement may experience, it has proven itself to be a rapidly growing, geographically expanding, serious movement of an oppressed group struggling to win its liberation. It is through understanding its importance and its seriousness, and setting our sights on building this movement and making the most gains possible, that we will be able to make those gains.

July 3, 1972

GAY ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION

by Kendall Green, Upper West Side Branch,
New York Local

Barry Sheppard states in his discussion article on the party's orientation towards the gay liberation movement that, "Gays are not a class, with a special relation to the means of production, nor an oppressed nationality, nor do they play a special role in the family or any other social structure. . . . Gay people play no special social role." Gay people are oppressed as a group, and that oppression leads to very definite forms of economic exploitation.

While little investigation and no statistical analysis has been done on the economic exploitation of gays, we realize that people who do not fit straight stereotypes are discriminated against in jobs. A few are employed in certain occupations where open gays are tolerated such as hairdressers, designers, actors, poets, and musicians; however the overwhelming majority of open gays would not find openings in these occupations. More or less blatant gays are sometimes permitted to work as department store clerks, in telephone solicitation jobs or in travel agencies. All of these jobs are most often unorganized, seasonal, and underpaid.

The majority of gay people are not immediately recognizable as gay, but they also face economic discrimination. Those who have been arrested for their sexual preferences cannot be hired for a large number of jobs where arrest records are checked. Often arrest reports are directly sent to employers, thus in Chicago thirty people lost their jobs following a raid on a gay nightclub even though charges were later dropped.

Some employers hire detective agencies to check on the sexual orientation of prospective employees, especially for managerial positions. Vincent Gillen, founder of Fidelifacts, a detective agency, commented that: "Establishing that someone is a homosexual is often difficult, but I go on the rule of thumb that if one looks like a duck, walks like a duck, associates only with ducks and quacks like a duck, he is probably a duck." Another agency, Retail Credit Company maintains files on more than 45 million people in the United States and sends out 35 million reports on these people each year including reports of homosexuality. Many jobs that involve working with money, stocks, or guard duty require bonding, which is unavailable to those with arrest records or to those the bonding agency suspects are homosexual.

Insurance companies also investigate their clients and will often refuse to issue insurance to suspected gays or do so only at greatly increased premiums. Allstate Insurance Company, for example, not only denies or cancels insurance for suspected gays, but they file a copy of their report with the police, the credit bureau, the gay's employer, and the insurance bureau. Insurance is a prerequisite for opening a small business or entering many professions. Banks and small loan companies often refuse to grant loans to suspected homosexuals. Household Finance Corporation has been picketed by gays for discrimination.

Security clearances are required for many jobs and are impossible for gays to obtain. A recent court decision may force the Department of Defense to reinstate a security clearance which they had taken away from a person who came out publicly as gay.

Federal Civil Service Commission regulations have considered homosexual activity grounds for rejecting a job applicant or firing an employee for many years. However during the late 1940s and early '50s, a witchhunt against homosexuals, Communists, socialists and others was instituted. Although the data is incomplete and overlaps in some cases, we know that 420 federal employees were discharged as "sex perverts" from 1947 to 1950. The State Department alone got rid of 425 homosexuals by 1953. 830 more were fired from federal jobs from 1953 to 1955. The State Department has kept up an average of 30 dismissals a year since then.

In 1950, a Senate subcommittee was established to investigate the employment of homosexuals and other sex perverts in the government. This subcommittee estimated that another 1700 applicants for federal jobs were rejected because of suspected homosexuality. Of course, thousands probably resigned from federal employment rather than face the possibility of exposure.

The subcommittee's report, which is the basis for present federal exclusionary employment policies, found that gay people were "not proper persons to be employed in the Government for two reasons; first they are generally unsuitable and second they are security risks." Gay people are unsuitable because their acts are criminal, they are frequently victimized by blackmailers, they lack emotional stability, they have weakened moral fibers (whatever that is?), they have a corrosive influence on other employees, they entice normal individuals to engage in perverted practices, and they will attempt to place other homosexuals in government jobs. The report cautioned that: "One homosexual can pollute a Government office."

The charge that gay people are a security risk is often accepted in view of the harsh penalties proscribed for homosexual activity. However a study of hundreds of espionage and treason cases throughout the world shows only two cases where a homosexual was blackmailed into handing over governmental secrets. Heterosexuals are far more likely to divulge secrets because of love affairs.

Beginning in 1962, the exclusionary practices of the federal government have come under attack by gay groups through court suits, picket lines and by publicizing the government's policy. In an official reply to the Mattachine Society of Washington in 1965, Civil Service Commission Chairman John C. Macy, Jr., rejected (a) the "spurious" designation of homosexuals as a class or minority group, (b) the idea that homosexuals are discriminated against, (c) the view that private consensual adult homosexual conduct should cease to be a bar to federal employment, and (d) that the commission pries into the

private lives of persons seeking or holding government jobs.

Gay males face another form of oppression through the selective service system. On the pre-induction and induction physical forms, the draftee is supposed to check homosexual tendencies if he suffers from this "disease." If he does check the box, the army psychiatrist will question him about his sexuality to make sure the draftee is not faking it. The army will then decide whether or not to take him. If it does not, then the draftee will receive a 4F classification. This does not end his problems, since all employers want to know the draft status of any male over 18. If the ex-draftee lists 4F as his classification, his employer will require him to sign a release allowing the employer to discover the reason for the 4F classification.

If, for one reason or another, the army does draft a homosexual, then his problems are compounded. Although some gays are able to operate without disclosure in the armed forces, 2000 to 3000 are given less than honorable discharges each year for homosexual behavior. As the army states:

It is the policy of the Department of the Army that homosexual personnel will not be permitted to serve in the Army in any capacity; prompt separation of homosexuals is mandatory. . . . Knowing participation in a homosexual act or strong tendencies towards such acts constitute sufficient basis for proceeding hereunder. . . .

Gay males and females who enlist in the army or other branches of the service are treated similarly. If the armed forces suspects a soldier of participating in homosexual acts, or someone confesses in order to get out of the service, an investigation is ordered to reveal the partners and the "type of homosexual" involved. Class I homosexuals are those who used force, fraud, or seduction and they are usually courtmartialed, imprisoned, fined, and given Bad Conduct or Dishonorable Discharges. Class II homosexuals are those who acted by mutual consent. This class includes the majority of gays discharged by the military, and they are usually administratively processed and given Undesirable Discharges. Those who demand a hearing are a little more likely to receive a General Discharge. Class III homosexuals have had no homosexual relations while in the service. Their "crime" is that they associate with "known homosexuals" or admit to homosexual tendencies or acts prior to entering the service. In exceptional cases, Class III homosexuals may be retained in the service; some are given Honorable Discharges, although most receive General or Undesirable Discharges. There have been several legal challenges this year to the less-than-honorable discharges given to gay soldiers.

The effect of a less-than-honorable discharge on gay servicemen has been studied by Colin Williams and Martin Weinberg. They found that gay servicemen who received less-than-honorable discharges suffered greater difficulties in finding employment, had more trouble at work related to their homosexuality, more periods of unemployment, and were more likely to attempt suicide. The economic effect of a less-than-honorable discharge is easy to understand since most employers insist on seeing a job hunter's discharge papers and anyone familiar with the discharge form can discover the reason for the less-

than-honorable discharge. For many servicemen their discharge papers are their only job references. The SWP has some experience in fighting against the Undesirable Discharges given to our comrades and other servicemen for political reasons. We fight against these discharges because of the serious effect they have on the GI antiwar movement as well as the individual who receives the discharge.

Another aspect of gay economic discrimination is blackmail. The overwhelming majority of blackmail cases involve homosexuality because the blackmailer knows the victim will not go to the police. The police themselves often entrap homosexuals in order to receive bribes. Gay bars and baths are expected to pay bribes to the police, alcoholic beverage control inspectors, politicians, Mafia gangsters, etc., and pass the cost on to their clientele who cannot turn elsewhere for socializing. Supervisors often "blackmail" gays in large bureaucracies by requiring them to accept the worst tasks, work the longest hours, stay in the lowest paying positions, while the bureaucrat "protects" the gay from being fired and thrown out into the cruel anti-homosexual world.

To protect themselves against exposure, gays who do not openly participate in the gay community or have gay friends often put on a "brestplate of righteousness" by participation in conservative political groups, church affairs, or civic groups. As Laud Humphreys states in *Tearoom Trade*: "Motivated by his own awareness of the discreditable nature of his secret behavior, the covert deviant develops a presentation of self that is respectable to a fault. His whole life style becomes an incarnation of what is proper and orthodox." Humphreys finds that those participants in tearoom trade (public restroom sex) who do participate in the gay community are more liberal in their political philosophy.

Despite the lack of a statistical analysis of the incomes of gays, we can draw certain conclusions from the kinds of economic discrimination that gays face. Blatant gays face extreme economic discrimination along with a few straights who may be identified as gay due to stereotyped images of homosexuality. Only a few types of jobs are open to blatant gays, most of which are low-paying. They would be the "last hired and first fired" from normal jobs. They would be unable to obtain insurance, bonding or loans to start their own business.

Gays who are not as obvious about their sexual preferences would experience less discrimination. It is difficult for a person to completely hide their gayness from close associates. Many straights are suspected of being gay and discriminated against because of that suspicion. Due to the various stereotyped images of gay people, there is no type of behavior which is above suspicion. In addition, the development of the gay liberation movement has given millions of gay people pride in their sexuality, making it more difficult for them to conform to the sick, sexist image needed to pass for straight. Thus while millions of gays are not immediately identifiable as gay, their sexuality often becomes suspect at a later date and they may be fired or not promoted in a job.

Because their sexuality is likely to be suspect, many gays avoid those areas of employment which require security clearance or investigation. Many also avoid jobs in the public light, where they would be fired if anyone discovered or suspected their gayness. Gays are unlikely

to invest time and money in training for a profession if they may be denied permission to practice that profession at a later date. California exchanges data on teachers with other states to avoid hiring gay teachers. Thus either by design or accident, gays would tend to take jobs where personal life is a largely irrelevant factor in employment—jobs such as factory workers or clerks.

This is confirmed by the Kinsey study *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Kinsey found that those who had some college education had the lowest level of homosexual outlet.* Those who had only a high school education had a five-fold higher level of homosexual activity and those with only a grade school education had a three-fold higher level. In studying the relationship between sexuality and occupation, Kinsey found that the lowest level of homosexual outlet was among professionals. Lower white-collar workers had 4.5 times higher outlet, semi-skilled workers 7 times higher, and day laborers 11 times higher homosexual activity than did the professionals. Kinsey's study of women indicates that before 20 years of age, less edu-

cated women have a higher incidence of homosexual attraction. After 20, the pattern is dramatically reversed probably because of the delay in marriage for better educated women. Kinsey found little relationship between a woman's parents occupation and the chance that she would have homosexual contacts. Kinsey did not include information of the occupation of the women themselves in relation to their level of homosexuality.

Although most gays are not immediately stigmatized as homosexuals, they are found in the same types of jobs that women and national minorities occupy. Gays can be branded an undesirable by arrest, a 4F classification, an Undesirable Discharge, or an investigator's report for the very activity which makes them gay, a unique form of oppression. While gays are not a class, national minority, nor a sex, they do constitute a sexual minority whose oppression results in economic exploitation very similar to that faced by women and national minorities. Gays, women, and national minorities do suffer from different forms of oppression, but it is important to realize that the result of these unique forms of oppression is a similar economic exploitation.

July 11, 1972

*Those interested in Kinsey's data are referred to tables 90 and 114 and pages 357 to 362 in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Table 131 and 132 pages 459-461 in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (paperback edition).

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION ON GAY LIBERATION

by Nat Weinstein, San Francisco Branch

As of this writing there has yet to be a systematic presentation of theoretical arguments supporting the proposition that gay liberation represents a factor with significant potential in the American revolution. There have been, however, quite a few articles in internal bulletins and in our press commenting positively along these lines. There are also the public statements of party spokespersons that help reveal what some of the arguments are. Finally, there is Comrade Sheppard's contribution which in its own way presents some of the issues on which lines of thought are drawn.

This hodge-podge, unfortunately, must substitute for a positive presentation of a thesis which is logically and by past practice the only proper way to begin a discussion.

* * *

Comrade Barry Sheppard, in his article opening up the literary discussion of the gay liberation movement, makes a number of very important and correct observations of the nature of gay oppression. But his general analysis of the nature and meaning of the oppression of gay people is faulty in places and doesn't go far enough. It ends, among other things, at the point it really should begin. And the conclusions contained in his opinions of what the party's orientation should be is, I believe, in error.

Specifically, while correctly noting that unlike workers, oppressed national minorities and women, gay people play no special subordinate social role, he concludes merely that "There is not a precise analogy, therefore, between the oppression of gays and the oppression of workers, oppressed nationalities or women." There is more involved than mere imprecision in an analogy, in this fundamental difference in the social and economic position of gays.

I will try to prove in the following pages that because of the fact that gays play no special subordinate social role, and all it implies, (a) it can be readily shown that they are not *exploited* because they are gay, (b) the great majority of gays escape overt oppression—and there is no reasonable basis to expect that that will change, (c) there are no effective social bonds linking gays together, (d) there are no effective links with the exploited and oppressed layers of society, and (e) while this issue comes under the general heading of the struggle for democracy, like many another struggle for democratic demands but unlike the struggle against the war, for example, it is extremely limited in potential for attracting large masses toward relating to this struggle. And, finally, I hope to prove, these reasons explain why gay liberation cannot play any significant role in the American revolution.

* * *

It goes without saying that all analogies are imperfect; otherwise they wouldn't be analogies, rather the things

being compared would be the same. So it is, that analogies between workers and oppressed nationalities and women are "imprecise." After all, the use of the analogy as a tool is helpful only if the common identities possessed by the components of the analogy are germane to the point being made. The only point, it would seem, of an analogy between gay oppression and the oppression of workers, oppressed nationalities or women, is to say that gay liberation is as fruitful an area of work with as revolutionary a potential as the others—give or take a little. That analogy, we shall see, falls flat on its face!

Now, we must keep in mind that this literary discussion takes place in the context of an atmosphere of confusion in much of the ranks of the party in which this false analogy has played no little part. While it is understandable that revolutionary-minded gays seek so far as possible to identify and equate their social condition with other oppressed sectors of society, it seems that many of the exaggerated and untrue assertions made to support this equation have taken considerable hold in the ranks of the party.

Looking back, we remember that in the first stages of the party's intervention into the gay liberation movements, it was widely accepted in the ranks of the party that gay liberation was destined to play as great or nearly as great a role in the revolution as we expect of oppressed nationalities and women. A "precise" analogy was seen between the forces. When this position became untenable as a result of greater experience with the development of gay liberation, the analogy was modified by dropping from the components a quality not affecting gay people but common to the others; *exploitation*. "Oppression" was substituted in its stead to serve as the key common denominator.

Even this proved untenable. How could you seriously equate the quality and extent of the oppression of the three with the one? Gay historians had to reach back into the dark pages of the Inquisition to find a modicum of support for this thesis. A new category was found, readymade, circulating as a popular phrase in the new feminist movement; "psychological oppression."

"Psychological oppression" is an abstraction from both the concepts of exploitation and its derivative, oppression; having little connection with the meaning of oppression as it affects the three basic sectors of society we are considering. It is an abstraction, to say the least, whose size, weight, intensity, etc. resists objective measurement. Nevertheless, the "glue" that now holds the analogy together is provided by the concept "psychological oppression." But to prove what? After all, with the affliction of "psychological oppression" as our common denominator, all manners of people could be "proven" to be the source of revolutionary contingents.

The question at issue is not the reality of this category, be it as it may. Gays are victims of a kind of overt oppression and the resultant reflection on their personalities

which is no less real. Of course, we should continue our position of unconditional support to the struggles of homosexuals for full democratic rights, including full civil and human rights, and against all the forms of discrimination and oppression they suffer under capitalism. What is at issue, however, is the concept of "psychological oppression" existing as a force capable of impelling significant numbers of gay people who are "in the closet" into "coming out." The "closet" avenue of escape from *overt* oppression, on the basis of historical experience, is too easy. The overwhelmingly large majority of "closeted" gays (according to repeated assertions by gays) evidently find "psychological oppression" more bearable than the overt form.

There is no escape for workers as a class, oppressed peoples as nationalities or women as a sex. There is no "closet" except for the occasional light-skinned Black or Chicano who can "pass," or the worker who rises above his class, or women whose economic position is powerful enough for them to place their privileges above their rights.

I will not insult the intelligence of the comrades by illustrating the chasm that separates the exploitation, the depth of the oppression and its psychological reflection suffered by workers, oppressed nationalities and women from that experienced by gay people. This absence of a daily grinding exploitation and overt physical oppression in gay people's lives in contrast to the lives of Blacks, Browns, women and workers, however, should be kept in mind when estimating (particularly when the analogy is employed as a tool) the possibilities and limits of gay liberation to play a role in the revolutionary process.

* * *

Let me introduce a factor I think of key importance in the analysis of the potential of gay liberation.

Our politics begin with the fundamental premise that the workers are the class destined by history to lead the mass to the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a new society. Our fundamental task is to build the instrument that is capable of leading the class toward the accomplishment of this historic mission. We have no illusions concerning the capacity of the workers to achieve this goal without the revolutionary party leading the class. We try to understand their weaknesses as well as their strengths, limits and possibilities. And also try to understand the mechanism that minimizes their weaknesses, augments their strengths, extends their limits and possibilities so as to eventually realize the full revolutionary potential of our class. For example, workers are generally the victims of the worst prejudices perpetuated by the capitalist rulers and their agencies. We don't compromise with these prejudices. But we know that contrary to appearances, which cause others to see the worker as the hardest chauvinist nut to crack, there is an overriding factor operating that will enable us to overcome these prejudices. The working class has the capacity, in fact, of ridding itself more radically, more completely, more abruptly of these prejudices than any other section of society. At least in action — where it counts most.

That overriding factor is, of course, class interest. A clear example of this capacity of workers to about-face in their attitude toward Blacks is shown by the history of the rise of the C. I. O. Before the C. I. O., because of the racist attitudes and restrictions against Blacks, strikes were broken and lost. Particularly the attempts to or-

ganize the mighty industrial giants of American industry. The class interest of workers forced them to break with their racist path — virtually overnight — remove the barriers to the unions from the path of Black workers, and even for a time, becoming the boldest champions of the equality of the working class.

Certain prejudices held by workers are so crucially opposed to their economic, social and political interests, that not only are they at a disadvantage in the day-to-day struggles with the class enemy, but it would doom them to defeat in the long run. The superexploitation and oppression of nationalities and women — the lower wage levels, the great predominance in the capitalists' pool of unemployed workers — lowers all workers' living standards and serves as both a source of super profits and as a deadly weapon in the hands of the capitalist class.

This superexploitation of oppressed nationalities and women which flows from the special subordinate roles they play, is a quality it has been noted before, not present in the lives of gays. Neither are gays, as gays, involved in any way in this vicious and intricate process of exploitation and oppression which I have briefly sketched. For while it may be true that many gays are also workers, they are not doubly exploited and oppressed because they are gay, as for example are oppressed nationalities and women because of their nationality or sex or both. And therefore, unless these workers are *known* homosexuals, which is rare, their homosexuality is effectively irrelevant.

The exploitation and oppression of Blacks, Browns and women is in great part intimately related to the exploitation and oppression of the workers. They are tied together with a thousand strings. Some of the identity of interest can be seen by the three sectors, some cannot. Some common or compatible interests are mistakenly seen as antagonistic. Our task is to explain to each sector why each other's aims that might appear to be separate or antagonistic to the other's interests, aren't at all, and actually are in fact quite in the mutual interest. As for example; the hostility of workers to the Black and Chicano struggle for self-determination, one small facet of which is control over education in their own communities — the struggle for an equal education. After making clear whose side we are on in the racist dominated furor surrounding this question, we must explain to the workers how and why it is *directly in their class interest* to support this struggle. Since concrete gains won by Blacks and Chicanos spill over and result in gains for workers too. Circumstances are often similar, workers need better education too! Besides, there is the political example set for the workers by the independent struggle of Blacks and Chicanos itself. What is highly relevant to our discussion is the simple fact that this intimate relationship serves to make our efforts in the one compliment and augment our efforts in the other. I think it important to note here that Trotsky taught us that the national struggle is an organic part of the class struggle.

Isn't it apparent that there is no such relationship between gay liberation and the other three basic sectors? Is the prejudice held by workers against gays a factor in the workers struggle? What strings connect gays with the working class or the oppressed nationalities? How would our efforts among gays augment and compliment our efforts among workers, Blacks and Browns? You would have to stretch logic tortuously to try to make such a

case. On the contrary, a much better case can be made for the argument that the disproportionate emphasis on gay liberation based on the false notion that this issue is in some way decisive to the success of the revolution—or even an important contributor—will prove to be a diversion in our approach to oppressed nationalities, workers and women. Undue emphasis on minor issues can give an organization like ours an exotic image, erecting barriers that cannot be justified by subsequent historical development.

* * *

Is there, however, such a link with the women's movement? Perhaps sexual freedom is the common aspiration that serves as the link? That would mean then, that the issue of sexual freedom would have to be stressed by us in the women's movement as it must of necessity be stressed in the gay liberation movement. In my opinion, that issue stressed by us in the women's movement would seriously hamper our efforts to build a mass movement of women, and isolate ourselves by alienating many healthy women who are not yet prepared to fight around the issue of winning sexual freedom.

Sexual freedom, the right of individuals to determine their own sex lives unhampered and without interference from the state and society, is unchallengeable. But this right varies in importance depending on class position. A woman who hasn't enough to eat for herself and her children, or has difficulty affording contraceptives or abortions, or can't get a job with a living wage, or doesn't have the *time* or *energy* to expend in the pursuit of a full and free sex life as a consequence of the struggle for survival, is less concerned and agitated by the restrictions imposed on sex by the state and society than those more favorably positioned in the social and economic order. It seems, on the contrary, that most women are repelled by what must appear to them to be an inexplicable *preoccupation* with sexual gratification. Experience, on the face of it I would think, amply confirms this judgment.

Is it possible the growth of gay liberation will gradually cause a decline in prejudices against homosexuality with more and more practicing this way of life, thus undermining the bourgeois family, as some would have us believe? The modern term encompassing this old idealist concept is building a "counterculture." Is it necessary to remind some comrades that the family grows out of and receives continual nourishment from the still too low level of the productive forces (productive forces which are held back today only by capitalism) and the systems of production based on private property? And that this class institution will remain for a time even after the socialist revolution, even under the most favorable conditions? The bourgeois family cannot be abolished or educated out of existence. It, like money, will wither and disappear when it is no longer necessary.

Or can it be that because the abridged rights of gays are part of the democratic struggle we have at last found the link to the exploited and oppressed layers and established the premise for the thesis that gay liberation is a revolutionary force with some potential? At the risk of stretching an analogy, may I suggest that on that plane of equation we can put as peers, not only gays and op-

pressed nationalities but also many repressed religious sects, pacifists, atheists, proponents of defense of the right to bear arms and drug culture cults.

Can we for a moment believe that because the struggle of an oppressed nationality for self-determination and the struggle of gay people to determine their sex lives are both democratic struggles, they are the same? Can they even be considered in the same league when you compare the size, weight, force, history, tradition, international connection, class connection, etc. of the two? But most important, again, without the same aggravating and compelling and infuriating social forces operating on them? Answering in the affirmative would reduce the permanent revolution to an absurdity.

* * *

There are no driving forces that can impel in a mass effort a significant portion of the claimed tens of millions of gays out of the "closet" and into their full struggle for their rights. Never before have such formations driven only by essentially psychological factors played any significant role in history. What basis then, would we have for intervening in gay liberation given the absence of such driving forces? None have yet been presented. (I will not bother to answer those motivated by moral considerations; i.e., "oppression" is bad, period, and we have to do whatever is necessary to combat it.)

There is another kind of argument pro-gay intervention comrades have alluded to in support of their position. It only seems to be independent of the half-perceived question of exploitation-oppression. Reference is made to the party's major stress on the anti-war movement as evidence that it is justifiable to take a "simple" democratic demand—the right of the people to decide on the question of war or peace—and make a major campaign of it for a prolonged period, putting virtually all our organizational resources at the disposal of this effort when necessary. This reference is calculated to prove that since both are democratic issues and both can be related to by wide layers of the population, therefore, it follows, the potential for mass support for gay liberation is demonstrated. Again we find comrades so eager to justify a position they forget to think. A little thought, after all, will reveal that the formal equality of the two is not at all equal in life. Again no thought is given to measure—it takes but a glance—the forces operating on the population flowing out of the two democratic issues. The war issue involves the life and death of imperialism and its grim determination to halt the spread of the freedom struggle of the exploited and oppressed colonial peoples. It concerns the very future and continued existence of *all humanity*. It involves the attack on the living standards of working people to pay for the enormous costs of this anti-human, intrinsically capitalist policy. Does more really have to be said?

We now come to an entirely different sort of argument. That if we intervene in the gay liberation organizations we can recruit (presumably) significant numbers of gays. And of course by intervention is meant to send comrades into the gay organizations, take leadership responsibilities and to help build new groups.

To intervene then, our party would of necessity have to project a line of propaganda and organize actions

based on the premise that gay liberation *is indeed* a profound revolutionary force. It would mean as well that we would have to continue to elevate gay oppression in our propaganda to the same level of force as the exploitation-oppression of oppressed nationalities, women and workers. "Psychological oppression" would have to be our key operative premise in this arena. We would also find a greater necessity to refer more young people to psychiatric writers of treatises — some of them of dubious scientific credibility — explaining these psychological phenomena, than to the traditional Marxist classics in order that the comrades could be "armed" to try to defend this vulnerable line.

In short then: to intervene, given our approach to politics, means to advocate independent mass action as builders of gay liberation organizations and coalitions. Which further necessitates that we *formally* adopt the thesis that gay liberation is a profound revolutionary force (or act as if we did)! One should ponder the consequences and meaning of promoting a line one is not convinced of only because of the conviction a high level of recruiting potential is "certain."

We are either being asked, in effect, to accept recruit-

ment potential (or rather the presumption of such potential) as *proof* of the thesis that gay liberation is a profound revolutionary force, or I am afraid, we are being asked to intervene "because we can recruit" *despite* the knowledge that gay liberation has no revolutionary role to play. Rather than a step toward the strengthening of the party, it is a dangerous step on the disastrous road followed by every tendency that thought it had found a new shortcut to rapid growth.

* * *

No matter what the outcome of the current discussion, I'm convinced events will quite speedily bring reality home. But unfortunately not without leaving even more disappointed and embittered comrades than if we collectively rubbed our eyes now, took a real good clear look, and cleanly put an end to this chapter of the party's development.

More important, by drawing all the correct lessons from this whole chapter we can give a new dimension to the understanding of the younger comrades in what a class approach to politics is all about.

July 9, 1972

CONCERNING AN INADEQUATE COMPROMISE

by Sudie and Geb, Boston Branch

The purpose of this article is to analyse the contribution by Comrade Barry Sheppard, printed in Discussion Bulletin No. 1 in this discussion. We'll try to show that he goes wrong by avoiding decisive questions, by making unwarranted assumptions, by over-abstractation and over-simplification, by using double standards, and by compromising between divergent views without explaining what the compromise is between or considering whether such a compromise is justified.

FIRST: ON "LEAVING ASIDE ALL DISCUSSION ABOUT WHY HOMOSEXUAL IMPULSES EXIST, OR WHY A SECTION OF THE POPULATION PREFERS HOMOSEXUALITY"

At the bottom of page 3, Barry advocates "leaving aside all discussion about why homosexual impulses exist, or why a section of the population prefers homosexuality, which need not concern us in trying to understand the nature of the oppression of gay people." Barry assumes

that such a discussion would not affect our political conclusions. This assumption is hasty; Barry gives no justification for it. In deciding whether to accept this assumption, we must at least make note of the various possible views of what gayness is—in order to see whether it matters which view is correct.

(A) *The Judeo-Christian View*: This view says that gayness is downright evil, a sin. Within the SWP we don't have to take this view seriously. It would conflict with Barry's proposals, but he is quite right to ignore this view.

(B) *The Stalin-Wohlforth View*: This view says that gayness is a social perversion of human nature, a product of decadence in the bourgeois sector, and even "the fascist perversion." Since this view is dressed up in "Marxist" phrases, we must take it a little more seriously. By this view, Barry's proposals would clearly be too pro-gay. Fortunately, Comrade Lauritsen gives us a very effective criticism of the Stalin-Wohlforth position. This criticism

is part of the program of Trotskyism.

(C) *The Freudian View*: This view says that gayness is a psychological disorder (like claustrophobia), specifically a confusion of sex-identity resulting from repression of unconscious desires caused by an abnormal family upbringing. Compared to views (A) and (B), it is only moderately anti-gay; Jehovah, God, Stalin and Wohlforth all see gays as criminals, while Freud sees gayness only as a medical problem. Freud thinks gayness should be discouraged. But in his defense it must be said that he would never have tolerated modern American "medical" methods of "discouraging" gayness, such as the torture of electric-shock "therapy," the chemical castration, or the neurological castration of lobotomy, that are in use in America today. Freud would insist that such a "cure" was worse than the "disease"; he believed in rational, *voluntary* discussion for dealing with gayness. In his time Freud's views were revolutionary, and they still would be a step forward if put into practice in either the US or the USSR.

The SWP must reject any Freudian-type view that gayness is a psychological disorder; that view is just Biblical superstition dressed up in "scientific" terms.

A Freudian could easily give "unconditional support to the struggles of homosexuals for full democratic rights, including full civil and human rights, and against all the forms of discrimination and oppression they suffer," as Barry also does. A Freudian could easily share the moderately favorable attitude Barry has toward the gay liberation movement. But a Freudian socialist would want a workers state to take some sort of painless measures to discourage gayness. Wilhelm Reich, for instance, advocated frequent heterosexual love-making at puberty to prevent gayness—which is a lot less painful in most cases than, say, electric-shock "therapy." But we owe it to the gay liberation movement to promise that under socialism, gayness will not be discouraged in *any* way; we must have a position on this question.

(D) *The Ellis-Davis View*: Havelock Ellis was cofounder with Freud of the scientific study of human erotic life. He was the first important scientist to crusade for gay rights. He saw gayness as being a physical defect. He agreed with all the progressive aspects of Freud's view, but went still further. He felt that gay love was just as good for gay people as hetero love was for heterosexuals. He opposed any attempt to discourage gays from being gay, considering this to be viciously harmful to the gays. He denied that gays were in any way mentally ill. But he did consider gayness to be abnormal and a defect.

Adelle Davis is the leading popularizer of modern knowledge of nutrition. She offers an up-dated variant of Ellis' view. Davis suggests that homosexuality may be the result of a nutritional deficiency. We must be clear that when Davis condemns sugar, coffee, etc., she presents volumes of overwhelming documented evidence; but she says openly that her hypothesis about homosexuality is just a personal speculation, and that she knows of no scientific proof.

The defining feature of Ellis-Davis-type views is the idea that gayness is some sort of physical defect. This seems generally consistent with Barry's views. The Ellis-Davis view is consistent with the concept of gay rights, but not with the concept of gay liberation; gay libera-

tion says at minimum that "Gay is good," while Ellis and Davis say that "Gay is not quite as good as straight."

A view held by such leading, principled scientists as Ellis and Davis must be taken very seriously. Some comrades may hold a similar position. Gay liberation requires us to recognize that gayness is *in no way* a defect. There are important political implications involved.

(E) *The Just-as-Good View*: This view says that gayness is a natural variation which is in no way unhealthy or undesirable. By this, gayness would be comparable, say, to left-handedness.

One problem with the just-as-good view of gayness, is that it can't explain, for example, why gayness is more or less universal in some societies, and a minority phenomenon in others.

(F) *The Gay-is-Better View*: This view has different variants; we will present the variant which we advocate. Such scientists as Kinsey, Beach and Ford, Churchill, and others, have presented substantial evidence that all or most human beings have a biological potential for erotic pleasure with either sex (again, we refer the reader to Comrade Lauritsen). Almost every form of erotic play that heterosexual couples enjoy, can be duplicated by couples of the same sex—kissing, petting, breast-play, oral-genital play, anal intercourse, mutual observation and display, mutual masturbation, sado-masochism, you name it. The reproductive act itself is about the only exception.

Since bourgeois ideology tolerates erotic pleasure only in association with reproduction, the masses are pressured to equate erotic pleasure with the reproductive act, either ignoring other games or seeing them only as ways of getting "warmed up" for the reproductive act. We know that, even within heterosex, a heavy emphasis on the reproductive act with less interest in other games, tends to result in less satisfaction all around (this is dealt with in works ranging from those of Masters and Johnson to *The Sensuous Woman*). Exclusive heterosexuality is closely associated with overemphasis on the reproductive act. In general it involves being trained to want *not to develop* certain erotic potentials which in fact are totally healthy and desirable. As such, exclusive heterosexuality is a repressed condition which deprives us of large portions of our biological needs.

Exclusive heterosexuality in general is common only in societies where gay love is violently suppressed. In ancient Greece, for example, gayness was the norm. Social distortions of human biological nature are weakest in more primitive societies, and in general these are the societies in which active bisexuality is taken for granted. Exclusive heterosexuality requires great social alienation; for this reason it appears most frequently in those societies based on commodity production, commerce, and money. Take away the alienation and the repression, and what results?

Bisexuality and Homosexuality:

The gay-is-better view considers bisexuality to be, in principle, the healthiest and most human condition, the one that will spontaneously become the norm among the liberated generations of the socialist future. We must

now discuss exclusive homosexuality. There is a phenomenon which gays call "bisexual chauvinism," where bisexuals arrogantly look down on exclusive homosexuals as being hung up and repressed, just as the heteros are. Many bisexuals express this by claiming that they are bisexual *rather than* gay.

In the society we live in, there is no basic social difference between bisexuals in general, and exclusive homosexuals in general. Both share similar oppression at the hands of exclusive heteros; both have the ability and desire to make love with members of the same sex, which is the taboo in question. It is in the interests of both groups to unite and identify as one. Thus they define themselves as being first *gay*, and either bisexual or exclusively homosexual as a secondary question. As gays, they are defined as having a certain *ability*—to love members of the same sex. The overall conflict is thus seen as the oppression of those who are conscious of the homosexual component of their natures, by those whose awareness of this part of themselves has been repressed into unconsciousness. When the most militant gays say that gay is better than straight, this is generally the line they are thinking along.

While secondary in our society, the differences between bisexuality and exclusive homosexuality are still worth understanding. Most gays are to one extent or another bisexual. Most gays in our society at one time considered themselves to be exclusively hetero. But many gays are or become exclusively homosexual, and many more generally prefer the same sex but under the right conditions can go either way. This preference is usually the result of hard experience (whereas being exclusively hetero is usually associated with *lack* of experience). Even for gay people, in relating to the other sex there tends to be strong pressure to conform with bourgeois sex-roles. One function that anti-gay prejudice has is to make it easier to channel people into patriarchal sex-roles, and the effects can be seen in nearly any relationship between a woman and a man, even when both are actively gay.

It results that it's generally easier to form a more equal relationship with someone of the same sex, someone more like yourself. Of course, inequalities and role-playing exist among same-sex pairs, too, just as they exist among Marxist couples. But in both cases it's to a much lesser extent than the bourgeois norm. This factor is probably the main reason why many gays prefer mates of the same sex (it is also one of the things that anti-gay people find the most disorienting and intimidating).

Among female gays, the preference for the same sex may well also involve a preference for the more human atmosphere that often exists among all-female groups in our male-dominated society. Among male gays, preference for males may sometimes involve a backward preference for those personality traits which are more common among males in our society, such as rowdiness, arrogance, pseudo-intellectualism, etc. The preference that Socrates had for males was connected to his belief in male superiority; male chauvinism runs rampant through the pages of the *Advocate*. But it would be a mistake to think that woman-hating is a general feature of male gays (as the Stalinists claim); despite their weaknesses, gay males in our society tend on the average to have incomparably more real respect for women than non-gay males usually have.

Conclusions:

Just as the party opposes the Biblical view of gays, it is also in our traditions to oppose the Stalin-Wohlforth view. We might do more in our public educational work to call attention to the record of the Bolsheviks on the one hand, and Stalin and his heirs on the other, on the gay question; no gay activist should be allowed to be ignorant of this.

We must take the Freudian view more seriously since it recognizes that gayness is not a crime, and further that the whole subject is a scientific question. But since his time Freud's views have been thoroughly discredited by science; Wainwright Churchill's evidence that negative attitudes towards gayness are more or less a Judeo-Christian custom, is especially relevant here.

We sometimes have to take positions on controversial scientific questions; fortunately we have plenty of evidence against Freud's view. If we are to take gay liberation seriously, we must take the stand that gayness is not a psychological disorder in any way.

Ellis would agree with this, but he would say that gayness is a physical disorder. Some comrades might still sympathize with this view. Someone with this view could be a supporter of gay rights, but would be in basic disagreement with the gay liberation movement. Again, to take gay liberation seriously we must reject this view; gayness is not a defect of any sort whatever.

The gay-is-just-as-good view, which sees gayness as a natural and healthy variation to be viewed the way most scientists view left-handedness, is held by a large section of the organized gay movement, though it is often seen as a less militant view than the gay-is-better view.

There are two ways in which Barry's overall position is suggestive of either the gay-is-just-as-good view or the gay-is-not-quite-as-good view of Ellis.

First, both these views see gays as a static, fairly small minority. By this, the gay liberation movement would directly involve at most a small minority of the masses, touching the majority only in their attitudes toward the minority. The gay-is-better view would expect that, as the hold of bourgeois ideology gradually weakens, the percent of the population that is gay would gradually increase. Thus, the gay liberation movement would ultimately be a movement of the great majority.

Barry never openly rejects the gay-is-better view. But he does not consider the possibility that the percent of the population that is gay might change. Implicitly, he assumes that gays are a more-or-less static, small minority; thus he takes a stand on the question he claims to leave aside.

There is a second way in which Barry does this. At the top of page 5 Barry says, "it remains to be seen how extensively gay people will be mobilized to struggle for their rights." But what remains to be seen? We already agree that that struggle is totally just. Even Havelock Ellis would agree that gays are as rational as anyone else, and so we can presumably agree that gays are as capable of being mobilized around political demands, and certainly of coming to support gay rights.

Evidently, what remains to be seen is *how important* the oppression of gays is to the gays themselves.

Certainly during the massive exterminations of gays under the Nazis, the Catholics, and others, the oppression of gays was an intolerable burden. But if the bourgeois

state grants a couple reforms, Barry seems to think, then the remaining forms of gay oppression might not really be such a big deal. This is basically the assumption that the oppression of gays is mainly the denial of their democratic rights—but there is also the cultural repression of the gayness that, perhaps unconsciously, is within all of us.

The gay-is-better view would say that as soon as material repression of gays is ended, the gay section of the population would start growing rapidly (or, to say it another way, more people would come to be aware of their gayness)—eventually involving the mass of the people. This would involve drastic changes in the lives of the masses, as individuals and collectively; for instance, it would not be so easy any more to recruit to the nuclear family, to channel people into bourgeois sex-roles, etc. So by this view, the gay liberation movement will reach its prime only *after* gays have won full civil rights, and from that point it will take at least a generation or two for it to run its course. This would be a truly mass movement.

This possibility Barry doesn't even mention—he's not even sure if gay people can be mobilized to struggle for their democratic rights. So Barry has clearly rejected the gay-is-better analysis of "why homosexual impulses exist." He should state this openly. It is clear in several ways that different views about why some people are gay and some (apparently) not, lead us to different understandings of the nature of the oppression of gays and to different concrete, political conclusions. In order to decide what the SWP should do, we must consider the different views of what gayness is, argue one against the other, and choose among them. We must know Barry's thoughts on the question; "leaving aside all discussion" of it is impossible.

SECOND: IS GAY LIBERATION BASICALLY JUST A DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE?

Near the beginning of P.4, Barry says "The struggle against the oppression of gay people is basically a democratic struggle." He then endorses the party's position "of unconditional support to the struggles of homosexuals for full democratic rights, including full civil and human rights, and against all the forms of discrimination and oppression they suffer under capitalism."

Of course, even the socialist struggle is basically a democratic struggle in the sense that socialists seek only to extend the principle of democracy to the economy and the society as a whole, making democracy for the first time real. But Barry means something else.

What is the difference between the gay rights movement and the gay liberation movement? The gay rights movement includes the more moderate gay groups such as the Daughters of Bilitis, the Mattachine Society, etc. These groups seem to fit Barry's description. But the section of the movement which calls itself the gay liberation movement is something distinct from this, something more.

What is the difference between the Black civil rights movement, and the Black liberation movement? What is the difference between the women's rights movement, and the women's liberation movement? That difference is also the difference between the gay rights movement and the gay liberation movement.

These rights movements may be seen as basically strug-

gles for democratic rights for Blacks, women, and gays. They are initial and necessary stages of the respective liberation movements.

The Black liberation movement goes further. It is the movement of the African-American people, in struggle against white society, for the overall needs of the Black community, even where this may go beyond democratic rights in the usual sense. It seeks to resurrect Black history, from the Black point of view, to develop Black culture, to cultivate blackness; it has contempt for white culture, seeing it as based on oppression and exploitation. It is based on Black Pride—which is more than merely saying that Black is just as good as white. It seeks Black Power.

Again, the women's liberation movement is more than just the movement for female democratic rights in the usual sense. It is the movement of the female sex, in struggle against patriarchal society, for the overall interests of women. It seeks to resurrect female history, from a female point of view. It seeks to develop female, feminist culture, a culture not just about women but also produced and controlled by women—to cultivate sisterhood. It has contempt for patriarchal culture, seeing it as based on oppression and exploitation. It is based on Female Pride—which is more than merely saying that female is just as good as male. It seeks Female Power.

For all the obvious differences between these movements, the parallels are great. The gay liberation movement is more than just a civil rights movement; it is the movement of the gay community, in struggle against sexist, anti-gay society, for the overall interests of gay people, even where this goes beyond democratic rights in the usual sense. It seeks to resurrect gay history, from a gay point of view; it seeks to revive the memory of Socrates, Sappho, and Michelangelo and more; it wants to expose the fact that exclusive heterosexuality is historically such a rare phenomenon as to be in a real sense abnormal, existing only where backed by physical repression, and running absolutely counter to human biology as well as the principles of humanism; it seeks to remind us that gayness has never been eliminated anywhere, but only forced underground, to re-emerge whenever conditions allowed it.

The gay liberation movement seeks to develop gay culture, to cultivate gayness. It has contempt for anti-gay culture, seeing it as based on oppression, exploitation, and sheer terror, on opposition to human pleasure, on prudishness, on the view that human biological nature is shameful and must be suppressed. It sees that anti-gay culture says that women and men are opposites, where in fact there is hardly any difference between them except what is brainwashed into them. It sees that anti-gay culture has different standards for what's desirable in women and men (women should be weak, men strong, etc.).

Gay culture says to value in a lover what you value in a friend or in yourself—that love is a relationship of equals or it isn't love at all. In short, gay culture is humanist, where anti-gay culture is sexist.

The gay liberation movement is based on Gay Pride—which is more than merely saying that gay is just as good as straight. It seeks Gay Power.

Our support for the Black liberation and women's liberation movements is unconditional, and not limited to basically democratic struggles around civil and human

rights. Our support to the gay liberation movement should be the same.

On gay liberation marches we hear the chant "2-4-6-8, Gay is just as good as straight." But at least as often, we hear "2-4-6-8, Gay is *twice* as good as straight." We hear "Hey, Hey—Whaddya say?—Try it once the other way!" and "Hey, Hey—Whaddya say?—Try it once, you might be gay!" and "2-4-6-8, is your husband really straight?" We hear gay women singing "Gimme That Old Lesbianism" ("It was good enough for Sappho and it's good enough for me"). This is the gay liberation movement; it will do us no good to pretend that it's just the gay rights movement.

The gay liberation movement signifies a great revolution in human culture. That revolution deserves our unconditional support.

THIRD: THE DOUBLE STANDARD FOR GAYS

In arguing that it would be a mistake to begin to intervene in the gay liberation movement, Barry tries to give the impression that there isn't much happening there so far. Thus, there's not much we could do if we began to intervene, and we're not missing much by not intervening.

Barry tells us that so far only a "small fraction" of gay people have been encompassed by the gay liberation movement; yet the same could be said about the Black or women's liberation movements. But the percent of gays who support the goals of the gay liberation movement is probably at least equal to (for example) the percent of women who support the goals of the women's liberation movement. This year, there were Gay Pride demonstrations of 6-10,000 in Philadelphia (50 percent of them Black); 7-10,000 in New York; something like 20,000 in New York last year. In the same period the largest feminist demonstration was the November 20 march of 3,000. But Barry knows all of this.

On page 5, Barry argues "There is no national gay liberation organization which could be a focus of our intervention." There is also (for example) no national women's liberation organization which could be the focus of our intervention, either. Barry adds that "There is no national action coalition around specific issues of gay oppression which we could support and help build." But we were intervening, for example, in the women's liberation movement for a year or two before there existed a national action coalition in that movement, either, and further, that would probably not exist today if it were not for the work we have done to help to build it. But Barry knows this, too.

Barry even goes so far as to say that it appears unlikely "that there will be any national focus of action by gay liberation groups in the period immediately ahead." He wrote those lines less than a month before the annual Gay Pride Week activities around the third anniversary of the Christopher Street rebellion (which he even mentions later on). This "national focus of action by gay liberation groups" occurs at the end of June every year; this year was the third year. But Barry knows this also.

It is downright *puzzling* that Barry should put forward such arguments—arguments which he himself can hardly be convinced by.

Barry extends the same double standard to the future. He says: "It remains to be seen how extensively gay people

will be mobilized to struggle for their rights, exactly what forms this struggle will take, and the tempo of the struggle."

Please note the fifth word in this quote. That word is "seen".

Do these things remain to be *seen*, or do they remain to be *determined*? Are we *spectators* in the historical process, or do we play a decisive role in the very *making* of history?

It doesn't remain to be "seen" how extensively women will be mobilized to struggle for their rights; it depends on our participation. Without our leadership, the women's liberation movement will tend to stumble, turn inward, go off on tangents, shrivel up—but not mobilize the mass of women. But *with* our leadership, the women's liberation movement can grow by leaps and bounds until it does mobilize the mass of women.

The same applies to the gay liberation movement. No movement can move at its full potential without conscious Marxist leadership, without *us*.

Barry wants us to wait. He says, let the gay liberation movement prove that it can do without us, then we'll consider jumping on the bandwagon. He wouldn't suggest anything like that concerning the other movements. He never tells us why the gay liberation movement should be measured on a different scale than the one we use for the other movements. Why, Barry?

FOURTH: AN INADEQUATE COMPROMISE

The usual procedure by which the SWP comes to an orientation toward a new development, is that the Political Committee drafts a resolution which it presents to the National Committee at a plenum; ordinarily the NC adopts it and eventually it is presented to a convention for final approval.

It is very unusual for a discussion to be initiated by a proposal signed by just one member of the PC. Evidently the PC was deeply divided on the question. There is more evidence for this—such as the long delay before the start of this discussion (we usually don't wait three years before deciding how to relate to a new development).

Even where there are differences within the PC or the NC, a proposal is usually agreed on which is satisfactory to all, enough so that a united face can be presented to the membership. Thus we have to suspect that the differences on the gay liberation question are especially strong.

But a democratic party can deal with differences and disagreements; so far there is nothing to be alarmed about.

Very often, where strong disagreements exist, it is politically wise to try to arrive at a temporary compromise which allows the worst of the disagreements to be postponed, so that additional concrete experience can be gotten to help us in making our final decisions. But whenever we compromise, it is important for us to be conscious of what the differing positions are, and to judge the proposed compromise in relation to those positions. This requires being fully open about our views.

The three positions in question seem to be as follows:

1) *The Gay Liberationist View*: This view sees the gay liberation movement as both deeply progressive and of fundamental importance within the revolution, a move-

ment with a vital role to play in the overall process of undermining of bourgeois culture and ideology. This view naturally feels that the sooner we intervene in the movement, the better, because of the tremendous gains to be made and because of the special advantages we have over our historical opponents within this movement. This view says that our concrete opportunities may not be things we can create at will, but on the other hand they aren't gifts from Heaven, either; the translation of a possibility into a reality is something we have to do ourselves.

2) *The Middle View*: This view is not convinced that the gay liberation movement is all that its strongest supporters say it is, but it is open to the possibilities. It agrees that we should support gay rights and similar struggles, but thinks that the amount of time and effort that we put into such support should depend on the concrete gains we can get out of it in such matters as direct recruitment. It feels that long-range perspectives are still too much in question for us to decide to launch a full intervention just on that basis alone.

In this connection we can view some recruitment statistics from the Boston branch. We remember that it is only a year and a half since the YSA had an explicit ban on gays being members, and since the party had a similar, though informal, ban. This opening up of the YSA to gays would be reflected in party recruitment only after a period of six months or so. So we will consider branch recruitment statistics in the past year. We will not include comrades recruited to the YSA outside of Boston, who moved to Boston and then joined the party, but only those who were recruited from the start in Boston.

Of 24 such comrades, 14 are female—58 percent. This is a figure to be very pleased with, given the relatively low recruitment of females to the party in the past (something under 40%). Of these 14 women, at least 10 are more-or-less actively gay (we don't know of any active gays among the 10 males, but this is of course still a possibility). That is, without the recruitment of the gays, we would have recruited only 14 total, instead of 24; and this would include only 4 females (29 percent).

Our recruitment over the past year has been very good in terms of quality of cadre; this has been reflected in the assignments the comrades have taken, and even in elections to the branch Executive Committee. Four of the 24 new comrades who joined the branch since last July were recently elected to the branch exec—which comrades know is a sign of exceptionally fast development of new comrades. Of these 4, 3 are gay women.

It's a little hard to measure the importance of assignments of different types, but we can try to pick out the 10 comrades of the 24 who have taken on the most demanding assignments. By our count, of these 10, 8 are gay women.

It isn't that the non-gays we've recruited have been all that few in number, slow in development, or anything like that; it's a matter of the very high number and quality of the gay recruits. This gay recruitment has not come out of the gay liberation movement, since, of course, we aren't in the gay liberation movement. The surge in gay recruitment is mainly just the result of our having dropped our old anti-gay membership policy (relatively few gays were in the branch while the policy was in existence), and also of the very drastic increase of political activity of gay people in all movements since the rise of gay liberation (this includes the coming out of many who hadn't pre-

viously considered themselves gay).

All or nearly all of the 10 gay women were recruited out of the women's liberation movement. Our involvement in the women's liberation movement but not in the gay liberation movement probably explains why we have recruited gay women and not gay men.

We don't know how these figures compare with the national average. But we can safely regard them as a good tentative indication of the potential for recruitment of gay people out of the gay liberation movement itself, if and when we ever get around to a serious intervention into that movement. Further evidence of the possibilities for recruitment out of the gay liberation movement cannot come until we begin to intervene in that movement.

3) *The Abstentionist View*: In general, this view opposes our intervention into the gay liberation movement, but probably for a great variety of reasons, many of which we must speculate about. At this writing, other than Barry's the only such views we have seen in print are from last summer's preconvention discussion. The most extreme statement seems to be Comrade Hedda Garza's. In Discussion Bulletin No. 9 page 20, she complains:

Black comrades are told to recruit Gay people in Harlem, which outrages them because in the Black ghettos, the attitude towards Gay people takes on almost a defensive aura. Many Black people believe that Black youth become Gay because of too many years spent in reform schools and prisons, deprived of social contact with the opposite sex. They see homosexuality as just another horror perpetrated on Black people by an oppressive society.

It must be noted that as of yet no Black comrades have verified Hedda's claims as to the degree of anti-gay bigotry in the ghetto. Various comrades have dealt with a number of points in Hedda's article. It is mentioned here only as the one example so far of a comrade saying something along the lines that we shouldn't get too close to gay liberation because it will alienate the working class. It must also be noted that if Blacks or other workers are as bigoted towards gays as Hedda claims, then all the more reason why we must throw ourselves into the gay liberation movement. Such bourgeois prejudices within the working class are deadly obstacles to the revolution, which we must actively combat.

The abstentionist view in general seems to be more based on the notion that the gay liberation movement is somehow "peripheral," fairly unimportant, without much potential impact. Therefore we shouldn't waste our precious, few cadres in it.

The minority resolution on the Chicano movement complained that the party assigned three comrades to probing the gay liberation movement, while we didn't intervene on a comparable scale into the developments at Merritt College. But the worst this resolution said was that the "Marxist relevancy (of the gay liberation movement) has yet to be analyzed"; the authors of this counterresolution might go along with a full-scale, immediate intervention into the gay liberation movement, so long as we began to take care of business at Merritt College, too.

Comrade Tom Leonard wrote some things which suggest that he is afraid that some gay comrades have dangerous prejudices against non-gay comrades. But he never opposed our intervening in the movement; he even says

"it is extremely important to intervene in new movements as they arise [even] before we have worked out a full program."

Comrade Debby Leonard, however, doubts the wisdom of our intervening in the gay liberation movement, based on her estimate of "how it relates to the total radicalization, its social weight, historical importance, etc." She feels that there are more important places to send our "precious cadre." But she makes it clear that she is not opposed in principle.

The main abstentionist force last summer was the minority of the party which supported the political counter-resolution, "For a Proletarian Orientation" (often called the FAPO group). Their abstentionism flows from their not seeing the interconnections between the factory struggle and all the various other struggles which together make up the socialist revolution. Since the gay liberation movement is *mostly* outside the factory walls, they see it "as a movement, totally relegated to the petty bourgeois sector of society" (Discussion Bulletin No. 15, p. 12-13). The FAPO group does say we should "support" the movement, but only from the sidelines.

The FAPO group contained very diverse political tendencies, and so it is an open question whether most of its supporters would agree with this aspect of their position.

Lastly, there may be some comrades who oppose intervening because they are afraid that if we recruit too many gays as a result of that intervention the party might be transformed into "some form of therapeutic organization which would help solve the personal problems of the individual homosexual" (the fear that the Political Committee expressed in its famous memorandum of Friday the Thirteenth, November 1970). We can try to educate such comrades as to why such fears are unnecessary, but we cannot afford to cater to such notions.

How Does Barry's Compromise Fit In?

(A) Barry's concrete proposals may seem to fall near the middle view, but they actually lean toward the abstentionist view. He hopes to satisfy the abstentionist comrades by promising that, at least for now, we won't get too close to gay liberation. With time, their view may be shown correct, and then we can retreat totally, without having lost much. Then we could just pretend that the gay liberation movement doesn't exist as we did for the first year and a half after the Christopher St. uprising. Barry only asks that we endorse democratic rights for gays; who can object to that? Barry doesn't even state support for the gay liberation movement, as opposed to the gay rights movement. What more could the abstentionists ask?

As far as we can tell, the FAPO group would be satisfied with everything Barry says about gay liberation (they say some things Barry doesn't say, but he doesn't deny them, either). The FAPO group says "We cannot act towards intervention in this movement as if we had a mass cadre at our disposal"; in different words, Barry says the same. Neither deals with the possibility that by intervening in the movement we might recruit faster, and thus move a little quicker towards having that mass cadre.

The FAPO group further says that the gay liberation movement "should not be equated with the Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican struggles, the women's liberation movement," etc. (when they wrote that, the FAPO authors

were in favor of feminism and Black and Raza nationalism, at least so they said). Barry agrees with this also. Thus, his use of the double standard in measuring the development of the gay liberation movement (see section three of this article).

The FAPO group also doesn't see any point in discussing what gayness is, why gayness is the norm in some societies and a minority phenomenon in others, etc. Barry also agrees with this.

(B) Barry hopes to satisfy the middle by claiming that there really aren't very many opportunities for us to intervene in right now anyway, so nothing can be lost by a go-slow policy. From the sidelines and from our occasional, limited participation in local actions, we will be able to see when real opportunities arise, if ever.

In order to satisfy the middle, those comrades whose minds aren't fully made up one way or the other—does Barry have to tell them that there is little chance of a national focus of action in the gay movement in the near future, when the annual Christopher Street-Gay Pride Week actions are only weeks away? Does he have to tell them that there is no national gay liberation organization or action coalition for us to intervene in, and hope that they won't draw comparisons with the history of our intervention in the women's liberation movement? Does he have to tell them that only "a small fraction" of gay people have been brought into the gay liberation movement, as if things were any different in, for example, the women's liberation movement? Does he have to give a history of the gay movement, which doesn't mention the *size* of various historic demonstrations, and which doesn't even *mention* the 1969 Stonewall uprising which signalled the birth of gay liberation.

Does Barry have to avoid the question of what gayness is? Does Barry have to forget that gayness is more or less universal in all societies in which there is no active, violent suppression of gays?

Does Barry have to forget to mention how our lack of intervention in the gay liberation movement has made it so easy for gay opponents to red-bait and slander us, since we aren't there to defend ourselves? Does Barry have to forget to mention that the gay liberation movement is one movement in which the Stalinists and others can't even start to compete with us (given their openly anti-gay positions)? Etc.?

(C) Barry offers the least to those comrades who are in favor of intervention. We can occasionally take part locally in temporary situations, where tactically advisable, but no "national party intervention in the gay liberation movement *at the present time*" (emphasis added). Are we supposed to conclude, or at least to hope, that he thinks we probably should intervene at some future time, maybe just a couple years from now? He doesn't quite *say* so, unfortunately.

He seems to want us to think that there will be just a *slight* delay before our intervention. If he said this openly, it would still be inadequate. But it's much worse than that. Barry wants us to wait for an *indefinite* period, with no guarantee that our attitude will *ever* change, and certainly no indication of what the criteria would be for the change. For all we know, Barry may have made up his mind that he will *always* oppose intervention; nothing he says rules this out.

The disagreements between the abstentionist comrades and the gay liberationist comrades are too severe for any hope of a pleasant compromise. The compromise must be between the gay liberationist comrades and the unconvinced comrades of the middle. What is in question between these two is how important the movement can become, how much we can recruit out of it, etc. We can find out only from inside.

The appropriate compromise is for a national party intervention into the gay liberation movement, involving relatively few comrades, with the perspective of learning as we go, starting with those elements of an analysis and strategy that all Trotskyists take for granted. One by one, this means:

1) *A national party intervention*: a consistent, ongoing intervention, nationally coordinated, involving most branches most of the time at least at a minimal level, involving in a more substantial way the larger branches and all branches in which there are particularly good opportunities, and with national participation in such national actions as gay contingents and Gay Pride Week. Maybe even a Pathfinder pamphlet.

2) *Involving relatively few comrades*: If twenty comrades had gay liberation work as a regular ongoing assignment, that would be just a small percentage of our membership; another twenty involved off-and-on as conditions require, would be another tiny percentage. This would be a small enough fraction that it wouldn't force us to cut down our other areas of work in any substantial way. But it would enable us to make a very significant intervention into the gay liberation movement. We have to consider the very real possibility that this small-scale intervention would result in substantial recruitment out of the gay liberation movement, which would mean that we'd end up with more comrades than we started with for our other areas of work. We need at least such an intervention if we are to be able to judge intelligently what possibilities exist. How much can we lose?

3) *With the perspective of learning as we go*: We remember that we began intervening in the women's liberation movement before we had any fully developed analysis or strategy for that movement. Our experiences from

that intervention played a necessary role in our developing that analysis and strategy. For instance, it was only as a result of our work in the abortion movement that we came to see the importance of organizing around the demand for abortion repeal, rather than restricting the movement to those who agreed with free abortion. The same has applied to every other movement Marxists have ever intervened in; we can't learn enough from the sidelines.

4) *Starting with those elements of an analysis and strategy that all Trotskyists take for granted*: We don't at the start need to take a position on whether gay is just as good as straight, or better. We do need to take the stand that there is *nothing* inferior about gayness—morally, psychologically, physically, culturally, etc.

We understand the special importance for gays of winning legal equality; such struggles have the special merit of being aimed directly at the bourgeois state (or at the bureaucracy in the case of the Stalinist workers states). We understand the necessity for exposing the reactionary anti-gay policies of the various workers states. We understand the inadequacy of lobbying and such tactics, and the necessity for mobilization of gay people in the streets. We understand the need for independence from bourgeois parties and politicians. We understand the need for a clear focus for actions (something which the Christopher St. Liberation Day Committee doesn't understand thus far). The need for united fronts, without exclusion, around those focuses. The usefulness of teach-ins and educational literature. The need for defensive formulations. We could go on and on. The SWP is already better equipped to lead the gay liberation movement than anyone else is, and we are in a position to demonstrate this to the rank-and-file gay activists—once we intervene.

An intervention into the gay liberation movement means a perspective of working to build that movement, of struggling to win that movement to our politics, of struggling to become the leadership of that movement, of recruiting the gay activists that we work with to the Trotskyist movement.

This much we are ready to do today. This much we need to do today. Let us get on with the work of it.

July 10, 1972