

# International Socialist Review

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**A  
Transitional  
Program for  
BLACK  
LIBERATION**



**Revolutionary Struggle for a Socialist America  
The American Antiwar Movement**

**INTERNATIONAL  
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# RESOLUTIONS

## Socialist Workers Party

### 23rd National Convention

This issue of *International Socialist Review* contains three of the major resolutions adopted by the Twenty-third National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, meeting in New York City during the Labor Day weekend, 1969.

All of the resolutions had been submitted in draft form prior to the convention to allow full discussion by the membership in line with the provisions of the party constitution governing pre-convention debate and discussion.

Several exceptions were made to the usual procedure in relation to two of the resolutions acted upon. In the case of the draft resolution, "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation," the party authorized a public pre-convention discussion in the pages of *The Militant* to enlist the views and opinions of readers of the party press as well as members and sympathizers.

This exception was motivated by the fact that for the first time in the history of the radical movement a fully elaborated transition program for the black struggle had been codified in resolution form. With appropriate amendments in the light of the discussion the resolution was unanimously adopted by the convention.

Another procedural exception was made in the case of the main political resolution, "The Course of U. S. Imperialism and the Revolutionary Struggle for a Socialist America." While adopting the

general line of the resolution published here, the convention decided to continue the discussion in literary form following the convention, with the final decision incorporating appropriate amendments to be made by a plenum of the national committee.

The decision to continue the discussion on the political resolution was made, in part, in consideration of the character of the resolution. It is not of a conjunctural type, but deals with basic trends involving a fundamental analysis of the struggle against U.S. imperialism. Among the proposals advanced for amending the resolution was the important one of dealing in some detail with the Chicano, Puerto Rican and other Third World movements playing an increasingly weighty role in the mobilization of forces for revolutionary socialist change. All proposals will be considered in elaborating the final draft on the basis of the general line adopted by the convention.

In addition to the resolutions published here, the SWP convention heard and discussed several reports on the international situation, with special consideration given to a discussion of the party's position on the Maoist "cultural" revolution.

The report by Gus Horowitz on the antiwar resolution was published in the October 10 issue of *The Militant*, to which we refer our readers for an elaboration of the SWP's position on this most important aspect of revolutionary socialist activity.

The convention also discussed a highly inspiring report on the development of the socialist youth movement with particular emphasis on the growth and increasing influence of the Young Socialist Alliance.

There were also panel discussions on women's liberation, the trade union movement, Third World activity and press and publications.

The concluding report on the state of the organization recorded the fact that the Labor Day convention of the SWP was the largest held in this country since the days of the postwar radicalization in the middle 1940s, and outlined a program of intensive expansion in all areas of party activity. All in all, the convention marked a new higher stage in the growth of the American Trotskyist movement.

# THE COURSE OF U.S. IMPERIALISM AND THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE FOR A SOCIALIST AMERICA

## I

The single most decisive event in the social and political history of mankind will be the coming American revolution. This revolution will close the terrible period of the death agony of capitalism with its social decay, hunger, wars, and bestial reaction, and open the socialist era of abundance, peace, and harmony—of a truly human civilization on a global scale.

From its inception, the American Trotskyist movement has been dedicated to bringing about this colossal change at the first historic opportunity. In collaboration with its cothinkers in the Fourth International it has concentrated on the one key element that can be prepared in advance by conscious effort—construction of a leadership of the political caliber required to achieve success.

Nowhere else in the world do revolutionists face such formidable obstacles as in the heartland of U.S. imperialism. The ruling class is the richest, most powerful, and most ruthless yet seen. Its political leaders are aware of the threat to their system which socialism has become since the first major blow was struck against it in the Russian Revolution of October 1917 led by Lenin and Trotsky. They are determined to block that threat by all the means at their disposal—by political stratagem and concessions, if possible; by naked force, if necessary.

To win against this power, huge mass forces must be mobilized, including the majority of the workers and their allies among the national minorities and the middle classes. These forces must find organized political expression in a Leninist party able to anticipate, to assess correctly, and to respond adequately to all the exigencies of the struggle as it moves forward and reaches its climactic phases.

The selecting, training and hardening of cadres to form the framework of such a party is thus of crucial importance. How well this daily task is fulfilled now will help determine the outcome of the more spectacular battles to be fought out in the period lying ahead.

To carry out this function properly, it is necessary to continually

estimate where we stand in the light of what has already been accomplished and what lies ahead. This has to be done in the context of the broad class struggle—which is not determined by us but by mighty social forces of international scope, above all the aims, decisions, and course of American imperialism.

This resolution is not designed to analyze the current conjuncture of events or lay out the immediate tasks and campaigns of the party. Other resolutions and reports will deal with these. This document proposes, along with the companion article on "The Road We Have Traveled," to present a general view of the development of U.S. imperialism over the past quarter century, the response of the oppositional forces within the country to it, the beginning of a new radicalization, and the role of our party.

## II

Like the other national centers of capitalism, the United States was impelled by the internal contradictions of its economic system to continually expand. After spreading across the North American continent, slaughtering and dispossessing the Indians and overpowering the slave system in the South in the process, it became a world imperialist power at the turn of the century. In the Spanish-American War, U.S. imperialism seized sectors of the decayed Spanish empire outright, dislodged Spain from Cuba, and proceeded to establish its own empire in Latin America and the Pacific. But American wealth and power remained overshadowed by British imperialism.

As a consequence of World War I, the United States gained pre-eminence over the European imperialist centers. Nevertheless, its standing as the world's chief imperialist power remained subject to challenge from its rivals. And their empires remained largely intact, in some instances even expanding.

In World War II, the United States smashed the combined attempt of Germany and Japan to overcome the American lead and, in passing, reduced Britain to the status of a satellite power. As for the other imperialist centers, they were brought down to a still humbler level and have had little choice but to watch the U.S. move at its leisure into their former colonial holdings.

Thus in 1945, at the close of World War II a quarter of a century ago, American imperialism appeared to have achieved a position from which it could move in a fairly short time to domination of the globe. Even the land of the October Revolution, despite the defeat of German imperialism, appeared to lie in shambles after the years of Stalin's ruinous policies that culminated in paving the way for the invasion of Hitler's armies. It was not without a certain plausibility that Wall Street talked of a "Pax Americana" governing the "American Century."

And in 1946 the cold war, reversing the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union, indicated what area of the world America's rulers had in mind for their next big advance.

However, Washington ran into obstacles the ruling class did not count on in pursuing its strategy of world domination after winning World War II. First of all, the American people were in no mood for another conflict abroad. Under the impact of the "Get Us Home" movement, the massive draftee army was temporarily disabled as an effective instrument of imperialist conquest. Secondly, the Soviet victory had immense consequences of a revolutionary nature. Owing to their planned economy, the Soviet people were able to make a remarkably swift recovery from the devastation wrought by World War II. Solving the "secret" of the atom bomb and making new advances in rocketry, the Soviet Union soon emerged as second only to the United States in power, a country of such formidable defensive capacities as to deter even the strategists in the pay of the Pentagon.

A revolutionary wave in Europe, sweeping through Italy, France, and Belgium, required immediate attention, resulting in a vast outpouring of dollars in the Marshall Plan to shore up tottering European capitalism.

The overturn of the capitalist economic structure in a series of Eastern European countries changed the relation of forces still further as economic planning became rooted in this area.

The colonial upsurge, beginning in Indochina and Indonesia, added still another complication.

Finally, the downfall of Chiang Kai-shek and the victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949 added such weight to the anticapitalist camp that the world relationship of forces was altered further to the disadvantage of U. S. imperialism.

Moreover, the Chinese success gave extraordinary impetus to the colonial revolution elsewhere in Asia, throughout Africa, and in Latin America. The reverberations were visible in Korea, Iran, Guatemala, Algeria, Iraq, the Congo. This upsurge culminated in the revolutionary victory in Cuba in 1959 and the establishment of the first workers state in the western hemisphere.

The strategists of U. S. imperialism have had to constantly revise the tactical pursuit of their unaltered strategical goal of world domination in accordance with these realities. Over the past 25 years they have engaged in an unending series of probes and thrusts against their class adversaries on a global scale. Whenever and wherever they have encountered stiff resistance or suffered a reversal, they have been obliged to pull back and reassess the situation before taking the next moves. Wherever they have registered successes or encountered vacillations in their class enemies they have thrust aggressively ahead.

In face of the revolutionary upsurge in the colonial areas, U. S. imperialism was compelled to readjust its timetable of world conquest.

In the case of Korea, General MacArthur carried the American flag up to the Yalu River, only to be hurled back by China; and the truce in Korea signaled the first grave military reversal of the U. S. in this century. Domestic opposition to U. S. involvement in Korea forced the Democrats out of the White House after 20 years of the Roosevelt coalition.

The defeat in Korea was followed by the disaster suffered by French imperialism at Dienbienphu in 1954. For a time U. S. imperialism was even thrown on the defensive in its hemispheric base of Latin America. With adequate leadership, the Guatemalan people might have accomplished in 1954 what the Cubans succeeded in doing five years later. Time was consumed as Wall Street sought to bring the restless populations in its empire under better control and to aid its sæellites in clubbing down the unrest in the areas ruled by them.

Despite these complications, Washington opened offensives in several areas. In the Middle East, Eisenhower dispatched marines to Lebanon in 1958, taking over from England and France the primary responsibility for containing the Arab revolution. A more ambitious undertaking was Kennedy's intervention in Cuba in 1961, which ended in the defeat of the expeditionary forces at Playa Girón. Washington's willingness to bring its unparalleled military might into play was further evidenced in the Caribbean crisis of 1962 when Kennedy instituted the naval blockade and was even prepared to launch nuclear weapons if the Kremlin refused to back down and withdraw its missiles from Cuba.

During the early 1960's American imperialism and its allies registered some significant successes in holding back the tide of revolution in the colonial world. These included the intervention in the Congo that ended in the murder of Lumumba and the toppling of the workers and farmers government in Algeria, both of which they feared could become Africa's Cuba. They smashed the incipient revolution in Brazil and the uprising in Santo Domingo, installed military regimes in a series of Latin-American countries, removed Nkrumah in Ghana and, most important of all, backed the crushing of the huge Communist Party in Indonesia and the slaughtering of some 500,000 of its members and followers.

These setbacks to the revolutionary forces in the colonial world encouraged the strategists of U. S. imperialism, who were additionally elated by the appearance of a deep rift between the USSR and China. When the Sino-Soviet conflict reached such a pitch that the two sides appeared incapable of uniting in joint action in face of an aggressive move by their common foe, Washington escalated its intervention in Vietnam. The Pentagon energetically exploited the opening provided by the Sino-Soviet split and Peking's preoccupation with the "cultural revolution" by putting half a million troops in South Vietnam and systematically bombing the workers state of North Vietnam.

Success in this enterprise would have signified the establishment of another bridgehead on the mainland of Asia to supplement the bases

in the arc extending from Korea, through Japan, Okinawa, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Thailand. This would have opened the road to further thrusts of the same kind. The world was justifiably alarmed over the possibility that the war in Vietnam would turn out to be the prelude to a nuclear showdown.

The U. S. stepped up its military operations in South Vietnam and bombed the North in order to save its puppet regime in Saigon, crush the revolution there and thus administer a terrible lesson to other colonial peoples that might challenge its hegemony. However, thanks above all to the indomitable resistance of the Vietnamese insurgents, it failed to attain these objectives. Instead, it exposed the limitations of its massive military machine in coping with popular revolution, diminished its prestige among its allies, and provoked at home the greatest antiwar movement in its history. This constitutes a new major setback in carrying through its scheme to subjugate the world.

### III

These international objectives pursued by U. S. imperialism have nurtured militarism and fostered the expansion of those sectors of industry most closely tied to the production of armaments and such related endeavors as the space program.

A quarter of a century after the end of World War II, American imperialism had more than 1,500,000 troops stationed abroad — one-fourth of them in Europe, almost one-half in Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia. These troops were deployed in accordance with Washington's "commitments" to defend forty-eight countries tied to American imperialism.

From the first two "crude" atom bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the American arsenal of nuclear weapons now includes miniaturized atomic shells that can be fired from cannon and intercontinental missiles capable of obliterating entire regions. New "improved" models of these fiendish weapons are under constant production, not to mention occasional massive boosts in this field like those represented by the "Multiple Independently-targetable Re-entry Vehicle" (MIRV) program and the "Safeguard Anti-Ballistic Missile" (ABM) system. In addition, the U. S. has in its arsenal chemical and biological weapons of equally fearsome nature. The military budget, already \$40 billion a year in 1960, had doubled to almost \$80 billion by the end of the decade.

This expansion of the armaments program, with its accompanying stepped up military-diplomatic offensive, was made possible economically by the uninterrupted growth of American productive capacity for the past three decades and the accelerated penetration of American capital abroad. The importance of the latter factor is symbolized by the fact that, while in terms of output the U. S. remains first in the world and the Soviet Union second, third place is now held by "U. S.

investments abroad." In absolute figures, this category exceeds the output of either Germany or Japan.

The enormous outlays to pay for past wars, current wars, and the preparation of future wars have saved American capitalism from a major depression in the past three decades, enabling it to surmount several recessions without sharp crises. A possible slump in the mid-sixties was averted by the increased spending to finance the war in Vietnam, and the longest uninterrupted boom in American history was maintained.

During the past eight years of boom, the concentration, centralization and expansion of American capital internationally proceeded at a faster pace than any time in history. Structural unemployment was reduced from the five to six million level of the Eisenhower period—which was considered by the capitalists to be "low"—to three to four million. Modern industrial methods were widely extended into agriculture, business and public administration, and educational institutions. While skilled jobs increased significantly, unskilled jobs precipitously declined as a consequence of the technological changes occurring in the economy.

But the prosperity has had another side. The diversion of such huge resources into the pursuit of war and the growth of a colossal public and private debt have been both profitable for big business and essential in dampening the business cycle. However, the consequent inflation has become a bigger and bigger problem.

This has undermined the international role of the dollar. In view of the ever-worsening position of the pound and franc as a result of the liquidation of the British and French empires, the relative weakening of the stable value of the dollar has accelerated the prospect of an explosive international monetary crisis. At home, inflation has driven prices upward at an increasing pace so that the cost of basic necessities has reached unheard-of levels in the United States.

During the 1960's American capitalism permitted the real value of the dollar to deteriorate in order to prop up and prolong domestic prosperity even at the expense of its function as the key international currency. This expedient has become less and less feasible as an anti-recessionary tool. In order to protect the conditions for the continued growth of world trade and foreign investment U. S. imperialism is now compelled to maintain the stability of the dollar even to the detriment of internal economic activity, production and employment.

While the American capitalists have poured the country's resources into fighting "brush wars" and in raising their capacity to reduce all of civilization to rubble in a nuclear war, their competitors abroad, above all Japan and Germany, have been modernizing their technology, bringing them into position to offer increasing competition to American products in the world market in the coming period.

The difficulties with the dollar coupled with the consequences of this intensified international competition will exert heavy pressure upon American big business to narrow the considerable wage differential they have been able to maintain over their foreign competitors. This they can do only by increasing pressure on wages, working conditions and employment and at the cost of heating up the class struggle at home.

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The astronomical expenditures for war have been felt in other ways. They have meant steady cutbacks in social benefits, the progressive deterioration of public services, accelerated decay of the cities, and a losing battle against massive pollution of the environment.

This has led to a growing awareness among the masses of the immense gap between present-day technical and productive possibilities in America and what has been achieved under the ruling class' order of priorities. This is a constant and growing source of general social discontent.

The working masses also see that, while the government is ready to undertake and underwrite—that is, socialize—all types of large-scale projects demanded by big business and the military, it makes the most grudging and pitifully inadequate expenditures for the most urgent needs of the people in housing, welfare, medical care, etc. Small wonder that the achievement of landing two men on the moon seemed irrational. Why spend \$25 billion on that while children go hungry in the United States?

A third underlying bitter realization is that the expenditure of resources and lives in military undertakings around the globe neither increases security nor gives any assurance of avoiding a world conflagration. To the contrary, the deeper the involvement, the greater the danger becomes of precipitating a nuclear showdown.

At the same time as they become aware of these glaring contradictions people increasingly feel that they have little or no direct control over what matters most in their own lives. The major decisions which shape their destinies are made by alien forces and no conventional means within their immediate reach can affect them.

#### IV

The political climate of the post-war period falls into two sharply contrasting phases: the initiation of the cold war and the consequent witchhunt atmosphere which prevailed until the 1960's began, and the emergence of a new wave of radicalization that has far from run its course.

The current stage was opened by the upsurge in the struggle for

black liberation in the mid-fifties. Although the ruling class sought to confine the movement to purely judicial and parliamentary channels, it kept spilling over into mass demonstrations and direct actions. This stimulated militant black nationalist consciousness on a massive scale which exploded in the mid-sixties in the successive spontaneous uprisings in the ghettos.

As McCarthyism gradually wore itself out, the "silent generation" of youth passed from the scene. Under the impact of the black struggle and then the Cuban Revolution, a new generation was drawn into action and came to more and more radical conclusions. The Free Speech fight at Berkeley in 1964 inaugurated an unprecedented ferment in America's educational institutions.

The escalation of American aggression in Vietnam in 1965 gave a qualitative boost to this radicalization. It also precipitated rifts within the ruling class. Involving merely the tactical question of whether it was wise to have become so deeply involved in Vietnam and whether a retreat was called for—the better to promote the fundamental objectives of American imperialism abroad—this division was nevertheless of considerable importance. It facilitated the growing radicalization by further legitimatizing dissent and placing an obstacle in the way of a repressive crackdown by the authorities on the antiwar forces.

Increasing numbers of youth advanced from criticism of the hypocrisy of the Democratic Party in its denial of democratic rights for the Afro-American people and sympathy with the colonial peoples in their struggle against imperialism to consciously anti-imperialist and even anticapitalist positions. The administration failed to whip up any mass enthusiasm for its war. This was manifested in the refusal of the workers to suspend union struggles for higher wages and better conditions as military operations escalated. Their attitude toward the war turned from apathy to deepening opposition as they experienced its consequences in mounting casualties, skyrocketing prices, rising taxes, deteriorating services and a consequent stagnation in their standard of living.

Two features of the current radicalization have great relevance to the revolutionary perspectives of our movement.

First, it arose during a prolonged prosperity. Always in preceding times such periods of prosperity had reversed rising opposition to the capitalist status quo.

Second, it leaped forward in the midst of an ongoing war whereas in all earlier imperialist conflicts patriotic hysteria had drowned out or suppressed the voices of dissent.

The war-induced prosperity of the early 1940's, reinforced by the anti-fascist complexion of the official propaganda, dissipated the radicalization generated by the depression of the 1930's; and the postwar boom, supplemented by the government-sponsored anti-Communist witchhunting, cut off all prospects of anticapitalist action soon after the close of World War II.

By contrast, the current unprecedented development of a wave of radicalization despite an economic boom and an avowed crusade "against Communism" takes on added significance.

This indicates that the two principal means exploited by America's ruling class to head off and strangle social and political protest are losing much of their efficacy. These two economic and political factors that enabled the capitalists to maintain social stability and restrict the spread and scope of radicalism in the 1940's and 1950's will hardly be so powerfully operative in the coming decade. The long-term boom extended by the leap in Vietnam-related military spending has created an inflationary problem that must be cooled down—not extended. The dissensions and divisions among the workers states make the fabrication of a "Communist menace to the American way of life" a less and less credible bogey for enforcing conformity and lining up the American people behind the schemes of the monopolists and militarists.

In addition, Americans have become increasingly skeptical about the honesty and trustworthiness of the powers that be. This distrust became vocalized on a wide scale and was expressed in significant public demonstrations as opposition to the Vietnam war swept through the college and high school youth, the Afro-Americans, the intellectuals and professions, the churches, and penetrated the armed forces. Much of the publicity issued in Saigon and Washington on the declared aims and progress of the war became discounted and recognized as a tissue of lies.

The basic dilemma faced by America's rulers today is this: The very measures required to halt the world revolutionary process come into increasing conflict with the maintenance of stability and class peace at home.

The American capitalist system lacks the resources to both maintain its foreign "commitments," which logically involve an endless series of Vietnams, and grant economic concessions and social improvements on a scale sufficient to dissipate the pressures engendering radicalization of the masses. To cut down its foreign "commitments" to the degree required would mean in reality foregoing indefinitely—actually, giving up—its major world orientation since the end of World War II. The American ruling class cannot undertake a reduction of such scope since it would run counter to the basic economic imperatives of the capitalist system itself and would permit an unimpeded upsurge in the world revolution.

The ruling class, of course, may contemplate trying to end the radicalization by suppressing it. The most thorough way of doing this would be through fascism. However, this murderous method is not on the order of the day. Fascism in the classical sense of a completely reactionary movement based on the demagogic mobilization of broad sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and directed to the complete smashing of the trade unions and all the popular organizations and democratic rights of the masses, is not feasible in the United

States today if only because the broad base for it is still lacking. Even if such a base existed, the American ruling class would hesitate long before resorting to the fascist solution, not only to uphold its reputation with the "free world" but because such a course would bring on an armed struggle that could well turn against its fomenters and bring a swift end to capitalist rule.

What the ruling class will most likely attempt in an effort to stem the radicalization is a combination of granting whatever concessions are possible and the increasing use of "law and order" legislation, reactionary court decisions, the clubs of the police, and bayonets of the National Guard.

The use of naked force in this way under a parliamentary regime is not the same as the political system of fascism. It cannot be sustained for a long period; it offers only a temporary block to the advance of radicalization on a mass scale; and it often proves to be counterproductive, arousing not fear and intimidation but fresh depths of resentment, anger, and resistance.

Whatever mixture of repression and concessions may be decided on by the ruling class, the American political scene is obviously in for increasing class polarization. This signifies on the one hand increasing assertiveness by the right wings of the Democratic and Republican parties and the conservative formations beyond them; and on the other hand increasing dissatisfaction among the masses with the old formations and a growing impulsion to break loose from them.

Thus the main perspective for the coming period is a breakdown of the relative political equilibrium characteristic of the heyday of American capitalism, increasing strains on the two-party system, the rise of small third capitalist parties both to the right and the left, and the development of extraordinary openings and opportunities for independent black and labor political action along with the growth of revolutionary socialist ideas and influence.

## V

Our capacity to take advantage of the new opportunities will be determined to a great degree by the skill with which we employ the methods projected and exemplified in the Transitional Program.

The key is to find demands corresponding to the present level of political understanding of the masses and to their objective needs. But demands which, in the course of struggle, lead to a higher level of understanding, independent organization, mobilization, and conflict with capitalist prerogatives; and thus tend to break through the framework of capitalism.

The central axis of such demands involves the struggle of the masses to control their own lives, their source of livelihood, their environment, the management of industry, the national decisions

affecting their fate. The struggle for control in these various fields merges into a struggle for government power. The first big step along this road is the achievement of independence from capitalist political parties and the initiation of independent political organization by a section of the labor movement or black community.

The process of radicalization develops unevenly. Depending on their background, their situation in society, the immediate problems they face, and their susceptibility to being influenced by examples of struggle and organization in other areas, various sectors of the masses gain political consciousness and go into action at different times and at different rates. A layer in the lead for a period can slow down and on occasion be outstripped by a layer awakening later under somewhat different circumstances. This layer in turn may mark time or even slip back as still another sector begins to move, often applying the most effective methods observed in other areas of struggle. Thus the black masses can be far out in front while the white workers lag far in the rear.

The real movement of the various sectors must be studied with careful attention and objectivity and special transitional slogans devised to correspond with their stage of development.

This is why the Socialist Workers Party strives to develop its program in such a way as to address particular sectors in a language they can understand and with concrete proposals on the problems of greatest immediate concern to them. The most important of these social forces are the black community, the youth and the organized working class.

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The current stage of the struggle of the Afro-American people for self-determination which began in the middle fifties expanded with the meteoric rise of Malcolm X in the sixties and the mass combativity manifested in the ghetto explosions. One measure of the immense rise in nationalist consciousness has been the recent *Newsweek* survey showing that one-fifth of the Afro-Americans now believe that the only way they can achieve real progress is through the establishment of a separate black nation. This mass separatist sentiment is the clearest single sign of wholesale rejection of illusions about the future of capitalist America.

The Socialist Workers Party was prepared theoretically for these developments, having discussed their possibility in the thirties with Leon Trotsky, who brought the Leninist teachings on the national question and the vast experience of the Russian Revolution to bear on this very problem in the U.S.

The liberals, and likewise many revolutionists, viewed the struggle of the black masses as aiming at integration within the white capitalist structure and as simply a component of labor struggles. Trotsky foresaw more complex—and more revolutionary—possibilities. In his opinion, the black masses would come to reject this type of "integration" in view of the centuries of bitter experience with racial op-

pression they had suffered. In the course of their struggle for emancipation, a consciousness that its goal could be realized only through winning unconditional self-determination, and not integration or equality within racist American capitalism would more and more clearly manifest itself. Marxist revolutionists had the duty of unconditionally supporting the independent organization and struggle of the black masses. Only the firm maintenance of such support could prepare the conditions for a powerful political alliance between independently organized, nationalist-minded Afro-Americans and socialist-oriented workers, black and white, in opposition to the entire capitalist system.

It would take the establishment of a workers government to open the possibility of establishing, if desired by Afro-Americans, a black nation either as part of a federated socialist republic or in complete independence if Afro-Americans so wished. Moreover, after trying either alternative, they would be free to switch. Independent black mass organizations would be the ultimate guarantee of safeguarding this right. And no organization that did not clearly state this would be considered a revolutionary or trustworthy ally by the Afro-Americans.

The movement for black liberation is a complex and contradictory fusion of two explosive trends. One is an irrepressible and powerful democratic thrust for self-determination as a distinctive national minority. This is combined with a proletarian struggle against the capitalist rulers. All those who fail to understand the dual character of the Afro-American movement and combined characteristics of the coming American revolution are bound to go astray in comprehending its development and orienting correctly toward it.

The problem of winning full democratic rights and national emancipation for black Americans is a task which was unsolved by the American bourgeois revolutionists of the 18th and 19th centuries and has been handed down for solution to the socialist revolution of the 20th century. The revolutionary potential of this nationalist movement has already been evidenced in the fact that it initiated and continues to deepen the mood of radicalism in this country and that the black masses and the black workers are the spearhead of opposition to the status quo. This vanguard role of black nationalism is bound to intensify rather than diminish in the further unfolding of the Third American Revolution.

The Afro-American struggle for liberation is the most formidable expression of the logic of permanent revolution in American life today. It has begun on the basis of a fight for national emancipation. But this democratic objective cannot be obtained except through all-out combat against the entire capitalist system which holds down the black masses for its own profiteering reasons. Thus, regardless of the prevailing ideas of its participants, the thrust toward national liberation inexorably tends to merge with the broader class struggle against capitalist domination.

The oppression and exploitation inflicted upon Afro-Americans cannot be removed by capitalism for four main reasons: (1) Black capitalism is much too weak, timid, and dependent on white business circles to carve a place for an independent black nation. (2) The white capitalist structure requires keeping the blacks at the very bottom of the social scale in order to maintain a reserve army of cheap labor that puts a check on the wage demands of other sectors and serves as a ready supply of workers in areas of sudden economic expansion. (3) Even if the ruling class could be persuaded that Afro-Americans deserve special economic treatment and social upgrading they would reject emancipating them because this would call certain inviolable private property rights into question. It would also immediately raise the related struggles of the most poverty-stricken whites and other oppressed national minorities to explosive proportions. (4) The capitalists maintain their rule through the ancient device of keeping the working masses from uniting in a common struggle to displace them. They do this by implanting and fostering the worst prejudices. Holding a sector like the blacks in the position of pariahs, economically depressed and educationally disadvantaged, is too potent a means of blocking solidarity among the masses for America's ruling class to give up.

The special social composition of the Afro-American population is no less decisive a factor than the material interests of the plutocracy in sharpening the revolutionary edge of its struggle. The Afro-Americans are not peasants dispersed in backward rural areas; they are predominantly proletarians concentrated in the biggest cities and the key industries and services.

They are subjected to double exploitation as blacks and as workers. Compelled to exist by selling their labor power, their wages as blacks tend to be the lowest, their rate of unemployment the highest, their opportunities for advancement and skills the slightest. Their demands as the most exploited section of the working class dovetail with the demands of the poorest of the poor for better conditions of life.

The class composition and status of the black workers can be expected to objectively propel them into leading positions in the black community, in the building and direction of a black party and the inclusion of working class demands in its program, and in the anti-bureaucratic struggles in the unions. Their experiences in these struggles will make it easier to win the most farsighted among them to socialist ideas and to membership in a multi-national Leninist combat party.

The combined character of the mass Afro-American movement to gain power to have control over their own future precludes any separation of stages in the struggle for its nationalist demands and socialist objectives. There cannot first be a successfully concluded struggle for national independence and democratic rights and afterwards a struggle for social liberation. The two must be indissolubly com-

bined and will, in fact, reciprocally reinforce each other. The nationalist demands must be tied in with working class demands in order to obtain either.

But there is more to the matter than this. The struggle for black liberation is bound to be an exceedingly powerful stimulant to developing the anticapitalist movement of the whole American working class. The formation of a black party would transform American politics by upsetting its long established organizational structure and alignments, leading to the disintegration of the Democratic Party coalition and setting an example of independent political action for organized labor. Through their black caucuses in the unions the black workers have already taken the initiative in contending against the racist and reactionary policies of the ossified bureaucrats, thus helping to begin the work of breaking their stranglehold upon the labor movement.

The failure to appreciate the revolutionary dynamism inherent in the Afro-American drive for self-determination causes many white radicals to misunderstand or depreciate the revolutionary thrust and potential of black nationalism. On the other hand, the current crisis of leadership in the black community is traceable to a failure to understand how the democratic demands pointing to self-determination, such as black control of the black community, can be tied in with transitional demands which promote the fundamental objectives of the working class movement in the struggle for socialism.

The continual ferment, periodic mass militancy and spontaneous uprisings in the ghettos show what combativity exists. Yet up to now the black community lacks not only an independent mass party but even an organized vanguard clearly dedicated to the task of building such a party.

The first step toward resolving this glaring contradiction is to work out a program that sharply delineates the nature and goals of the black liberation struggle and projects a course of action that can lead toward the construction of an influential black mass party and the education of its cadres. Suggestions along this line are included in the SWP resolution: "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation."

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The rebellion of the youth, currently observable in its sharpest form on the campuses, has become a new factor in American politics and social struggle. The student youth occupy a place of increasing social weight in the United States. The growing campus population of almost 7,000,000 already exceeds the number of farmers. They are concentrated in educational areas or institutions to a degree exceeding the work force in all but the most giant factory complexes.

The general nature of the problems of the youth radicalization and the strategy for solving them have been dealt with in the resolution, "Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth In-

ternational." This resolution, while international in scope, is directly relevant to the radicalization of the youth in the United States and its meaning for the American revolutionary socialist movement.

The radicalization of the campuses in the sixties was a serious matter for U.S. imperialism because of the influence the attitudes of American students have had upon the rest of their generation in the high schools, factories and the armed forces. This was shown with the utmost clarity in the role played by the youth in organizing, spearheading and broadening the opposition against the Vietnam war and the degree to which the oppositional attitudes spread, even penetrating the armed forces.

By emerging after a decade of the new rise of the black liberation movement, the large-scale youth radicalization in effect opened up a second domestic front in the offensive against America's capitalist rulers.

The days of a "silent generation" among the youth are definitively done with. The decades of political acquiescence on the campuses and the high schools are over. Whatever ups and downs may occur as the ruling class seeks to allay the rebellion of the youth, the campus will never be the same. The ups and downs will take place in the framework of a long term deepening of the revolt and an increasing disposition among vanguard students to be receptive to revolutionary socialist policies and ideas.

Because of the backwardness of American politics and the extremely low level of socialist consciousness among the workers, the student movement at its present point in the United States plays a disproportionate and extremely significant role as a testing ground for political ideas and realignments. The campuses along with the black communities are today the main arenas where the principal issues of revolutionary strategy and policy are being openly debated.

The socialist current that is able to gain ideological and organizational hegemony over the new radical generation in open competition against its rivals will be in the most favorable position to take advantage of any breakthroughs which subsequently occur in the ranks of the working class. This prospect enhances the importance of participating in student struggles while systematically polemicalizing against all currents, from the opportunists and reformists to the ultralefts, in order to win the best elements to the banner of revolutionary Marxism.

The magnitude of the student population and its increasing impact upon political life make imperative fraternal collaboration with and support to the efforts of the Young Socialist Alliance to build solid bases on educational institutions from coast to coast. It will fight for the leadership of the radical youth in the spheres of both ideology and action, imbue them with the ideals of socialist internationalism, and bring fresh new cadres toward the revolutionary party.

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The labor movement still suffers from the political inertia induced

by the combination of government witchhunting and sustained prosperity that followed the brief postwar upsurge of 1945-46. But molecular changes have occurred that are important to note. Four significant new features deserve special attention.

First is the increased number of black workers in basic industry. In such basic industries as auto, steel and rubber, ghetto youth, brought into the plants, have come into the labor movement in significant numbers. Today they are burdened with the dirtiest and most grueling jobs.

They are the same ones who have initiated black caucuses, independent actions against the labor bureaucracy, and the beginnings of independent formations that are disturbing the quiescent atmosphere within the labor movement and improving the atmosphere for growing oppositional moods. Socialists and militants in the unions have the obligation to explain the progressive significance of these vanguard initiatives of these black workers to their fellow members and back them to the hilt.

Secondly, the age level in the unions is declining. This is a consequence of the expansion of jobs under the impact of the boom, particularly in the sixties. Not only has the average age level gone down, but the percentage of union members who have been in industry less than five years has gone up by 15 percent in the past five years. A large percentage of the work force is now made up of men and women belonging to the post-Korean War, post-McCarthy generation.

They have never gone through a major recession or experienced massive layoffs or plant shutdowns. They have not gone through a series of bitter, prolonged strike struggles. They picture the future as a repetition of the past as they have known it—regular wage gains through bargaining sessions, a more or less steady increment over the years to their standard of living, and steady employment. They also incline to assume that if things should go wrong the government will surely do something about it.

But their inexperience has other implications. An economic downturn, suddenly confronting them with the basic anarchy of the capitalist system, could rapidly turn many of these young workers, however conservative their present political consciousness, into the most militant and revolutionary-minded sector of the working class.

The third feature is the transformation in status of large layers of skilled and semi-skilled salaried personnel in technical, administrative, service, and educational fields. The technological changes over the last 20 years have rationalized and introduced industrial methods into whole new sectors of production and proletarianized its personnel. The rigid hierarchical organization in these areas more and more resembles the alienating work process in the plant. This makes the workers in these occupations much more receptive than before to militant unionism and radical ideas.

Because of their connection with college education this category

of workers are most liable to direct influence by the moods of campus radicalization which they often transmit into their circles.

The fourth feature is the increased number of public employees; that is, workers hired by the federal, state, county and local governments. The number of workers who confront the state in the boss-employee relation constitutes the fastest growing proportion of the union movement. Because of their direct confrontation with government representatives in all negotiations on wages and working conditions such unions cannot escape immediate involvement in political issues.

The main political struggles of the day—around the needs of the Afro-American people, the rebellion of the youth against the war—are taking place outside the trade union movement. This is one of the consequences of the persistence with which the labor officialdom has clung to its alliance with the Democratic Party machine. But the repercussions of these struggles have been felt to an increasing degree within the unions; and it is only a question of time until the number of unions directly caught up in them grows.

A large left wing in the American labor movement will most likely emerge in response to a threatened deterioration in working conditions and living standards which will arouse and impel workers to organized counteraction. Their caucuses will be affected from the first by the degree of radicalism prevalent in the country, the black communities and among the students.

To sustain itself, a left wing formed and fighting under such conditions would have to be guided by a class consciousness clear enough to grasp the necessity for labor to forge its own political party. Its aim would be to gain independence from the state instead of serving as an agency of Washington against the interests of oppressed peoples abroad and the rank and file of the unions at home.

The struggle for democracy within the unions is crucial and will have to go hand in hand with the fight of the ranks to win a majority against subordination to the political parties and government of the bosses.

In the coming period in which deflationary policies and increased unemployment will be accompanied by the threat of rising prices, it will be essential to put forth the transitional demand for a sliding scale of both wages and hours. The first is the only safeguard for the real income of the workers under rapid inflation. The second is designed to unite the working class by more equitably dividing up the available jobs with no reduction in take-home pay. The fight for the coupling of these two transitional demands will be the only effective way to answer the attempts by big business and its government to make the workers bear the brunt of the periodic recessions and at the same time to combat the inevitable wage-ceiling proposals under inflationary conditions.

The demand for workers control in industry as projected by the Transitional Program could find growing acceptance in this process.

This slogan accords with the aspiration of the workers to have the decisive voice in the organization of production against the intensified exploitation and deepening alienation imposed by capitalist rationalization. It coincides with the growing demands of the radicalizing youth and Afro-Americans for power to control their daily lives, environment and destinies.

The concept of workers control extends into demanding that the company books be opened for public inspection, and that watchdog committees be set up to check company practices. Such committees naturally suggest setting up consumer committees that could be organized on a neighborhood basis to check the prices and quality of goods as inflation threatens the family marketbasket of every worker.

The interference by the government and the impact of its policies on all areas of life objectively pose the question of political power before the working class. The increasing concentration, centralization and conglomeration of capital and its grip upon local, state and federal government more and more threatens to render impotent the methods of even militant business unionism. What the individual corporation is compelled to grant through normal bargaining processes can easily be snatched away by government monetary and tax policies. The formation of an independent labor party is the next giant step the unions must take to defend the elementary interests of the working class. Thus, propaganda for the labor party must remain in the very center of any program for both a genuine left wing in the unions and for our party.

This puts a heavy premium at this stage of the radicalization on circulating our press and literature to disseminate our basic ideas to open-minded unionists. Education in the overall socialist program leading to stepped-up recruitment is our priority task in the labor movement.

## VI

The change of political climate in the sixties is often attributed to the rise of a "New Left" by those who have only a superficial acquaintance with its basic characteristics. It has actually been the first stage of a new radicalization which expresses the drive of rebellious youth, black and white, to break away from liberalism, reformism and pacifism and take the road leading toward anticapitalist struggle. This attitude is evidenced in the opposition of the dissident youth to the imperialists in Washington and those who kowtow to them and by their rejection of the social-democratic and Stalinist movements both at home and abroad.

This radicalization is marked by a set of special features arising from its spontaneous nature, ideological primitiveness and instability and the absence of direction from any mass political formation or large Marxist party with clear authority.

Most of the new radicals are unsuspecting victims of the effects of the prolonged cold war period which deeply disrupted the continuity of American radicalism, dimmed its best traditions, and opened wide the field in which aberrant tendencies can spring up.

The partial vacuum on the left has been created by the following developments:

1. The incapacities of the labor bureaucracy and the various leaderships of the black community in the past three decades to cut loose from the two-party system and initiate independent political action.

2. The destruction of the social democracy as an effective force in the American political scene owing to the degeneration of its central leadership, which backed the alliance between the labor officialdom and the Democratic machine and ended up offering critical advice to the State Department on how best to fight "Communism" abroad.

3. The inability of the Communist Party to recover from its suicidal course during World War II, when, as its contribution to Stalin's "people's front," it came out in open support of U.S. imperialism and attempted to sacrifice the welfare of labor and the black community to this policy. After the unremitting pounding by the witchhunters the CP was further decimated by the massive desertions following Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin in 1956.

Both the Socialist Party's submission to the State Department and the Communist Party's subservience to Moscow were equally repugnant to the new radicals since their initial targets of rebellion were "liberal" anti-Communism and bureaucratic opportunism.

4. The labor conservatism and the erosion suffered by the entire radical movement in consequence of the years of sustained economic prosperity and virulent witchhunting. In particular, this cut off the promising rapid expansion of the Socialist Workers Party at the end of World War II. Thus the Marxist vanguard was a very small force as the radicalization began.

Owing to these circumstances the struggles attending and promoting the new wave of radicalization have been disconnected and atomized instead of being programmatically and organizationally coordinated through the influence of any single leadership.

Whereas the CP was the overwhelmingly dominant force in all circles of the left during the 1930's, no single political grouping or ideological current has gained a comparable supremacy in the current radicalization. What we see instead is a pluralism of tendencies and diversity of policies fiercely contending against one another for the allegiance of unaffiliated militants.

This situation accounts for the openness of the movement and the non-exclusionist attitudes which have come to prevail in it. These stand in refreshing contrast to the ultra-factional monopoly over the left the Stalinists were able to exercise during the 1930's and the ban they sought to impose upon the views of all critics and revolutionary opponents.

The promising leftward shift of the radicalizing youth has become prey to two dangers.

Despite their avowed aversion to liberalism and formal renunciation of reformism, sizable sectors of militants can still become disoriented by the demagogic devices of the opportunistic leftists in and around the Democratic Party, who are headed by the CP. So long as no significant steps are taken toward launching independent black or labor parties, they can be lured into chasing after the illusory prospects of accomplishing something within the established capitalist electoral arena or through some radical-sounding middle-class makeshift like the Peace and Freedom Party. In one form or another, this is the principal trap set in the path of the young radicals because of the resources of sophisticated circles of the ruling class and the persistent efforts made by Moscow and its acolytes in the U.S. to seek alliance with these circles.

On the other hand, at the present time a significant number of radicals are susceptible to and carried away by ultra-left adventurism. They are vulnerable to its dangers through inexperience, their petty-bourgeois backgrounds, the absence of a militant workers movement and a strong Marxist leadership from the arena of struggle, and their ignorance or rejection of a revolutionary program and perspective which could give firm guidance and a clear goal to their actions. Their sympathy and admiration for the Cuban, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arab and African revolutions often leads to a simplistic conception of the role of armed struggle and guerrilla war in advancing and winning a revolution. They make a mechanical transfer, which is usually purely rhetorical, of the tactics and techniques used by the colonial fighters to the vastly different situation and concrete problems of the revolutionary movement in the United States.

The violence of the ruling class has also played a role in fostering ultraleftism. Club-wielding, trigger-happy cops are expert at provoking their victims into a blind fury. But, however comprehensible they may be, ill-considered responses are hardly effective in countering the violence of the police. The cops prefer to precipitate battles with isolated groups and weak organizations in such a way as to make it most difficult for them to mobilize active sympathy on a wide scale. They are much more cautious when they are confronted by mass actions, directed by well-organized formations that know how to utilize defensive formulations and other effective political countertactics.

The principal political force in promoting ultraleftism has been the Maoists and those influenced by them. The Maoists facilitate the work of the opportunists by their irrational adventures, by the openings they provide for the worst kind of provocations, and by their zealous application of Mao Tse-tung Thought to the American scene.

At bottom the ultraleftism of the Maoists is not qualitatively different in its results from the opportunism practiced by the followers of Moscow. Both offer diversionary substitutes for a correct revolu-

tionary program and effective revolutionary action. This accounts for the remarkable ease with which some of these seemingly absolutely opposed tendencies can form unprincipled alliances or suddenly change places with one another. The one constant in their positions and activities is hostility to the principled line of revolutionary Marxism.

The evolution of the now fragmented SDS leadership, which has swung in a few years from radical reformism to crude adventurism and quasi-Stalinist methods, is a conspicuous case of how opportunism and ultraleftism can succeed one another and be mixed together in the most bizarre combinations under the conditions of the current radicalization.

## VII

To win the coming socialist revolution in America, a politically homogeneous party, structured in accordance with the Leninist principles of democratic centralism, is required. Such a party, rooted in the masses, embodying the experience accumulated by past generations of dedicated revolutionists, tested in common action, and hardened through years of battles under the most varied conditions, gains the political know-how that is absolutely essential to overcome the material resources, political skill, and obstinate determination of the ruling class to retain its historically doomed grip on society.

The Communist Party, the major obstacle that has stood in the way of the construction of such a party for the past forty years, is no longer in position to automatically renew itself from a fresh wave of radicalization. Although they remain our central rival for leadership of the coming mass movements, the years of a Stalinist party dominating the left are behind us. The actual relationship of forces now offers American Trotskyism its most favorable opportunity for growth and influence. Our cadres stand at least on a par with those of the CP or the Maoists, and are greater than any the social democrats can muster.

Unlike the anarchists and spontaneists of all sorts, our movement recognizes the indispensable and central role of the Leninist party in carrying through the anticapitalist struggle to victory. Such a party welds together the most conscious elements of the entire toiling population and their spokesmen around a clear body of scientific doctrine, class traditions, and a revolutionary political program.

The character and structure of the revolutionary party is determined by the nature of the adversary it must combat and overthrow. The centralized bourgeois state incorporates and reinforces all the divisions among the working masses to ensure its domination.

A single centralized multi-national revolutionary party is required in order to successfully combat, outmaneuver, and overthrow the highly centralized power and agencies of the class enemy and carry

out the main tasks of socialism. It is necessary in order to politically overcome the uneven development of different sections of the working class and the national divisions that mark American social struggles. It enables all these separate forces to be united under a single banner and around a common program, to gain confidence through common experiences, and become a powerful and invincible fighting force against their common enemy.

This is how Lenin proceeded. Czarist Russia constituted "a prison-house of nationalities." Yet even there, Lenin was the staunchest advocate of a single workers combat party uniting the Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Jewish, Georgian, Finnish, and other Marxists as the only instrument that could lead to victory.

It is evident that the coming American revolution, now in the process of formation, is destined to have a combined character. The democratic struggles of the oppressed national minorities and the anticapitalist movement of the working class will reinforce each other. These dual aspects of the revolution are most fully embodied in the black workers, who have both a keen class and nationalist consciousness, who participated in the uprisings in industrial centers, and have formed black caucuses in the unions.

The proletarian composition of the black community can lead both to the proletarian leadership and incorporation of proletarian demands in the program of a black political party and facilitate the recruitment of black militants to the revolutionary socialist party.

The CP and SP seek to form multi-national reformist parties in which socialist consciousness does not reinforce revolutionary nationalist consciousness, but which negates it. Some ultralefts in SDS propose to divide the functions of the workers vanguard between a white radical leadership and some all-black organization. Others, like Progressive Labor, condemn black nationalism as reactionary. All of these groups are wrong or one-sided on this question. Either they deny the anticapitalist implications and revolutionary character of the independent struggle for self-determination by the national minorities, or fail to grasp the combined character of the Third American Revolution, or reject in practice the construction of a politically homogeneous multi-national revolutionary workers party to unite and lead the working masses to power.

The vanguard party is the highest expression of the collective consciousness of the working class and the repository of its historical memory. It brings the costly lessons of past experiences to bear upon the problems of the present in order to clarify them and avoid the repetition of previous errors.

The importance of this function has been freshly confirmed by the controversies over strategy and tactics which have agitated the entire left during the sixties. Many of the "old" issues long ago settled by the Marxist movement, which some considered outmoded and irrelevant to American conditions, have once more been sharply raised for consideration and action. Among these are the differences

between a popular front and a united front, the value of mass mobilizations versus isolated and individual confrontations, the record of Stalin, the defense of democracy within the workers movement, etc. It becomes more and more difficult for serious militants to avoid taking a stand one way or another upon such questions.

The experiences of the past five years have also forcefully demonstrated the decisive role of programmatic positions in shaping the course of a mass movement and determining its outcome. This could be observed most clearly in the antiwar movement, which brought all tendencies upon the same field and tested the merit of their proposals in a series of united actions of a mass nature. The campaign mobilization of the SWP and YSA in this movement and our proposals gave the antiwar movement a weight, momentum and direction it would otherwise have lacked.

This resulted in considerable gains for our party. The influence exercised by our ideas in the antiwar movement is a clear example of how even numerically small forces with a realistic appraisal of the situation, an appropriate program, and the capacity to conduct itself in a flexible and non-sectarian manner can fulfill the functions of a revolutionary vanguard. Our role was decisive in the historical impact the antiwar movement had.

Three lessons of the experiences of the past period should be underscored.

1. In view of the fact that no single tendency has hegemony in the radical movement, the action coalition approach which has guided our tactics in the antiwar movement will continue and be extended to other areas of activity. This is an application of united front methods to the peculiar conditions of the present stage of political and organizational development in the American left. It is the method to bring and keep together a broad diversity of elements in order to build a mass base for action on specific issues directed against the imperialist ruling class.

2. We must take advantage of openings and occasions in the current mass struggles to apply the method and augment the demands of the Transitional Program. We should attempt to extend them to new sectors of American society which enter upon the field of struggle, as has already been undertaken for the youth radicalization and the Afro-American struggle.

3. Joint action does not entail the suspension of political differentiation and polemical struggle against the opportunists and ultra-leftist misleaderships of the radical movement. To the contrary, as ideological debate deepens with the radicalization, we must continually counterpose the program and views of Marxism to the false ideas and positions put forward by rival tendencies.

Our superiority over our opponents does not come from our greater size but rather from the value and consistency of our Marxist principles, the validity of our ideas and the cohesiveness and discipline

of our cadres. Our differences with them are not incidental and episodic but fundamental.

The events in France in May-June 1968 show how the contradictions of contemporary capitalism accumulate the most powerful and explosive social forces that can be detonated into action at the most unexpected moment. The United States, with its history of sudden and convulsive changes, is hardly immune to something comparable. All of our gains in the next period will prepare us for such a sharp turn of events when the radicalization of large numbers of workers opens up the possibility of victory.

August 1969

# THE AMERICAN ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

## Part I

The current stage of the struggle  
against the imperialist war in Vietnam

### A. The present stage of the war

The war in Vietnam is the central issue in world and national politics today, as it has been since 1965 when American imperialism massively escalated its intervention. This war is a key part of American imperialism's offensive against the world revolution, whose axis during the past two decades has been in the colonial areas. The goals of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam are to crush the national liberation struggle and, if possible, overturn the North Vietnamese workers state, thus dealing fatal blows to the socialist revolution in all Southeast Asia. Additional aims include establishing a strong beachhead in this area, the better to take over the former holdings of the French, the British and the Dutch imperialists and to mount heavy military pressure against China. Washington will continue to seek these strategic aims no matter what tactical shifts may be necessitated by the worsening situation.

To pursue its objectives Washington has poured more than a half

million troops, the most modern instruments of destruction, and billions of dollars into the adventure in Vietnam. But because of the heroic resistance of the workers and peasants, the U.S. has not been able to crush the Vietnamese revolution.

U.S. intervention in Vietnam began as a relatively limited "police" action. When the Vietnamese rebels came close to defeating the Saigon regime, Johnson "escalated" U.S. intervention in 1965, widening the scope of military action until it developed into one of the major wars in U.S. history—one that already has surpassed the Korean war in American dead and wounded.

Because of its international repercussions, the war became the central confrontation on a world scale between the forces of revolution and the counterrevolutionary power of American imperialism. American imperialism hoped to make Vietnam an object lesson which would serve to intimidate the revolutionary forces throughout the world. But Washington's intent now threatens to rebound against itself. The determined struggle of the Vietnamese has touched off a sympathetic response throughout the world, not only in the colonial world but also in the advanced capitalist countries and, to a lesser degree, in the workers states. A definitive victory for the Vietnamese revolution would impart to the world socialist revolution a fresh inspiration whose effects would be felt for years to come.

The Moscow bureaucrats have defaulted in their international obligation to defend the Vietnamese revolution. U.S. imperialism's initial military strategy in Vietnam was to undertake a step-by-step escalation, probing at each stage to see what the Soviet response would be before going ahead further. The Soviet bureaucrats retreated in the face of Washington's aggressive advances. To save face they have given minimal military and diplomatic aid to the Vietnamese while evincing a readiness to sacrifice the revolutionary movement for the Stalinist utopian strategy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism.

This capitulatory policy is reflected in the attitude and conduct of the pro-Moscow parties which have generally abstained from initiating or organizing mass opposition to the war in Vietnam—a compounded crime in those countries where the Communist parties have a mass following.

While primary responsibility for deterring Washington's aggression lies with Moscow, Peking has also defaulted in its obligation to defend Vietnam. Despite the immediate danger posed by the Vietnam war to the Chinese revolution and the security of their country, the Peking bureaucrats have persisted in their sectarian refusal to press for a united front with other workers states in defense of the Vietnamese revolution. Many pro-Peking parties have reflected this attitude by sectarian abstention from participating in united actions against the war and by belittling the importance of such efforts.

Only Cuba and, to a lesser extent, North Korea among the workers states have maintained a principled internationalist line in defense of the Vietnamese revolution.

The Social Democratic organizations, with a few exceptions such as in Japan, have either abstained from the struggle against the Vietnam war or have actually taken part in their own capitalist governments' complicity with U.S. imperialism's war effort. Wilson's Labour Party is the most shameful example.

As a result, the international antiwar movement has developed independently of the Stalinist and Social-Democratic parties and to the left of them. The antiwar movement has been marked by its youth, militancy, spirit of internationalism, and engendering of anticapitalist consciousness.

From the outset the scope of American opposition to involvement in the civil war in Vietnam was broad. This opposition has grown and intensified since 1965 until it now extends to a majority of the population and has come to involve hundreds of thousands in antiwar actions. The international antiwar opposition and the sharpening of social tensions at home owing to the war are important factors in limiting the ability of the American ruling class to continue the war as they would like.

For all its wealth and power, the American capitalist class has found it increasingly difficult to carry on a major war in Vietnam, simultaneously finance an expanded nuclear arms race, prop up and defend the rest of the capitalist world, and allocate sufficient resources to attempt to allay domestic unrest. The consequences of the war in Vietnam have shown that the basic relationship of class forces on a world scale is less and less favorable to imperialism.

It is the effect on its strategic interests that makes U.S. imperialism balk at withdrawing from Vietnam in humiliating defeat at the hands of the people of a small colonial nation. Yet the longer withdrawal is postponed, the worse the problem Washington faces in Vietnam becomes. If it is not possible at this time to roll back the revolutions in North Vietnam and China, Nixon, like Johnson before him, must at least try for an outcome like the one in Korea. If it is not possible to win by military means, other means must be sought.

The Tet offensive in 1968 provided dramatic proof of the difficulty U.S. imperialism faces in its efforts to "pacify" Vietnam, giving the lie to the boasts of the generals about military "progress" and about winning political support for the puppet Saigon regime. Within the United States, the actions of the antiwar movement reached extraordinary heights. Hundreds of thousands demonstrated against the war on April 15, 1967, October 21, 1967, and April 27, 1968. Almost a million students participated in the largest student strike in U.S. history on April 26, 1968. These mass actions reflected the underlying antiwar sentiment of tens of millions.

Washington's difficulties in Vietnam have sharpened the divisions within the ruling class itself. These differences are over the tactical implementation of American imperialism's basic counterrevolutionary strategy under current conditions. The differences concern the size of U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia; the danger of the war lead-

ing to a conflict with China, a "pre-emptive" nuclear strike and World War III; the relative importance and "price" of a temporary arms limitation agreement with the Soviet Union; how much money to pour into the war in Vietnam; the price of the war in terms of domestic social unrest. The American ruling class has also found it increasingly difficult to win support for its war from the capitalist governments of other countries. These differences have left considerable room for the growth of the antiwar opposition of the masses.

Under pressure of these mounting problems, Washington has altered its tactics, placing greater emphasis on the diplomatic front. This started with the Paris talks and Johnson's withdrawal from the presidential race in 1968. The bombing "halt" in the north was featured as part of the shift, although the "pause" was utilized to transfer troops elsewhere and orders were issued to maintain "maximum military pressure on the enemy." Nixon has continued this policy. Washington seeks to win at the negotiating table what it has been unable to exact on the battlefield—the derailment of the Vietnamese revolution. The objective is to try and impose a Korea-type settlement which will preserve a capitalist South Vietnam as an Asian base for U.S. imperialism.

Nixon, like Johnson, hopes to obtain the aid of the Soviet bureaucrats in bringing the Vietnamese revolutionaries to terms. Although this possibility cannot be excluded, the Soviet bureaucrats are far less able now than in parallel situations in earlier years to force the Vietnamese revolutionaries to submit to a capitulating compromise. The struggle in Vietnam has developed independently of Moscow and Peking; its leaders have learned bitter lessons from the experiences that followed 1954; and its militants are more determined than ever to reverse the colonial puppet status of South Vietnam.

The pause in the bombing of North Vietnam and Nixon's ballyhooed peace propaganda and token withdrawal of troops have not been accompanied by any reduction in the scale of U.S. military operations in Vietnam. The level of bombing, the number of casualties, and the flood of money pouring into the war remain as before. Moreover forays into Laos and Cambodia have been stepped up, a fact that Washington has finally been compelled to admit.

The central problem facing U.S. imperialism in attempting to win the kind of settlement it wants is control of the state power in Vietnam, which depends in the last analysis on force of arms. Without the massive military might of U.S. imperialism, the Saigon regime would rapidly collapse. This fact shows the fraudulent nature of all the well-publicized Washington schemes for a settlement: the scheme of turning the war over to Saigon; the scheme of a coalition government; the scheme of elections under the Saigon administration. So long as the Vietnamese revolutionaries refuse to give up their arms and continue to carry on the fight a U.S. withdrawal will lead to rapid victory over the Saigon regime. Under these conditions, a "compromise" formula that does not settle the question of state power will

remain illusory. The war can end only when one side is defeated; and until that happens, either on the battlefield or at the negotiating table, the war will go on.

While attempting to gain a negotiated political victory, Washington above all needs time. But here it faces the problem of domestic opposition to the war and the growth of social unrest on numerous fronts. So long as the war continues, so long as there are mass antiwar actions, the climate of protest will continue to intensify. Washington's capacity to achieve its war aims is limited by the need to deal with unrest at home or risk an intolerable growth of class conflict. "Pacifying" the antiwar opposition in the United States has become a prime necessity for the ruling class to gain the time they must have to try to "pacify" the Vietnamese.

Thus a second and extremely important side to Washington's maneuvers is its propaganda offensive aimed at allaying public aversion to the war. If the ruling class cannot now secure majority support for its war of aggression, it hopes at least to win acquiescence in its diplomatic offensive as a credible means to peace. This was the primary aim in Johnson's withdrawal from the 1968 presidential race, the initiation of the Paris talks, the bombing pause in North Vietnam, the election of Nixon as an apparent alternative to Johnson, and his war policies, and Nixon's token withdrawal of troops.

From the outset, the Nixon administration has attempted to convey the impression that its policies are not the same as Johnson's. However, the hints about secret talks and secret progress, the talk of "turning over" the bulk of the fighting to the Saigon regime, of expanded social legislation when the war is over, merely continue Johnson's line. Under increasing pressure to offer tangible evidence of de-escalation, Nixon finally began token withdrawals of troops. But this was already contemplated by the Johnson administration upon the Pentagon's assurance that it would not lower the current level of the war.

The time that Nixon seeks can only be purchased at a high price. In attempting to allay public opposition to the war, Nixon's peace propaganda raises the American people's anticipation and desire for a speedy end to hostilities.

Antiwar sentiment has grown considerably since the initiation of the Paris talks, and will continue to do so. This includes American GIs who find it increasingly difficult to see why they should risk their lives to save the Saigon regime.

Under these circumstances, the ruling class cannot hope to diminish mass sentiment for peace but only to deflect and disarm it. The propaganda maneuvers are meant to serve as a tranquilizer. But the effect can only be temporary. As the war goes on, the killing will continue. To scale down the fighting in the absence of a military victory or stalemate does not conform with the strategic objectives of U.S.

imperialism. As the costs of the dirty war continue to affect the lives of the American people, the waves of indignation and protest will mount. Already the April 5-6 antiwar demonstrations revealed the beginning of massive disillusionment with Nixon's play for time. The new president thus faces the perspective of ending up as hated as Johnson, if not more so.

U.S. imperialism's increasingly grave difficulties in Vietnam and at home offer big opportunities and responsibilities for the antiwar movement. The task is to prevent the ruling class from gaining the time for maneuver that it so desperately needs. A new wave of massive antiwar demonstrations is called for to expose the deceit of the ruling class and to bring mass consciousness of the meaning of the war to a still higher level.

The demand for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam has gained added urgency and importance. By giving fresh impetus to the demand to bring all the GIs home now, the antiwar movement can undercut the lie of the ruling class that its Paris talks are the avenue to peace.

## B. The present stage of the antiwar movement

Washington's propaganda offensive temporarily dampened the explosive potential of antiwar sentiment in the United States. Although the desire for peace continued to grow among the mass of the American people, the sharpness of this sentiment was blunted by illusions regarding the Paris talks. In addition, part of the antiwar coalition was diverted into bourgeois electoral politics in the illusory hope of advancing the cause of peace by this means. The Nixon administration, upon assuming office, was granted the customary period of little or no criticism. Thus the lull in massive national antiwar demonstrations lasted almost a year, although there were large demonstrations in a few local areas and a marked increase in actions by antiwar GIs.

The organized antiwar movement suffered numerous defections in the months prior to the elections and afterwards in the immediate post-election period. The McCarthy campaign and a series of bourgeois "peace" candidates drew the class collaborationist wing of the antiwar movement away from mass action, a trend buttressed by illusions in the Paris talks. In many local areas, the antiwar coalitions eroded or collapsed entirely.

Owing to these defections, the National Mobilization Committee, which was formed for the purpose of organizing major national antiwar demonstrations, tended to lose its broad coalition character. This trend was reinforced by sectarian and exclusionary measures directed against the vanguard which favored mass actions around

the slogan of immediate withdrawal. As a result, ultraleftism came to predominate in the apparatus of the NMC. The NMC adopted the line of confrontation tactics by a few as a substitute for organizing militant antiwar action by hundreds of thousands. The NMC placed more importance on adventurist tactics than on an independent antiwar political line. The disorienting character of this NMC line was shown at the Democratic Party national convention in Chicago where the demonstration organized by the NMC objectively favored McCarthy's bid for the Democratic nomination. Adventurist tactics subjected hundreds of antiwar youth to needless brutalization in a demonstration that, despite the great publicity it secured, was relatively small for a national action.

The continuation of the ultraleftist, sectarian course set the stamp of a single antiwar tendency upon the NMC, assuring its demise as an antiwar action coalition. The unpostponable next step for the antiwar forces is to build a new national antiwar coalition and to strengthen or rebuild the local antiwar coalitions for the purpose of organizing larger mass demonstrations.

The differences over perspective in the antiwar movement were also reflected in the Student Mobilization Committee, the principal organization of antiwar youth as well as the militant spearhead of the broader antiwar movement centered around the slogan of withdrawing the troops now. Immediately after the SMC's tremendously successful student strike in April 1968, a coalition of Communist Party and pacifist elements initiated a split in the SMC, breaking with the perspective of mass antiwar demonstrations. In the course of that fight, they attempted to jettison the non-exclusionary basis of the organization. Unable to capture the SMC, they withdrew from it.

Throughout the past year we supported all attempts to organize mass antiwar demonstrations, and through them re-cement the badly divided antiwar organizations. The Student Mobilization Committee played an essential role in taking the initiative in calling demonstrations and prodding other sectors into action. It called for antiwar demonstrations in August 1968, prior to the elections in October, and initiated the conference which called for the April 5-6, 1969 demonstrations. Though the first two of these actions were not as large as previous demonstrations, they maintained the perspective of massive action. The growth of antiwar activity by GIs was a major new development and an important factor in inspiring the antiwar demonstrations that did occur.

The scope and size of the April 5-6, 1969 demonstrations signified that much of the disorientation within the antiwar movement had dissipated. The mounting casualties in Vietnam made it clear to many that Nixon was continuing Johnson's fundamental policies in Vietnam and served to stir hundreds of thousands back into the streets to protest the war. In view of the turnout of April 5-6, the fresh or-

ganizational impetus derived from it, and the shifts in the objective situation, the time is ripe for another series of major antiwar demonstrations.

As support for the April 5-6 demonstrations gathered momentum, these became the focal point around which many of the local antiwar coalitions were rebuilt. This advance has laid the groundwork for rebuilding the antiwar coalition nationally. The Student Mobilization Committee, still weakened organizationally prior to April 5-6, has since emerged as the authoritative national organization of antiwar youth and the major organizer of demonstrations on a national scale.

The importance of the Student Mobilization Committee within the broader antiwar movement was confirmed by the April 5-6 demonstrations. From the inception of the antiwar movement the youth have been the main initiators and most active participants in the mass mobilizations. Time and again it has been the left-wing youth who have kept the antiwar movement in the streets, refusing to be drawn into class-collaborationist gimmicks. They have provided the bulk of the activists and have continually pressured the more conservative elements into support for the militant mass actions. They have been the main force in fighting to win the antiwar movement to the demand for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. Repelled by any signs of a return to the norms of the Joe McCarthy era, the youth have been the key element in helping to maintain the nonexclusive character of the antiwar movement.

The April 5-6 demonstrations involved a higher percentage of youth than ever before, showing a marked increase in the numbers of high-school youth. The spring months of 1969 saw an unprecedented upsurge on the high-school and college campuses with the war in Vietnam and the black liberation struggle being the central issues.

On the college campuses, the issue of campus complicity in the war sparked a wave of protests against ROTC, against recruitment for the armed forces and the war industries, and against university war-related research. In some cases the student strikes involved the vast majority of students. These actions show how favorable the situation is for organizing against the war on the campuses. Such campus actions help to create a favorable atmosphere for street demonstrations, and vice versa, and are certain to remain a major feature of the SMC's antiwar activities.

The depth of antiwar sentiment on the campuses makes militancy and audacity appropriate in a situation where the antiwar students represent an overwhelming majority. In some cases, however, campus protests have suffered setbacks due to adventurism and organizational sectarianism, especially where SDS has initiated such actions.

The SMC has an important task to perform in educating large numbers of students on how to build the most effective struggles. The SMC's experience in organizing militant mass actions and its non-exclusionary organizational procedures are a necessary antidote to

the organizational sectarianism and adventurism imposed by SDS elements on the campuses.

The possibilities for organizing high-school antiwar actions are extremely favorable. The present generation of high-school youth has grown to political consciousness in an atmosphere dominated by a war which they have rejected out of hand. The SMC has registered its greatest recent gains in this area. The potential for organizing the SMC in the high schools is enhanced by the absence of serious competition from other tendencies. One important feature of high-school antiwar activity is the fight for civil liberties against the arbitrary prohibitions against political activity by the school authorities.

In the past year there has been a decided increase in antiwar activity by GIs. Washington's peace propaganda and the opening of the Paris talks heightened the antiwar sentiments of the GIs; fresh force was given to their objections to fighting and dying in an unjust war which the government admitted it was not winning militarily. The growth of GI antiwar protests adds formidable new social weight to the antiwar movement and will be a permanent feature of antiwar protests from now on.

Important milestones in the past year were: (1) the nationwide antiwar demonstrations in October 1968; local antiwar demonstrations such as that in Seattle February 16, 1969; and, most important, the nationwide antiwar demonstrations April 5-6, 1969. More GIs participated in these demonstrations than ever before. (2) The proliferation of GI antiwar newspapers, published locally by GIs and distributed at the local bases. (3) The fights for GI rights waged at Ft. Jackson and Ft. Bragg.

These developments all reflected the widespread antiwar mood within the army. From the beginning, our political tendency was the only one to consistently point to the potential for GI antiwar activity. We have been the most insistent that the antiwar movement adopt a political approach to win the GIs as an ally. Our opponents, along with many antiwar activists in the past, have taken a moralistic attitude, encouraging individual noncompliance with the draft and blaming individual GIs for being somehow in complicity with the imperialist aggression in Vietnam. Their belittling of the potential for winning GIs to antiwar activity made them blindly reject a political approach to the GIs. However, with the growth of GI antiwar protests, our position has been confirmed in practice and is now accepted by large numbers of antiwar activists. But deep differences exist within the antiwar movement in evaluating the importance of the GI antiwar developments and how to approach them.

Our position is based on the mass character of the army. The ranks of the armed forces are composed of draftees or men who enlisted under pressure of the draft. As such, the army tends to reflect a cross-section of the youth in society, and the development of political consciousness in the army parallels that in the civilian population. The present army tends to incorporate much of the political ferment that

exists among the youth and to bring antiwar sentiment to an acute pitch. In addition, the discriminatory nature of the draft system means that there is a disproportionate percentage of black and brown youth in the army, a percentage that is even more pronounced at the front lines.

Sentiment against the war is widespread among GIs, as it is among civilian youth. But because of the restrictive nature of the military, antiwar actions by GIs are still in their initial stages. Objective developments indicate that the pace of GI antiwar protests can be expected to increase rapidly, especially as they become more and more linked up with the mass civilian protests. The development of truly massive protests and a massive radicalization in the army could only occur interlinked with a similar mood in the civilian population and its readiness to support and defend the antiwar GIs. Our perspective is that of a parallel and interrelated development of GI and civilian antiwar protests.

In this light, we view the GIs as an important component of the antiwar movement, but not as a substitute for it. The axis of the antiwar movement remains mass mobilizations against the war, including GIs and civilians.

The fight for democratic rights is of special importance to GIs opposed to the war. It links up with civilian antiwar sentiment and the need for collective action as the most effective way to struggle against the war. There are three aspects to this approach:

(1) For open, collective action against the war rather than isolated individual actions or "underground" organizing.

Desertion, refusal to obey orders, or other individual actions are not acceptable to the majority of GIs. Those who take this course will be open to easy victimization from the brass without any corresponding gains. Such isolated acts may salve the consciences of individuals but are not an effective means of political opposition to the war. The political climate favors open, collective antiwar activity rather than "underground" organizing, which is many times more difficult and foolish when unnecessary.

(2) For the concept of the GI as a citizen-soldier.

A GI is a citizen temporarily in uniform and therefore retains all his constitutional rights as a citizen, including the rights of free speech and free assembly. The full utilization of democratic rights is a powerful tool in the hands of the majority—and that is whom the antiwar GIs speak for. The brass, who want to use the army against the wishes of the soldiers, fear simple democracy; but to the GIs it is a powerful and necessary part of the struggle. Despite attempts by the brass to restrict the exercise of constitutional and democratic rights, these rights can be fought for and won in the army.

(3) For concentrating on the Vietnam war as the issue of main concern to the GIs.

The army being what it is, GIs have legitimate grievances on many different issues. But the greatest unity can be built around opposi-

tion to the war in Vietnam. It is the issue on which GIs can gain the maximum amount of civilian support and protection against the brass' attempts at victimization and restriction of constitutional rights.

Unlike coalitions formed for specific mass demonstrations, ongoing antiwar activity by GIs cannot be effectively organized if it includes other approaches on a coalition basis. The continual possibility of victimization by the brass necessitates strict adherence to these three points. Experience has shown that on this threefold approach GIs can effectively oppose the war, minimize chances of victimization, and counter any victimizations inflicted on them.

Because of the depth of antiwar sentiment inside and outside the ranks of the armed forces, the brass has had to proceed cautiously and even retreat in many instances rather than deal too summarily with dissenters. The retreats by the brass encourage other GIs into activity.

The right of GIs to participate in demonstrations while *off base and out of uniform* has been established. Although the brass has attempted to inhibit the exercise of this right—by restricting GIs to base on the days of demonstrations, for example—the right has been conceded by the Pentagon. Where punitive measures have been taken, they have usually been for some other officially-stated cause, for demonstrating while in uniform or for allegedly being AWOL. The establishment of the right to demonstrate opens the door to an effective campaign to build GI participation in antiwar demonstrations.

The developments at Ft. Jackson and Ft. Bragg, initiated by GIs United, are among the most important antiwar and civil-liberties struggles that have taken place. For the first time the central question was raised of the right to protest the war while *on base and in uniform*. This is a higher level of the fight for GI rights. The brass' retreat from their intended victimization of the Ft. Jackson GIs was a major victory for the antiwar movement. It showed the importance of effective tactics in mobilizing extensive civilian support. It is to be expected that there will be continuing fights for the on-base, in-uniform rights of GIs. The most effective will have to be carried out with all the indigenous support and careful legal and political groundwork that attended the Ft. Jackson case.

Publicity about the lessons of the Ft. Jackson case will be an important aid in explaining the nature of GI antiwar activity. GIs United illustrates that the ongoing antiwar activities of GIs can best be organized, not from outside the military by civilians, but by the GIs themselves on their base along the lines of the threefold approach outlined above. Organized antiwar GIs can become a component part of the general antiwar action coalitions, working with other forces to build the mass demonstrations, yet retaining a distinctly GI form based on a specific political approach for GI antiwar activity, in much the same manner in which the student antiwar committees function in relation to the general antiwar coalitions.

Our central activity in relation to the antiwar activities of GIs will

pivot around three points: (1) building GI participation in antiwar demonstrations; (2) publicity about GIs United; (3) the distribution of GI newspapers.

The primary manifestation of labor's resistance to the war has been its refusal to sacrifice for the war and the growth of union struggles in the midst of war. There has been a sharp increase in the number of strikes as workers have attempted to maintain their standard of living and job conditions in the face of mounting inflation and ruling-class pressure for sacrifice. The antiwar movement has been a factor in helping to spur these struggles. The divisions in the organized labor movement, which have produced an open breach within the trade-union bureaucracy, partially reflect the growing militancy observable among the ranks.

As antiwar sentiment and general social struggles continue to mount, it becomes more difficult for the official union leaderships to stand apart from the antiwar protests. Some local unions have gone on record in opposition to the war and lent their support to the antiwar demonstrations. This can now become more extensive. The antiwar movement has the opportunity and obligation to encourage this process and to involve the trade-union movement in the antiwar protests wherever possible. Lower levels of the trade-union officialdom can be won to the antiwar movement as it presently exists, opening up expanded opportunities to reach the ranks of the working class more easily.

In adapting to the antiwar pressures, some sections of the trade-union bureaucracy, especially on the higher levels, will undoubtedly bring great pressure to bear for exclusionary measures against the militants, for a negotiations line rather than withdrawal, and for support to capitalist politicians. All of these moves must be fought. But the negative pressures that may arise from the bureaucrats can be offset by the added social weight of the trade unions and the opportunity to involve the mass of the working class more easily.

The growth of the antiwar movement has been paralleled by the upsurge of the black masses and is related to it. Identification with the struggle of the non-white Vietnamese and the colonial revolution in general has been an important help in generating the new mood of militancy. The costs of the war have made it difficult for the ruling class to grant concessions to the black masses and for the Uncle Toms to put a damper on the growing struggle.

There has been a significant increase in antiwar sentiment among Afro-Americans, especially among the youth. This sentiment has been reflected to some extent in greater black participation in the antiwar demonstrations.

Almost every black organization has come out against the war, many of them in solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution. Some of the black organizations have participated in antiwar coalitions for the purpose of building mass demonstrations, most consistently on the high-school and college campuses. Many of the demands raised

in the black student struggles have been specifically directed against U.S. imperialism's use of the high schools and colleges for the war in Vietnam. Within the army, black GIs have been central to many of the GI antiwar protests.

Both the working class and the black population bring great social weight to bear in the struggle to end the war in Vietnam. The antiwar movement must continue to conduct its actions in such a way as to earn their support and solidarity.

### C. A revolutionary socialist strategy against the war in Vietnam

The mass antiwar movement is unique in American history. It has grown and intensified even as the shooting war has taken place. Developing prior to a general radicalization of labor and in the absence of a mass working-class political party, the antiwar movement has organized large street demonstrations as the chief means of independently manifesting and organizing the antiwar sentiment of the American masses. These demonstrations have been far more than symbolic shows of protest. They have been the main factor in preventing a climate of social peace from being established for the duration of the war. The continued and growing involvement of masses in antiwar protests is a key factor in limiting the ability of American imperialism to press on with the war in Vietnam and to contemplate other wars like it.

The past few years, marked by the Vietnam war and its domestic repercussions, have seen the intensification of social conflict on numerous fronts. The antiwar movement has been a critical factor in the growth of these social conflicts, for the mass character of the antiwar actions enables them to affect broad layers of the masses and spur protests among youth, GIs, labor, and the black movement.

The political independence of the periodic mass demonstrations has helped prevent the permanent diversion of antiwar sentiment into class-collaborationist channels. That would have blunted its effect. The actions of the antiwar movement have helped legitimize a general climate of protest, preventing the development of a wartime hysteria and helping to roll back most of the vestiges of McCarthyism that existed a few years ago. By virtue of the antiwar movement's example, the right of the people to oppose the government's policy has been reaffirmed in the midst of war and represents an implicit challenge to the rule of the capitalist class.

To ever-increasing numbers, the war in Vietnam and the mass opposition to it have laid bare the undemocratic and reactionary nature of American capitalism, producing a new wave of radicalization, especially among the youth. This has opened up expanded opportunities for recruitment to the Socialist Workers Party.

Antiwar coalitions have been the principal organizational vehicle for building the mass demonstrations against the war. Such coali-

tions are a particular form of the tactic of the united front. They correspond to the present situation which is marked by the absence of mass working-class political parties and the political bankruptcy of the official trade-union leadership. Of central importance has been the nonexclusionary character of these coalitions, enabling revolutionary socialists to participate in them while maintaining their own independent political positions. This has been a major factor in strengthening the left wing of the antiwar movement and in maintaining the independent mass-action axis of the antiwar protests.

The coalitions have proven to be unstable and shifting in composition, loosely composed of antiwar organizations, individuals, and political tendencies. The single issue that has united divergent tendencies in the antiwar coalitions has been the organization of mass demonstrations against the war. The antiwar movement is so heterogeneous politically and in composition that it cannot serve as a basis for a coalition around a general political program. But united in action, the different components of the antiwar movement have been able to organize demonstrations in the streets which are objectively anti-imperialist in character, whatever the varying and opposing views on other matters of the individual participants and organizations.

Within the broader coalitions we have sought to build the left wing on the basis of the demand for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. In contrast to all versions of the negotiations demand, the demand for immediate withdrawal is the only principled way of supporting the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. It links up support for that right with the interests and antiwar sentiments of the GIs and the working class.

The history of the antiwar movement has been a history of continual struggle over its line, its course and its perspective. The antiwar movement has been subjected to tremendous pressures to divert it from an independent, anti-imperialist axis of mass action. The two central threats to this perspective have been: (1) being drawn into class-collaborationist politics and (2) being diverted into individual acts and adventures that would isolate the vanguard and steer the thrust of the antiwar struggle away from the masses.

Both of these threats have been quite strong on occasion, though never strong enough to permanently change the mass-action orientation of the antiwar movement. Other differences in the antiwar movement have generally derived from these. The participation of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance has been an indispensable factor in maintaining the mass-action orientation of the antiwar movement.

The fundamental problem of policy facing the antiwar movement has been how to counter the threat of class collaboration. The Communist Party and bourgeois liberals have sought to use the antiwar movement as a means of pressure within the Democratic Party. This current made the greatest headway during the 1968 elections.

The McCarthy campaign, with its stated goal of getting the antiwar

movement "off the streets," succeeded in drawing many of these class-collaborationists away from building mass demonstrations. Other variants of class-collaborationist electoral politics have been the various third-ticket "peace and freedom" campaigns directed at disorient the more militant wing of the antiwar movement which could not be drawn directly into the Democratic Party.

Because there is no mass working-class political party to counterpose to these procapitalist candidates, we have sought to keep the antiwar movement from participating as a movement in electoral politics, advocating instead that it continue on its course of building mass antiwar demonstrations during the election season. Wherever possible we have run our own socialist election campaigns to win over the most revolutionary-minded forces within the antiwar movement.

A variant of the class-collaborationist approach in the antiwar movement has been the line of "multi-issue" organizing. Reformists of all stripes have advocated that the antiwar forces unite around a general political program in contrast to the single issue of joint action against the war. Given the class composition, political line, and heterogeneity of the groups involved in the antiwar movement, such a multi-issue program could only be a liberal-reformist one. It would function as a bridge to class-collaborationist electoral politics and divert concentration upon demonstrations against the war.

As a result of the growing youth radicalization this argument has been updated with left verbiage about transforming the antiwar movement with its mass actions into a general anti-imperialist movement. But such a coalition, ostensibly organized to fight against imperialism in general, would be a fraud. That task requires a revolutionary-socialist party and program to lead the struggle for the socialist revolution. The antiwar movement is anti-imperialist in its actions, not in the program of all its participants. The real function of this multi-issue line would be to build a verbally radical but nonetheless reformist organization as a substitute for organizing mass demonstrations against the war.

Our line in the antiwar movement has been to show the intimate relation between the Vietnam war and the rise in social tensions in the United States promoted by racism, antilabor legislation, inflation, taxes, cutbacks in social-welfare legislation, etc. By exposing the connection of these issues to the Vietnam war, the antiwar movement can enhance its ability to reach out to the working class and the black liberation movement and draw more powerful forces into the struggle against the war. To the newly-radicalized forces moving in a revolutionary direction, we present, not a coalition program with liberals and reformists, but the revolutionary-socialist program of the Socialist Workers Party.

Another variant of the reformist approach in the antiwar movement has been to seek to limit actions to a local or "community" level and organize them around immediate issues. This line has usual-

ly been counterposed to the line of building mass antiwar demonstrations. Its proponents seek to substitute the struggle around immediate social-welfare issues for a frontal attack on the major issue of the war in Vietnam. Our position has been to link up the local and immediate struggles of the workingclass and black masses with the mass demonstrations against the war, not to counterpose one to the other. In practice, the mass actions of the antiwar movement have helped to stimulate struggles on these other issues.

While less serious a problem in the long run, the threat to divert the antiwar struggle in an adventurist direction and thus isolate it from the mass antiwar sentiment has been considerable in the past year. The standard pacifist line of civil disobedience through acts of "individual conscience" and the adventurist line of small-scale pseudo-confrontation tactics are equally unconcerned with winning over the broad masses and the working class. The most pernicious feature of the line of small confrontations is its substitution of super-militant tactics and their effects on a few participants for a political line aimed at bringing masses into action.

The source of this ultraleft line is frustration with the continuation of the war despite the mass opposition to it. Seeing a growing radicalization but not yet a mass working-class radicalization, the ultra-lefts aim at shortcuts which avoid the more difficult, prolonged, but indispensable task of bringing the working class into action. In that sense ultraleftism is merely the obverse of opportunism, which seeks its shortcut in supporting capitalist politicians. These two sides of the ultraleftist approach were clearly evidenced in the character of the demonstration at the Democratic Party convention, which combined aggressive tactics with an opportunist political line of backing McCarthy. Without a working-class political perspective, today's ultra-leftists can easily turn into tomorrow's opportunists.

We differentiate between the organized ultraleftist groups which must be fought every step of the way and the newly radicalized youth who want to fight against capitalism but through impatience and inexperience may temporarily get sucked into adventurist gimmicks. We must patiently explain that militant antiwar actions which are massive in size and which aim at winning over the mass of the working class, GIs, and Afro-Americans are the politically effective actions to project. Confrontation with the ruling class is basically a political confrontation, not simply a series of tactical encounters.

As the political disorientation resulting from the Paris talks continues to dissipate and mass antiwar demonstrations become increasingly feasible, it is absolutely essential that the antiwar movement draw a clear line demarcating itself from the various ultraleftist and adventurist approaches. Otherwise it risks isolation from the prevailing mass antiwar sentiment.

The same twofold challenge to the axis of mass action is reflected in different approaches to the draft. We are opposed to capitalist conscription, to the discriminatory nature of the draft, and to the use

of the schools by the ruling class to enforce it. We are for mass actions against the draft, tied in with the Vietnam war issue and politically directed towards winning the support of the draftees and enlistees. We do not advocate individual noncompliance with the draft but support the constitutional rights of GIs to oppose the war.

Two other lines have been counterposed to this Marxist policy: (1) The liberal antidraft line oriented toward lobbying Congress to modify or abolish the draft. This line has not had any serious impact in the antiwar movement. (2) The line of individual acts of noncompliance with the draft.

The draft-resistance approach has been declining in influence as GI antiwar actions have developed. At present the overwhelming majority of youth are not engaging in draft refusal. Individual draft refusal is ineffective because it easily victimizes those who engage in it and isolates them from the mass of young workers and other youth. Moreover, the draft refusal line cannot win the support of the GIs who view it as an inadmissible means of individual escape from the Army.

The history of the antiwar movement has been marked by a continual struggle for adherence to the demand for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, as counterposed to various formulations for a negotiated peace or for demands falling short of immediate withdrawal. We have fought for the immediate withdrawal demand within the antiwar movement as the way of supporting the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. The left wing of the antiwar movement has been organized around the immediate withdrawal demand and has been able to make it the major theme of the mass antiwar demonstrations.

In the context of the Paris talks and various ruling class maneuvers to disarm the antiwar movement, there are likely to be renewed pressures from the class collaborationists to take these maneuvers for good coin and demand less than the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Vietnam. Another pressure towards the negotiations demand has been the proposal by sections of the American antiwar movement to support the ten-point program of the National Liberation Front or the 12-point program of the Provisional Revolutionary Government. This proposal is a retreat from support to Vietnamese self-determination and a back-door concession to the right of the U.S. to negotiate Vietnam's future. It would also be a political trap for the antiwar movement to counterpose a propaganda stand of support to the NLF or PRG to Washington's peace propaganda and token troop withdrawal. It would play into the Nixon administration's hands as they attempt to put themselves forward as the ones who want to withdraw the troops! We will continue to fight for the antiwar movement to raise as its central slogan, "Bring *All the GIs Home Now!*"

The continuing fight over whether or not to engage in mass antiwar demonstrations has been closely linked with the fight to main-

tain the nonexclusive character of the coalitions. The class-collaborationist forces have continually attempted to impose a reformist political program on them. The ultraleftists have tried to limit them only to those who would accept their tactics and verbal radicalism. On occasion both of these trends have attempted to scuttle the nonexclusionary foundations of the antiwar organizations. It has been a continual fight to maintain nonexclusion and unity around the single issue of antiwar action in the streets. The Socialist Workers Party has played a central role in welding together diverse tendencies for this sole purpose. We have supported and built the militant left-wing formations as part of the broader coalitions.

The antiwar movement has offered a major challenge to all the working-class tendencies in the United States. It has tested their ability to recognize and respond to the central issue in world and national politics; their ability and willingness to defend the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese; their ability to intervene with their political line and apply it to the immediate political issues; their ability to train their cadres to function in the living mass movement; and their ability to win recruits from among the thousands of youth who have been radicalized by the war in Vietnam. The Socialist Workers Party's participation in the antiwar movement stands in sharp contrast to that of our political opponents.

The organized and semiorganized Social Democrats have been largely bypassed by the antiwar movement ever since the 1965 SDS march on Washington, when they could no longer impose exclusionary measures. Mired in cold-war anti-Communist ideology, the Socialist Party has denounced the nonexclusive, mass-action antiwar movement and the slogan of immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. Its efforts have been limited to electioneering for liberal capitalist politicians or pressuring them through such efforts as petition campaigns in favor of negotiations. The Socialist Party, which had considerable influence in the peace movement of the early 1960s, has stagnated in face of the growth of the mass movement against the war in Vietnam. The loosely-organized "third camp" Social Democrats have intervened in the antiwar movement to only a limited extent and made only minimal gains.

The Maoist Progressive Labor Party has pursued a sectarian and abstentionist policy towards the antiwar movement. At the inception of the antiwar movement, PL operated through the May 2nd Committee, which proclaimed itself as the exclusive organization for all antiwar actions but which was never able to organize mass demonstrations or willing to involve other tendencies. PL's refusal to participate in the united-action coalitions led it to abstain almost totally from the growing antiwar movement. PL dissolved the May 2nd Committee when it entered SDS at a time when SDS had retreated from the struggle against the war. Although PL has made gains from its entry tactic in SDS, it has cut itself off from the bulk of the radicalizing youth around the antiwar movement. Its political gains

within the general youth radicalization have been meager.

The Communist Party has intervened in the antiwar movement intermittently, not on a consistent basis. The CP's basic line has been to seek to utilize the antiwar actions and organizations as a means of pressuring the Democratic Party. It has advanced its class-collaborationist line in all important disputes within the antiwar movement. It has remained hostile to the left-wing, immediate-withdrawal-based antiwar committees, viewing them as competitors to its youth organization and to the various liberal peace committees in which it operates.

Nevertheless, because of the mass character of the antiwar demonstrations, the CP has been forced to enter united-action coalitions, where it meets our direct competition. The result has been a relative weakening of the CP in comparison to the SWP, especially in regard to youth cadre. This changed relationship of forces is one of the most important byproducts of the antiwar movement for the revolutionary vanguard.

The organized ultraleft groupings have remained relatively ineffectual. Some, such as the Spartacist League and the Workers League, have abstained almost entirely from the antiwar movement. Those which have intervened, such as Workers World-Youth Against War and Fascism, have not built the mass demonstrations, but attempted to initiate adventurist actions subsidiary to them or entirely isolated from them. Despite the militancy and inexperience of unaffiliated radicalizing youth, the organized ultraleft grouplets have not made significant gains, either in numbers or direct organizational influence.

Students for a Democratic Society is not a tendency in the working-class movement but a loosely organized amalgamation of competing tendencies and unorganized radicals. As a national organization, SDS retreated from the struggle against the war after its march on Washington in 1965. While SDS has experienced considerable numerical growth, its national weight within the organized antiwar movement has been minimal due to its abstentionist policy. Local SDS chapters have participated in the antiwar movement, not through national SDS, but through the antiwar organizations as they exist, primarily the Student Mobilization Committee.

The maturing political differentiations within SDS have further paralyzed its ability to act as a national organization. This opens the door for: (1) the Student Mobilization Committee to gain greater authority as an organizer of antiwar youth, including among SDS members; (2) the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party to recruit more of the healthiest revolutionary-minded SDS members.

The Socialist Workers Party is the only working-class tendency that has from the first recognized the central political importance of the struggle against the Vietnam war and has met its obligation to defend the Vietnamese revolution. We have made the antiwar struggle

the major arena of our work and have intervened in it on a number of levels. We have been the most consistent fighters for the central line of mass antiwar demonstrations and for the political demand for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. The support we have won for our political line and the consistent work we have done to implement it in building the antiwar actions have enabled us to exert a decisive influence in the leadership of the mass movement itself, as it presently exists.

The Vietnam war has been a major factor in generating a new wave of radicalization in the United States, opening up expanded opportunities for building the revolutionary party. As the revolutionary socialist wing of the antiwar movement, we have been able to reach the bulk of the radicalizing youth, gain a hearing for our political program, and add significantly to our forces. The majority of new recruits to the Socialist Workers Party in the past few years have come directly out of the antiwar movement. The combination of our political weight in the antiwar movement and our expanded recruitment have changed the relationship of forces within the working class vanguard significantly in favor of the Socialist Workers Party as compared to our opponents.

The antiwar movement has been an important training ground for the new cadres of the Socialist Workers Party, giving them valuable experience in applying the transitional program in the mass movement, and enabling them to learn in practice how to be tactically flexible while politically firm. Tested against opponent tendencies, the Socialist Workers Party has been able to deal them heavy blows and minimize their gains. This development is most important in relation to the Communist Party which remains the major long-term competitor of the revolutionary Marxists for leadership of the working-class vanguard. The political struggles that have taken place in the antiwar movement are part of the preparation for the struggles for the leadership of the general working-class radicalization which is to come and which will determine the future of the American socialist revolution.

Our central tasks in the antiwar movement are to continue to build the mass antiwar demonstrations that are dealing hammer blows to American imperialism and to recruit from the growing numbers that have begun to move in a radical direction as a result.

## Part II

### The SWP approach to military policy and its evolution since 1940

Military policy is an essential part of any transitional program of the revolutionary party in the imperialist epoch with its monstrous growth of capitalist militarism. The naive outlook of the early socialist movement which disregarded the military aspects of the class

struggle has long since become outmoded. The actual relations between nations, peoples and classes compel every political tendency to take a position and work out a policy toward both imperialist and class warfare.

The position of the SWP in this field as in others has been derived from Marxist principles and the methods and traditions of Bolshevism as interpreted and applied by the Fourth International. This general line has been consistently followed from the beginning of our movement in this country. But since 1940 the tactical application of this course has twice been modified because of changes in objective circumstances.

In 1940, on the eve of the impending World War II, the SWP set forth its revolutionary socialist antiwar program in the form of the proletarian military policy. This represented a specific application of the methods of the transitional program adopted in 1938 to the working-class psychology and political conditions of the time.

The program was based on the following concepts. (1) It continued our irreconcilable opposition to imperialist war and the capitalist system which breeds it. (2) It projected the perspective of a struggle to win leadership of the working class in order to carry through a fight for state power and establish a socialist society. (3) It laid stress on the need to build a Leninist-type party to fulfill these objectives.

Our approach was categorically counterposed to the misleading ideas and political confusion sowed by the professional pacifists and the Stalinists and Social Democrats on the issues of militarism.

The pacifists proceed on the utopian premise that the laws of the class struggle and capitalist competition can be nullified by the cooperation of people of goodwill who can prevail upon the imperialists to refrain from warmaking. Pacifists oppose the development of the class struggle in favor of class peace at almost any price.

From their moral and religious opposition to violence as such, and not simply to reactionary violence, flows a rejection of the right of armed self-defense. They substitute the individual "witness" for organized collective action. Their conscientious objection to military conscription and training leads to draft evasion or victimization by imprisonment which further isolates antiwar elements from the masses.

Pacifist ideology is as pernicious and prostrating under wartime conditions as in times of sharp class conflict. It demoralizes and disorients antiwar activists and movements, deters mass mobilizations, and plays into the hands of the imperialists.

Pacifism as a policy may look plausible so long as peaceful relations prevail but it collapses like a pricked balloon as soon as hostilities are declared. In previous periods many professional pacifists have turned into fanatical war supporters once the ruling class has plunged the nation into battle.

Marxists, on the other hand, have always recognized that under military conditions a military policy is mandatory.

In addition to their false line of class collaboration and supporting "peace" candidates who surrender to the warmongers, the Stalinists and Social Democrats take positions which are not essentially different from the simple antimilitarist attitudes of the pure pacifists and which prove to be equally impotent in the struggle against capitalism and its wars. Historically, they, too, have capitulated to the warring state power after war has broken out, or else they have refrained from advancing or acting upon a program of struggle to take state power from the capitalist rulers, the only way that capitalist militarism and imperialist wars can be abolished.

The military policy adopted in 1940 was a revolutionary line designed to promote the anticapitalist struggles of the workers under the given wartime conditions.

It was anticipated that proletarian revolutions would emerge in the advanced capitalist countries directly out of the consequences of World War II and that the worker masses in the giant conscript armies would play the decisive role in them.

The transitional measures proposed in the program were to be a bridge from the revolutionary vanguard to the young worker-soldiers drafted into the U.S. armed forces, who were imbued with a mixture of anti-Hitler, antifascist, defensist, democratic and patriotic sentiments. They aimed to develop an assertion of their class independence within the capitalist military machine so that it would be possible to proceed step by step toward winning ideological and political hegemony among them in preparation for the anticipated revolutionary upsurge.

This undertaking was politically prepared and reinforced by the party's public opposition to the imperialist war dramatized by the 1941 Smith Act trial and its documentation.

As part of its program, the party continued its unconditional opposition to capitalist conscription. At the same time it took cognizance of the fact that the antifascist and patriotic sentiments of the workers led them to favor compulsory military service. It therefore counterposed the concept of conscription by the workers' organizations to the capitalist military draft. It advocated military training under trade-union control, financed by the capitalist government.

These proposals aimed to build class-conscious workers' military formations capable of defending labor's interests under conditions of capitalist militarism, imperialist war and the threat of fascist counterrevolution.

Party members called up for military service submitted, as individuals, to capitalist conscription. In the armed forces they lent themselves to learning military skills and sought to win the political confidence of their fellow soldiers. Their participation as socialists in the military machine was viewed as a prerequisite for revolutionary action if a favorable turn of events made it possible to gain a majority to the idea of transforming the imperialist war into a struggle for workers power and socialism.

This set of measures, presented in propaganda form at the outset of the war, did not become the basis for any substantial action during the conflict because the actual pattern of events took a different turn which did not coincide with our expectations.

The most radical development which took place in the army was the "I want to go home" movement of the GIs at the end of the war in the Pacific which upset the plans of the Pentagon strategists by weakening their armed forces.

Although revolutionary situations erupted in Western Europe, no victorious revolutions occurred in the advanced capitalist countries. The axis of the world revolution shifted to the colonial world.

These postwar conditions created a world situation which was qualitatively different from that of the 1941-45 period. However important interimperialist rivalries remain, they have been subordinated to imperialism's cold war against the workers states and its military interventions against the colonial revolutions. The U.S. armed forces have become the principal instrument of world imperialist aggression.

These global developments have generated marked changes in the views of the American people toward the issues posed by Washington's armed interventions. U.S. involvement in World War II was almost unanimously accepted under the illusion that it was a progressive war waged against fascism.

While a noticeable and a significant decline in patriotic fervor was registered during the Korean war of the early 1950s, active and overt opposition was pretty much confined to circles on the left which were then on the decline.

Vietnam has brought about a decisive shift in popular attitudes toward imperialist war. An unprecedented antiwar movement has emerged which continues to win more and more supporters in the midst of a shooting war. It is led by insurgent youth who belong to the post-witchhunt generation and who have been radicalized by the colonial revolution and the black liberation struggle.

Instead of urging on the government to victory at all costs, defeatist moods have been gaining ground among large sections of the population since 1965. This resistance to the imperialists expresses itself directly in sympathy for the Vietnamese revolution and indirectly through condemnation of the war as illegal, immoral and unjust and in the reluctance of the organized workers and blacks to make any material sacrifices for the war effort.

This country's ruling class is having to pay the toll of its function as the chief guardian of world capitalism. In becoming the top dog of the imperialist pack, it has fallen prey to all the basic contradictions of international capitalism in its death agony. Washington is obliged to finance and provide the main military means required for increasingly massive measures to stem the tide of the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist mass struggles throughout the world.

The heavy costs of this course are being levied upon the people

in the form of conscription and sizable military casualties; mounting taxes and inflationary pressures on real wages; and gross neglect of urgent social needs. These consequences of imperialist militarism have caused more and more Americans to question the Vietnam conflict and the official rationale for its prosecution. The official demagoguery and barefaced deceit employed by the government to justify U.S. intervention have generated widespread suspicion. The growing criticism of imperialist policy and resentment against the war keeps adding to the number of Americans who want to bring it to a speedy halt.

The pacifist sentiments of the masses have a different significance than the ideology and policies of the professional pacifists. They grow out of distrust of the foreign policy imposed by the monopolists and militarists and revulsion against their aggression which have a revolutionary potential. If these healthy instincts can be deepened, politically developed and properly directed, they can become the basis and point of departure for the creation of a mass anticapitalist consciousness which can pass beyond the narrow political limits set by the professional pacifists and their fellow class collaborationists who have dominated previous "peace" movements.

The task of our party is to direct this antiwar protest into class-struggle channels. To make its military policy fit the new international and domestic conditions, the party has introduced the following changes in its tactics.

The slogan of military training under trade-union control has been laid aside along with the advocacy of conscription into workers' military organizations.

More emphasis is placed upon opposing capitalist conscription which is becoming increasingly unpopular.

As in the past, party members called up for military service submit to the draft.

In doing so, they refuse to sign the unconstitutional loyalty oath now made part of the conscription procedure.

Although the main weight of the antiwar movement continues to center in the civilian population, the opposition to the war which has developed within the present conscript army has added a new and extremely important political dimension to the forces involved in the fight against the imperialist warmakers. Revolutionary socialists within the armed forces focus their political activity on the assertion and defense of their constitutional right to express their views as citizens upon the war and other issues of government policy, using sound tactical judgment in exercising that right and avoiding disciplinary hangups and penalties over routine military matters and orders.

The basic aim of our current transitional approach is the same as its predecessor. It seeks to promote a struggle for power and socialism by the workers and their allies and to build a strong, democratically disciplined combat party capable of leading that struggle to the end.

## A TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM FOR BLACK LIBERATION

It is becoming more and more clear to increasing numbers of Afro-Americans that nothing less than a revolution in this country will bring about the liberation of black people. As a result, a great deal of discussion is going on over how to make a revolution and how to relate present-day struggles and demands to the goal of changing society as a whole. In providing answers to these questions, the experiences of the rest of the world revolutionary movement can be immensely helpful. They teach that the most effective road to revolutionary victory is through developing a rounded program of mass struggle—and organizing a mass political party around militant action on that program.

How can these lessons best be applied at the present stage of the struggle for black liberation in the United States? That is the all-important question this document proposes to discuss and answer.

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What do the developments of the past 15 years demonstrate? The struggle for black liberation has taken giant steps forward since the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott touched off the contemporary phase of the movement. It has given Afro-Americans a heightened sense of dignity, worth and destiny as a people. It has made the claims of the black masses into a paramount and unpostponable issue in American life and politics. It has acquainted the whole world with the intolerable conditions of the more than 22 million Afro-Americans and their determination to end the racist system and to win self-determination.

More recently, it has propelled black nationalism from deeply felt resentment against injustice and inequality into a powerful and ascending force in the Afro-American communities.

In the conclusion to his biography of Sammy Younge, Jr., the first

black college student to die in the black liberation movement, SNCC leader James Forman summed up the situation in the following terms: "The history of resistance to the most unique colonization experience known to mankind shows that the '60s must be recorded as an accelerating generation, a generation of black people determined that they will survive, a generation aware that resistance is the agenda for today and that *action* by people is necessary to quicken the steps of history."

Black Americans have participated in plenty of actions since 1955 — and these struggles have been responsible for whatever advances have been achieved. But it is painfully evident that all the struggles over the past decade and a half have not succeeded in improving the living and working conditions of the masses of black people or eliminating the worst abuses inflicted daily upon them. Only a few favored individuals from the black upper crust have benefited from the tokenism through which the white possessors of power and wealth have tried to dampen or buy off the militancy of the masses.

A pile of economic statistics confirms what almost every Afro-American knows from personal experience. Blacks are subjected to many forms of discrimination, have much lower incomes and fewer job opportunities, get lower wages, live in rotten housing, have bigger rates of unemployment and receive inferior education. Just one figure from the bottom of the heap shows what the score is. Forty percent of the nation's 9,500,000 citizens on welfare are black. In some states monthly welfare payments amount to as little as \$40 for a family of four. In New York City, 80 percent on welfare are blacks or Puerto Ricans.

Despite the heightened consciousness of the nature of this oppression and the awareness of the failure of the policies pursued in the past, no clear alternative conception has yet emerged from the black community on what has to be done to bring better results. Although repeated uprisings in the black communities have indicated time and again the existence of a deepgoing mass radicalization, little headway has been made in organizing the ghetto masses into an effective force for struggle. Instead, the gunning down of black leaders, the assassination of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., the repression of the Black Panther Party and the lack of mass agencies of struggle have bred a widespread feeling of frustration which exists in the black community on all levels.

### The fraud of black capitalism

Meanwhile the chief political representatives of American capitalism are not silent or inactive. They have no intention of removing the causes of discrimination, poverty and misery. These are built into their system of racist oppression and economic exploitation. They have shown by the use of police, state and federal troops over the recent years that they are ready to resort to the most brutal and

bloody repression to put down black protest. In order to maintain their rule they strive to keep blacks divided amongst themselves and separated from potential allies among the whites. They expect to keep blacks in their place by alternating cheap concessions ("tokenism") with repressions.

The Kennedy and Johnson administrations banked on the passage of a few civil-rights bills and a fake war-on-poverty to calm and appease the growing militancy. These have not worked. Now the more conservative Nixon administration has announced the development of a "black capitalism."

The essence of this program is that the principal lending institutions, backed by government loan guarantees, are supposed to help set up and encourage different sorts of small business enterprise by black individuals or groups. Not much has yet been done along this line. But the idea of creating a puny black capitalism alongside the gigantic edifice of white capitalism and in competition with it is a pure fantasy and a cruel hoax. While it may benefit a few black businessmen, it will fool very few black people.

Today almost all black businesses are tiny family operations, catering to a ghetto clientele and providing a meager income for their owners and a few jobs for others. About 25 percent of black firms are barber shops and beauty parlors. One out of every 40 Americans is a proprietor, while only one black in 1,000 is.

For show-window purposes, Nixon and his henchmen may aid and establish a few more black-operated enterprises—which will remain in debt to their financiers. But they will not narrow the colossal discrepancy between white capitalist ownership and the layer of black proprietors. The predominant trend of American economy is toward accelerated concentration of business and industry in fewer and bigger monopolies. This cuts down small white business as well as blocking the growth of black business. A sprinkling of new black firms cannot alter or reverse this process. They will remain petty and shaky marginal enterprises while the major banks, industries, insurance companies, chain stores and real estate interests stay in white hands and keep on fleecing the black communities.

Nor do the corporations which control the job market have any compelling reasons to better wages or working conditions for their black wage-slaves or eliminate the higher rate of unemployment among black workers and youth.

So long as the capitalist system prevails, Afro-Americans have the right to demand equal, if not greater, access to capital resources, credits and loans so they can go into business on their own as well as into factories, offices and government positions. Cooperatives may help some black communities to lessen the parasitic grip of the white bloodsuckers and acquire a larger measure of autonomy over minor aspects of their economic life. But this is quite different from expecting that the present owners and controllers of the United States will satisfy the needs of the black community or that black capitalism will

solve or even alleviate the most pressing problems of black people, such as housing, education, employment, and poverty. A fundamental transformation of the whole economic, social and political system is required for this.

### The liberal approach

The liberal black leaders, from Whitney Young and Roy Wilkins to Ralph Abernathy and Bayard Rustin, advocate extensive reforms for the benefit of black people. The trouble is that they expect to see these concessions come from Democratic and Republican party politicians, the very agents of the capitalist ruling class which has bred racism for centuries, upholds it and is its main beneficiary at home and abroad.

These gradualists and reformists keep their ideas and activities within the limits of the established order which they are committed to serve. They resemble the house-slaves and handkerchief-heads who came cap in hand begging "massa" for favors.

The more astute white capitalist politicians and their black stooges are aware that any breakaway from the two-party system to the left is a danger to them. That is why they back the campaigns and build up the reputations of black Democrats like Mayor Carl Stokes of Cleveland and Mayor Richard Hatcher of Gary. Such black men are nominated and put in office, not to serve the welfare of the black community, but to head off the mounting demands for change, to co-opt and corrupt black nationalist sentiment if possible, and turn it back into channels which are safe and secure for the white supremacists.

The first major action of Mayor Stokes was to increase payroll taxes to raise money so that more cops could be hired to maintain control over the black community. And Mayor Hatcher admitted his administration has little control over what happens to black people in Gary. "There is much talk about black control of the ghetto," he said. "What does it mean? I am mayor of a city of roughly 90,000 black people—but we do not control the possibilities of jobs for them, of money for their schools, or state-funded social institutions. These things are in the hands of U.S. Steel Corporation, the county department of welfare and the State of Indiana."

### The positions of the revolutionary nationalists

To one degree or another almost every Afro-American shares the sentiments if not the ideology of black nationalism. The spectrum of the black nationalist movement comprises a wide variety of political positions and trends, ranging from those on the extreme right, who

want to build black business, through the purely cultural nationalists, to the revolutionary left wing.

Today hundreds of thousands of black men and women look forward to the black revolution as the road to liberation. In the vanguard are the rebellious black youth in the ghettos, the streets and the campuses who are absorbing ideas and inspirations from the "Third World" revolutions, the teachings of Malcolm X, and their own experiences in struggle. The most advanced recognize that capitalism is the source and support of racism and that it is necessary to abolish capitalism in order to attack racism at its roots.

This rapidly growing revolutionary consciousness means that increasing numbers of black people, especially among the youth, are ready to devote their lives to the building of a revolutionary movement to win power for the masses and overturn this system. They are now forced to grapple with the extremely complex problem of how this can be done. Without a correct and realistic perspective for carrying on the liberation struggle, based on a clear understanding of the objective conditions in the United States today, thousands of excellent revolutionary cadres run the risk of disorientation or wasting time and energy while trying to reach the goal of emancipation.

Numerous revolutionaries see the necessity and desirability of breaking away, once and for all, from both the Democratic and Republican parties and forming an independent black party which will not only enter candidates in election campaigns but mobilize the Afro-American communities in actions to attain community demands.

However, they do not yet see clearly how to link struggles for the pressing immediate needs of the black people with the revolutionary goal of overturning the whole racist capitalist system. In their search for an answer to this difficult problem they swing from one extreme to the other without finding a logical and practical connection between the two ends. Thus at one time they talk about armed struggle by small, highly disciplined, and trained groups of militants as the only really revolutionary method of action. When they run up against the unrealism of guerrilla-type actions in the United States, where the scale of revolutionary struggles demands huge and much more complex commitments of forces, they fall back to spasmodic and uncoordinated activities associated with the largely spontaneous struggles that flare up in the community over issues that often do not appear to be far-reaching. Many militants who have grasped the need to overturn the system as a whole feel that in participating in such battles they are merely marking time while they search for the formula that will put a successful revolution on the agenda in the United States.

In order to work out a strategy and tactics that can realistically hasten a revolutionary showdown, it is necessary first of all to under-

stand where the black liberation struggle actually stands today. What stage is it in?

In the country as a whole, a struggle for government power by the working class is not an immediate perspective. This obviously holds true for the white workers, who remain relatively quiescent politically and still tied in with the Democratic Party machinery through the union bureaucracy.

Without the white workers, the movement for black liberation cannot realistically pose an immediate struggle for government power. It is true, of course, as the mass uprisings indicate, that the black masses are more ready to fight for their rights against the authorities than any other sector of American society. But it requires the active backing and participation of the majority of the population to achieve government power. This stage has not yet been reached in the United States. Moreover, the political understanding of the black masses today is far less advanced than their combative frame of mind. Despite their bitterness, nine-tenths of the black voters cast a ballot for the Democratic candidate for president in 1968, as they did in 1964.

The truth is that we stand in a preparatory period. Once this is thoroughly understood, the problems begin to fall into place.

The first big problem is how to break the hold of the white supremacist capitalist politicians upon Afro-Americans. The solution lies in promoting the formation of an independent mass black political party.

The second big problem is how to get Afro-Americans in their majority to move faster and farther along the road to revolution. The solution lies in formulating and fighting for a program that can help transform the general discontent and general militancy of the black masses into an organized, cohesive, consciously revolutionary force. By presenting and fighting for such a program, a small vanguard can transform itself into an influential power among the masses.

The next section of this document presents proposals along this line, many of which have already been brought forward by various elements in the movement.

### **Suggested program of mass struggle**

The motivation for a program of revolutionary mass struggle must be the self-determination of Afro-Americans. Like all oppressed nationalities, black people can achieve their freedom only by taking their destiny in their own hands: "Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow."

This means that black people must form and unify their own organizations of struggle, take control of the black communities and all

the institutions within them, and conduct a consistent fight to overcome every form of economic, political and cultural servitude and inequality generated and enforced by the decadent, racist capitalist society.

### A. Black control of the black community

It is a basic democratic principle that a people should have the right to decide its own affairs. Therefore the central demand of the liberation forces is for black control of the black community. This is an indispensable step towards freeing the black masses from domination by the white racists who benefit from their exploitation.

The demand for black control of the black community has a number of attributes which give it an extremely powerful potential for mobilizing the masses in a revolutionary direction.

The demand for black control has been raised spontaneously in thousands of struggles across the country. It is obviously a demand which speaks directly to the needs and present understanding of black people. At the same time, black control of the black community is a democratic demand. It is based on something which even the ruling class says it believes in—the right of people to have democratic control over their own lives and communities. Thus the resistance the power structure puts up against this struggle will help to expose the hypocrisy of the ruling class on one of the central issues which it uses to brainwash and enslave the masses—its proclaimed adherence to democracy.

At the same time, the struggle for black control is profoundly revolutionary, because it poses the question of who will have decision-making power over black people: themselves or the capitalist rulers. The realization of this aim can build black fortresses which will be centers of black counterpower to the white power structure in the principal cities of the United States.

As they develop within the black communities, struggles targeted to win control over specific institutions and agencies can pave the way and prepare increasing numbers of people for the all-inclusive goal of total control of their community. These partial struggles, carried out around issues such as black control of the schools, can be extremely important because through them encouraging victories can be won. These victories, even if limited to specific areas, can help to raise the confidence of the community in its own power and lay the basis for broader future struggles.

The following demands can help promote this process:

1. Replace police occupation of the black community with a community-controlled police force drawn from residents of the community.
2. Black control of all government funds allocated to the black community and control over all plans for renovating and constructing

housing and other communal facilities and improvements.

3. Community control over all institutions in the black community, such as hospitals, welfare centers, libraries, etc.

4. Establish community councils to make policy decisions and administer the affairs of the black community. These councils should be composed of representatives elected by workers in various community institutions—factories, hospitals, educational institutions—as well as delegates elected on a block basis.

The local councils or boards of control should be joined together on regional, state and national levels, the aim being to create a National Council of Black Communities. This should be composed of elected, not appointed, delegates representing the local constituencies.

Such a National Council could work out common policies and speak with one voice on all matters affecting the communities as a whole and their relations with all other forces and agencies. It would thus exercise far more authority than any single community could. To prevent the National Council from bureaucratic usurpation of power, elections should be held regularly and delegates should be subject to recall at any time so that they remain under the control of the local committees they represent.

## **B. Formation of a black political party**

The indispensable instrument for organizing and carrying on effective struggle for such demands, achieving complete control over the black community, and moving forward to black liberation, is an independent black political party. Its program would be designed to use the immense wealth created by working people, black and white, not for imperialist war and the enrichment of a few but for the needs of the majority.

The main purpose of a black party is to lead Afro-Americans in political and mass action. But its progressive proposals would attract support from other sections of the population which suffer from the evils of capitalist rule.

A black party would expose and challenge the do-nothing polices of the Democrats and Republicans and present an alternative to them not only by participating in elections but by organizing effective community actions. It would take the initiative in promoting the self-mobilization of the black people and forming alliances with students, poor white people, workers and all other forces interested in radical change. It could play a vanguard role in bringing revolutionary ideas to all sections of the country.

### C. Key planks in a party program

#### Domestic policy

1. It is the duty of society to provide well-paid jobs for all. A shorter workweek with no loss in pay to spread the available work. Unemployment insurance at full wages for everyone 18 or over whether or not they have held jobs before.

2. Transfer the funds from the war budget to launch a multi-billion-dollar crash program of public works to build schools, hospitals, better public transport, parks and recreation facilities, nurseries, libraries, and housing. Give black workers priority on all jobs connected with the construction program.

3. A \$3 an hour minimum wage with guaranteed protection of this minimum against increases in the cost of living.

4. Put an immediate end to hunger and malnutrition through a guaranteed annual income which can assure everyone, including the old, sick and disabled, adequate living standards.

5. Abolish all taxes on incomes of \$7,500 and under. Abolish all sales taxes which discriminate against the poor.

6. Make free quality medical care available to all citizens. Expropriate the drug monopolies and medicine profiteers. Undertake a large-scale program to train black people as doctors and nurses.

7. Organize self-defense units to protect the black community and its organizations. Oppose gun laws which leave black people defenseless and unarmed while white cops and racists assault members of the black community.

8. Investigate the financial records of all landlords and businesses operating in the black community and tax their superprofits to help finance improvement projects for the community.

9. Extend credits to black cooperatives and small businesses.

10. Enforce and tighten all existing housing codes. No tenant to pay rent exceeding ten percent of his total income.

11. Expropriate any firm which discriminates against black people.

12. Elect price committees to inspect and police prices in the neighborhoods.

13. Review the cases of and release all black prisoners because they have not received fair trials. All black people to be tried by a jury of their peers as guaranteed by the Constitution, that is, by other black people.

#### Military and foreign policy

1. End the draft. Exempt black youth from military service.

2. Bring the GIs home from Vietnam immediately. The black man's struggle is here at home.

3. Take a referendum on the attitude of the black community toward the Vietnam war and all foreign wars.

4. Support the constitutional right of GIs to speak out against the war and discrimination in the armed forces. An immediate end to all discrimination in the armed forces.

5. Self-determination for the Vietnamese and all Third World peoples. Solidarity with the liberation struggles of all oppressed nationalities.

6. End government assistance to all oppressive regimes from South Africa to South Vietnam. Dismantle all foreign military bases.

### Black education

The black community should have control of its entire educational system from the nursery school through college. This can be accomplished in the following ways:

the educational system

1. Election of community control boards to supervise schools in the black community.

2. The establishment of an educational system and curriculum which meets the needs of black children, prepares them for future economic security, gives them a knowledge of themselves and an understanding of the true history and culture of black people.

3. Parent involvement in every phase of school life.

4. Institute a crash program to train black administrators and teachers. Preferential hiring of black teachers and administrators.

5. Community groups should be entitled to use school facilities to promote activities of benefit to the community and the black liberation struggle.

6. Offer a full program of adult education.

7. Dismiss all school officials who victimize or insult students on racial grounds.

8. Introduce special tutoring programs for all students who have fallen behind in their studies.

high schools

1. Establish student policy-making boards to run student activities in the high schools, handle disciplinary problems and participate in the general supervision of the schools.

2. Hold regular full assemblies to discuss school problems and ascertain the will of the students.

3. Maintain the rights of all students and teachers. These should include: freedom of expression, freedom to organize, to pass out literature, freedom from censorship of school newspapers, freedom of assembly and the right to invite any outside speakers regardless of their political views.

4. An end to disciplinary expulsions.

5. An end to the tracking system—special tutoring for all students who fall behind.

6. A rounded black studies program which will teach Afro-American history and literature truthfully and throw light on the real nature of capitalist racism.

7. Upgraded job training programs. Adequate preparation for all students desiring to attend college.

8. A guaranteed job for all high school graduates.

a black university

The black community should have universities which are related to the needs of black people, to their struggle against oppression, and to their development as a nationality. Third World university students and faculty should be able to shape their own educational destiny and provide training in all the skills and professions required by the black community. The following demands to accomplish these ends have already been raised in the campus struggles:

1. Autonomous black studies and Third World studies departments, adequately financed and with complete control of curriculum, facilities and policies in the hands of Third World students and faculty.

2. Representatives of Third World groups on all policy-making bodies.

3. Availability of university facilities for use by the community and their expansion in the black community.

4. Free university education for all Third World students who desire it, with full expenses paid by the government and scholarships available to all who need them.

5. Guaranteed jobs for all graduates.

### The black workers

Because of the role they play in production, black workers are potentially the most powerful sector of the black community in the struggle for liberation. As the victims of inequality in the economy, black workers have already begun to organize separately on the job to advance their interests and protect their rights.

The unity of black and white workers is indispensable to combat and overthrow capitalism. But where white workers are privileged

and black workers are penalized, black unity in action must precede and prepare the ground for black-white unity on a broad scale. Black caucuses in the unions can fight against discrimination in hiring, firing and upgrading and for equality of treatment in the unions themselves, as DRUM and other black caucuses in Detroit and elsewhere are undertaking to do. Where they are part of organized labor, they should strive to democratize the unions, regenerate their progressivism, and eliminate white job-trust conceptions and practices.

These aims can be furthered through the following demands:

1. Rank and file democratic control of the unions. Elimination of all racist practices in the labor movement.
2. Preferential hiring and advancement of black workers and free access to apprentice training programs, the skilled trades and higher-paying supervisory posts.
3. For an escalator clause in all union contracts to assure automatic wage adjustments to keep up with the rising costs of living.
4. For a 30-hour week with no reduction in pay.
5. For speedier grievance procedures. No restrictions on the right to strike.
6. Equal rights and treatment for all black union members.
7. Complete independence of the unions from government interference. Repeal of all antilabor laws.
8. Workers control of industry through factory committees elected by the workers on the job.

\* \* \*

Most of the proposals listed above have been brought forward at one time or another in the course of the black liberation struggle over the past years; others are taken from the experiences of the masses elsewhere in fighting against capitalist domination. A program of this sort cannot be fully finalized or frozen. It has to remain flexible and open-ended with plenty of room for additions and improvements as the struggle develops and new problems come to the fore.

The whole point of the program is to provide a guide for the organization and action of the Afro-American masses which can lead toward the goal of black liberation with the maximum of gains en route.

The black liberation movement is bound to play a vanguard role in the coming American socialist revolution both by its example of combativity against the racist power structure and by the stimulus its struggles will give to actions of other sectors thrown into opposition to the ruling capitalist class.

The strategy of the black liberation movement hinges on the achievement of two tasks. One is the unification and mobilization of the black masses for revolutionary action. The other is the weakening of the enemy forces.

Since Afro-Americans constitute a minority of the population in the

United States, it will be necessary to find ways and means to take advantage of potential social divisions among the whites and thereby reduce the original unfavorable odds. This can be done by drawing on part of the poor and working-class whites, as well as sympathetic students and intellectuals, into an alliance of action while some other sections of the white population are neutralized. Those parts of the program suggested above which not only correspond to the needs of the blacks but will likewise benefit prospective political allies among the white majority can serve to further these long-range aims of a realistic revolutionary strategy.

### **Revolutionary strategy and tactics**

How does the program outlined above fit into the strategy and tactics of a socialist revolution in the United States?

At first sight most of the points appear limited in nature. Many of them concern rights and liberties guaranteed to every citizen by the Constitution. Or they propose broadening these rights, as, for example, establishing the right of black control of the black community. They can be defined as "democratic demands."

Other points concern guaranteeing jobs, hourly wages, annual income, a 30-hour week, social benefits such as adequate medical care. Others involve independent political action, the defense of the black community, organization of black power. For reasons which will be explained below, these can be defined as "transitional demands."

Taken point by point, the program can seem modest, perhaps even feasible under capitalism if one were to take at face value the propaganda about capitalism standing for democracy, a good living, and a free world.

Particularly to be noted about the demands is that they have either already appeared in the black communities, in some instances with quite broad backing, or they are easily understood and appreciated by wide groups and, with correct leadership, could serve as rallying slogans for very massive struggles. This is a first prerequisite for any program for revolutionary struggle. That is, above all, the program must be based on the objective needs of black people.

But how does such a program tie in with the struggle to overturn capitalism and build a socialist society in America?

To understand this, it is necessary to bring in some general considerations. On a world scale, capitalism as an internationally integrated system for the production and distribution of basic necessities is in its death agony. It offers little to most of humanity but grinding poverty, hopeless insecurity, declining opportunities, increasingly repressive regimes, and endless wars, each more horrifying than the last.

A number of countries have already torn loose and set out on the

road to building socialism, whatever the difficulties, hardships and setbacks caused in the final analysis by the poverty-stricken level at which they had to begin and the efforts of the capitalist powers to injure and destroy them. The relationship of forces between capitalism and socialism on a world scale has changed to such a degree in the past 50 years since the first successful socialist revolution in Russia that even the United States is, at bottom, on the defensive. That is the basic reality despite the decades of prosperity arising out of the victory in World War II and the preparations for World War III, and despite the colossal military force at the command of the American capitalist rulers.

What is to be observed all over the world is that mass struggles of any considerable scope now tend to collide with the capitalist system and, with proper leadership, have the potential to break through the barriers of capitalism and cross over into struggles for socialism.

This tendency is so strong, so deeply imbedded, that examples can be cited throughout the Third World where a struggle for such democratic demands as national independence and a thoroughgoing agrarian reform has moved in the direction of a struggle for socialism. In Cuba, Vietnam, and China these struggles have culminated in actual revolutionary overturns of the capitalist system.

While the tendency for big mass struggles to move toward socialism is especially striking in the Third World, it is also operative—with certain modifications—in the industrially advanced capitalist countries. Under the impulse of serious problems affecting their lives in general and standard of living, masses of working people can become engaged in struggles of a militant nature, the logic of which is to disregard the limitations of capitalism and to seek solutions that can actually be worked out only if socialism is instituted.

This gives these struggles a "transitional" nature. Beginning with a limited challenge to the rule of capitalism, they move logically toward the creation of a new revolutionary power in opposition to the capitalist government.

The key demands being raised in the black liberation struggle today, such as black control of the black community, jobs for all and self-determination of Third World peoples have this quality of being transitional in nature. They are rooted in the needs and present understanding of the black community, yet they have a revolutionary logic because the capitalist system does not have the capacity to meet them. A new, more rational, more productive system is required.

On the ideological level such transitional demands constitute a means of bringing the level of understanding of the broad masses under capitalism to the higher level required to understand consciously the need for socialism. The present-day struggles around these demands for changes in the system can lead to and become part of the overall struggle for power. The mobilization of the masses thus takes

place as a process, with each struggle awakening, educating, inspiring and organizing new layers toward revolutionary consciousness and action.

Several examples will suffice to show this logical development.

Unemployment is a familiar enough phenomenon in the black communities. It is easy for a black youth, for instance, to understand why he should have a guaranteed job opportunity. When great numbers of youths face the same situation, a point can be reached where they can engage with some militancy in common action in support of jobs for all.

The problem is obviously no longer an individual problem, as the capitalists seek to picture it and to maintain it. Its true nature has come to the surface. It is a problem involving society as a whole, demanding an overall solution.

Where are the jobs to be found? One possibility is to take all the current jobs and reduce the hours on each job sufficiently to make room for everyone seeking employment. To maintain living standards, however, current yearly incomes must be guaranteed despite the reduced work week.

What power can enforce such a solution?

Quite clearly, only the government can do this. Since the present government will resist this collective way of solving the problem, the question arises as to who it really represents, and why it should not be removed to make way for a government that will guarantee jobs for all.

More questions arise. The solution demands economic planning on a national scale and the placing of human needs above profit-making. Consideration of the socialist alternative to capitalism has thus been placed on the agenda.

Thus the demand for jobs, can, under certain circumstances have very far-reaching consequences.

The actions spearheaded by black students on campuses across the country give another indication of the potential role of struggles around transitional demands. The demand for increased or open enrollment of Third World students has already been shown to have far-reaching implications. Significant gains towards increasing black enrollment can and have been made within the present educational structure, but the struggle for open enrollment—that is, for college education for all who want it—will not be so easy for the system to fulfill.

Certain key questions are immediately raised by this demand: Where are the resources for such a vast expansion of educational facilities to come from? How will adequate jobs be found for all the students upon graduation?

If persistently pursued, struggles around this demand call into question the capitalist economic structure itself. Because of its built-in need

for large pools of low-paid, unskilled labor, capitalism is not constructed to absorb the costs and consequences of higher education for the most exploited sector of the working force.

From the standpoint of moving the revolution forward, struggles such as those that have been taking place on the campuses—whether they end in victories or not—can inspire and lead to demands with more far-reaching implications than was apparent in the original issues. The black community as a whole has supported and received inspiration from the example set by the black students in struggles for self-determination.

The fight for autonomous black studies departments, for example, has helped pave the way for struggle for control of other institutions in the black community. If there can be black control of black studies departments in the universities, why not black control of the public schools, black control of the police and black control of the community?

The impact which these black student struggles have already had can be seen in the fact that they have succeeded in bringing about unprecedented unity in action between blacks and other national minorities including Chicanos, Oriental-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Indians. They have likewise attracted support from many radical white students and even, in one small but significant instance, from a progressively-led union local of oil workers in the Bay Area.

The movement of black and Third World students is a clear example of how a struggle in a limited arena under present conditions can help to expose the system and lead to bigger and broader efforts. Struggle is the school of the masses and the means for clarifying their consciousness of what has to be done. All the demands that bring them into action for their own aims are worth raising, fighting for, and incorporating into an overall revolutionary strategy and program.

The strategy of advancing the black liberation struggle through the development of transitional demands is fundamentally different from both the reformist and ultraleftist concepts of what to do.

The reformists view capitalism as so powerful and entrenched that it cannot be overturned, at least for a long time to come. From this pessimistic outlook, they conclude that the best that can be accomplished is to improve the lot of the poverty-stricken masses a little, either by persuading or pressuring the rulers.

The ultralefts see capitalism as completely finished, not only as to perspectives but in capacity to survive. They see it as standing by inertia, requiring only a slight push to make it collapse. They dream of bringing this about by galvanizing the masses through clever or extremely revolutionary propaganda—which often times turns out to be mere rhetoric—or by a small heroic group undertaking a spectacular action which, by setting an example, will prove contagious,

setting the masses in motion in some kind of spontaneous way.

Against both the reformists and ultralefts, revolutionary Marxists view capitalism as having entered the epoch of its death agony, yet as still retaining considerable capacity to defer the final showdown through violent means, through a few concessions in some instances, through keeping the masses from gaining an understanding of politics, and through blocking the organization of a revolutionary party deeply rooted among the masses and endowed with a competent leadership.

As against both the reformists and ultralefts, the revolutionary Marxists seek to take advantage of the basic weakness in the position of the ruling class. This lies in the deep-going tendency of all serious social struggles in this epoch to involve government power and to raise the question of who should exercise this power, no matter how limited these struggles may be, or may appear to be, at the beginning.

The revolutionary Marxists propose a strategy based on this fact. The succession of transitional demands suggested above corresponds to the course of struggle repeatedly observed in the world today. To pose these demands in their logical succession, to try to organize battles along this line, helps to develop an understanding of the main existing tendency in the class struggle, thereby advancing the political understanding of the masses and hastening the stage when a final showdown with the racist capitalist system becomes a realistic possibility.

### The goal of liberation: capitalism or socialism?

The program of a movement or a party is a means to an end—and for a revolutionary movement that end means the replacement of the prevailing system of racist oppression by a free and equal society. What kind of socioeconomic organization can enable the black liberation movement to achieve self-determination and a better life for all Afro-Americans?

Black nationalists have very varying attitudes on this crucial question. On the right are some who believe in building up black capitalism. To the left are those revolutionaries who have come to understand that only a socialist society can solve the fundamental problems of the black masses. Many nationalists are disinclined to take any definite position on this matter. We will settle that when we come to it, they say. However, this is not the sort of issue that a movement seriously committed to the abolishment of racist oppression can evade or leave indefinitely hanging in midair.

A realistic decision on what kind of economy can succeed the present system of exploitation in the United States cannot be made in

an arbitrary manner. The possibilities have been restricted by great historical factors which have been at work over a long stretch of time. Foremost among these factors is the level of economic development which determines the character and the goals of the contending forces.

This point can be made clearer by comparing the situation which confronted the movement for black emancipation in the mid-19th Century with that of today. At that time the main immediate oppressors of the black people were the Southern slaveholders, while the Afro-Americans in bondage were mostly cultivators of the soil. The objectives of that revolution were to destroy chattel slavery and to provide the freedmen with the economic, social and political means for their liberation and advancement.

What happened, as everyone knows, was that the slave power was smashed during the Civil War and Reconstruction and the slaves given their formal freedom. But since the Northern capitalist conquerors denied them the promised "40 acres and a mule" and other prerequisites for their economic independence and the exercise of political power, the blacks could be thrust back into a new state of servitude from which they suffer to the present day.

Today, the main oppressor of the Afro-American is the capitalist class. The vast majority of black people no longer live on plantations in the rural South or work in the fields. They are packed into city slums where they make their living—if they are not thrown on welfare—by working in capitalist enterprises. They are surrounded on all sides by the capitalist owners who fleece them as employers, loansharks, bankers, landlords and merchants.

In order to win liberation, the revolutionary movement must overthrow these exploiters whose system breeds and sustains racism and oppression. Because Afro-Americans are both an oppressed nationality and the most heavily exploited segment of the American working class, the black liberation movement has a twofold character. It is at one and the same time a nationalist movement for self-determination and a proletarian struggle against the capitalist possessors of wealth and power.

Afro-Americans have been the principal victims of the profit system at all stages of its development in North America over the past 400 years. They were enslaved and shipped across the Atlantic to raise staple crops to enrich the planters. They are still laboring for the profits of others today, although in the cities rather than the countryside and for capitalists rather than slaveholders.

The hour has struck when an end must be put to all forms of exploitation and servitude. Full and definitive liberation cannot be achieved except through abolishing the private ownership of the means of production by the corporations and banks.

This measure is mandatory whether Afro-Americans decide to ex-

ercise their right of self-determination through the creation of a separate black nation or within the context of the creation of a single socialist republic along with insurgent white workers and other anti-capitalist forces.

The transitional program of a genuinely revolutionary movement must have a clear and conscious goal which guides all its activities and lights the way for its followers. It must be designed to satisfy the needs of the working masses and place them in control of their own affairs. While promoting a transition from national oppression to self-determination, it will of necessity advance the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Through this second emancipation black America will not only have effected its own liberation, but promoted the liberation of all oppressed peoples from racism, capitalism, and imperialism.

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