

independent socialist

Independent Socialist Headquarters

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Special New Politics Issue:

P. 3: Defend the Ghetto Uprisings

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For President

An Independent Slate in '68

Can You Help?

with the \$700 it costs us to bring this supplement and other literature to the New Politics convention? Send checks payable to INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST to P.O. Box 910, Berkeley, Calif.

From the time we were children, and before that, we have had it beaten into our heads that it is impossible for us to change "what is."

Newspapers, radio commentators, major party politicians, poverty officials persevere in repeating the old saw that "you can't fight City Hall," that if you want to change things you have to go through "channels" and rely on "people in the know," the people already in power. We have found, however, that while it is hard to fight City Hall, it can be done. The presence of thousands of activists in Chicago this week is, if nothing else, notice that we need not endure what we are told we must always endure: wars like the Vietnamese war, police despotism in our neighborhoods, rampant racism and poverty. Our presence in Chicago is underlined by the activity of growing movements all across the nation which have harnessed the energies of many more thousands in fighting against the crackpot "realities" of our society.

Why We Are Here

We came to Chicago to decide what course of action offers the most hope for extending our movement to the millions of Americans whose allegiance must be won if we are to make the most of the beginning we have made, if we are to build towards a future in which the New Politics will be the majority politics, and hence, a ruling politics in America. Only by

attending that end can we accomplish the things for which we strive. The destruction of innocent Asian peasants and American soldiers (and the threat of nuclear holocaust which goes with it) will not be ended by the power structure which started it. Nor will racism and poverty be overthrown by real estate interests (or their politician friends) who benefit from segregated slums. The only hope for peace abroad and justice at home is the ability of the ordinary people -- people who do not benefit from war and racism -- to run their own lives. But to run their own lives they need the political power to run American society -- to wrest the great American machine from the uses of destruction and turn it to the purpose of improving all of our lives.

The New Politics says that this is possible, despite all the bad advice from those who are now on top. Our presence here says this is possible. Our problem is: how to build a movement which will multiply the numbers we have now in Chicago into a force which can rally enough support in America to turn that possibility into a reality -- to transform oppression into the power of the oppressed.

We are today a long way from that final victory. Even an independent Presidential campaign in 1968, so very important as a means of winning new sections of the American people to our banner, will not itself accomplish that final

victory. But the building blocks of tomorrow's victories are the decisions we make today. It is this which makes our deliberations so important.

Marches Are Not Enough

Remember the peace marches last spring? Remember the hundreds of thousands who poured into the streets of New York and lined Kezar Stadium in San Francisco to protest the war? As this is being written, only several months later, American planes are bombing the center of Hanoi. Those marches last spring were the largest anti-war demonstrations held during war-time in our nation's history. Johnson answered those marches by escalating the war.

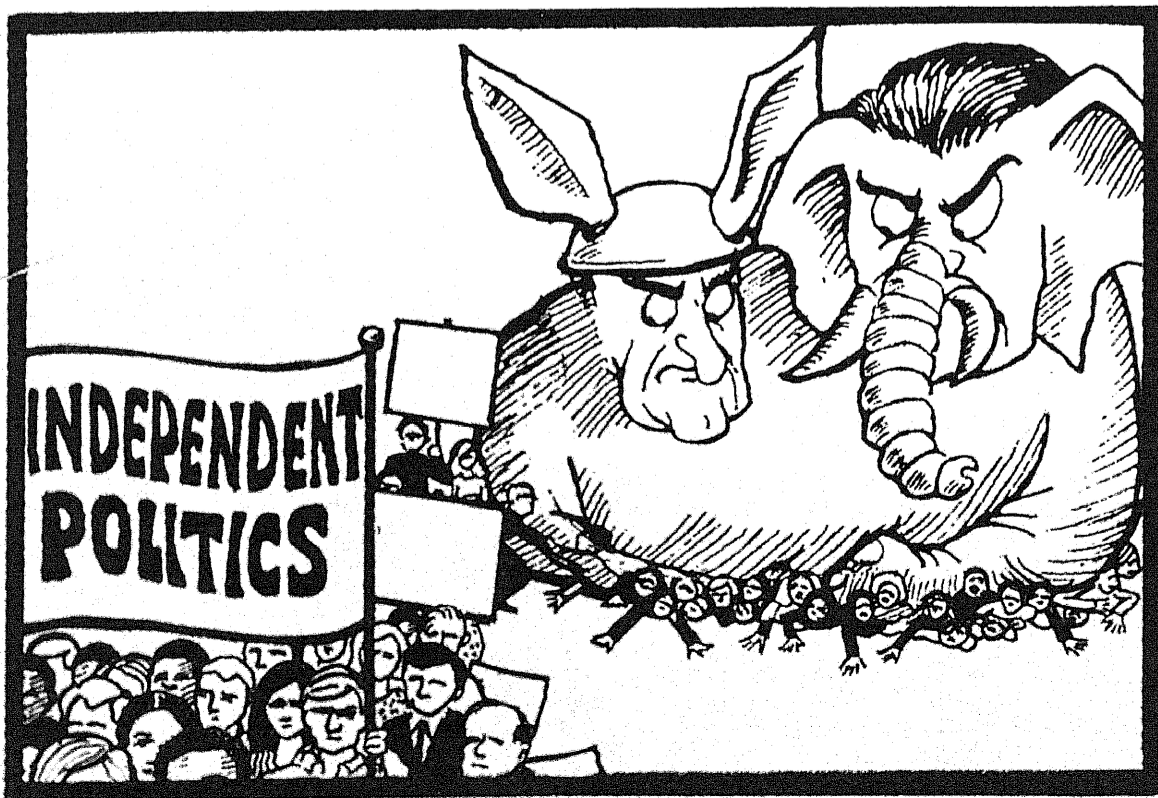
Remember the long years of sit-ins and demonstrations, followed by the beginning of massive resistance by blacks in the ghetto -- just weeks ago? Johnson's answer to these uprisings was . . . call in the Army! (What was good for the Vietnamese was good enough for the black ghetto.)

Marches, demonstrations and armed resistance are not enough.

They are not enough because they are not part of a movement which challenges the Establishment politically, a movement which can actually threaten the power of those who now rule. The absence of such a movement -- opposed to both Democrats and Republicans -- is one reason Johnson can answer us with escalation instead of real concessions.

We do not have such a movement because we have thus far failed to do in politics what we do in the community. When we want something in the community we organize to get it. We do not depend upon the people in power to get them for us. The old politics says: if you want an improvement in your living conditions, depend on the good will of the landlords and the city officials. The New Politics, having learned better from bitter experience, spurns that advice. It organizes marches of the tenants, demonstrations by the anti-war movement, sit-ins by the welfare clients.

We do this, with one glaring exception. When election time comes, mil-



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lions of Negroes and anti-war Americans vote for the Democrats. With this act they give away with their right hand what they have won with their left in demonstrations and marches. In relying on the Democrats, Negroes, trade unionists, poor people and students block off the real approaches to political power. To understand why this is so, will bring us far along the road to understanding why independent political action is a necessity if the New Politics movement is to continue to move forward.

Our Weapon ... And Theirs

The masses of people who have an interest in changing their position in this society have one great weapon at their disposal; the power to mobilize their great numbers in open political struggle. This is the weapon that trade unionists, Negroes and peace activists employ on strikes and demonstrations. IT IS THE WEAPON WITHOUT WHICH THERE WOULD BE NO NEW POLITICS MOVEMENT TODAY. It is in marked contrast, however, to the weapons of the vested interests. The banks, real estate groups and big business fight their battles with wealth. The wealth asserts itself in many ways: the use of patronage, landholdings and the status acquired through exercise of economic power — a respect for which has been drilled into much of the American population, including many of the economically underprivileged.

The Democratic Party is a political agent of these established interests. It is a party in which power is exercised through the use of wealth and by the activity of patronage leaders and machines to whom politics itself is a business. It is amenable to the control of the power structure but not accessible to those who struggle by other means. It is amenable to the control of those who stand for the war in Vietnam and the status quo in the ghetto, but not to the opponents of those evils.

"LIBERAL" DEMOCRATS

These facts explain why, despite the great numerical force of millions who are oppressed, their voice is scarcely heard, except as statistics in the Gallup Poll or as victims of police brutality. A vote for the Democrats is a vote for their own oppression. Unfortunately, this applies even when the Democrat is a "liberal" Democrat. Because the liberal Democrats — even the best of them — do far more to make the Democratic Party seem like the "party of the people" than they do to actually make it into one, Bobby Kennedy criticizes the war but promises, at the same time, to support the war-making President for re-election. John Burton, a very "leftwing" California Democratic Assemblyman, criticizes the war and the slums but refused at this crucial time to sign a petition for an independent anti-war Presidential candidate (while at the same time he pledged to combat crime by training more police!). There are rare Democratic Party mavericks, of course, but these are exceptions which prove the rule.

For many years, sincere reform groups from New York to California, numerically strong reform groups, including large num-

bers of trade unionists, have tried it. They have even won primary victories. But the Democratic Party remains the same and the reformers become, over the long run, captives of and apologists for the system they set out to fight. They started out with good intentions. They did not intend to reinforce the trend towards war and social injustice but they wound up doing so.

The clever plan of getting the Democratic Party to "work for us" rather than for the power structure has only one thing wrong with it: it hasn't worked, and won't work. It has been tried out sixteen ways to Sunday, by experts and amateurs, professionals and enthusiasts, and it simply doesn't work. There is a very practical reason why it doesn't work. Whatever noises the liberals may make in the party, as long as the men who run the party machine know that the left has nobody to vote for but Democrats, they know that they have the left in their hip pocket. It is then only the elements to the right that they really have to woo. They don't have to make real concessions (the kind that hurt) to people who are going to have to vote for them anyway. They face right, and the whole center of gravity of American politics moves right. That's one reason why the right calls the tune. KEY TO THIS PATTERN IS THE FACT THAT THE LEFT REPRESENTS NO POSSIBLE THREAT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT AS LONG AS IT HAS NO INDEPENDENT ALTERNATIVE OF ITS OWN.

AT THEIR MERCY

Without a national movement which declares its independence of and opposition to the major parties, therefore, we leave ourselves at the mercy of our enemies. We depend upon the party of the power structure to reform itself. We would never think of following the advice of those who advise us to be submissive in our own communities, to try to "persuade" slumlords to alleviate their slums. We would never think of joining a real estate association as a means of cleaning out the rats and the cops. No. We form our own movements. The "persuasion" we use in the force of our organized numbers. The Democratic Party is the party of war-makers and slumlords, yet to it there is as yet no organized opposition. That is why Johnson nationally, and the Democratic Party locally, can answer our resistance with escalation. We have no weapon to threaten them, no weapon to fight them, no political movement with which to replace them.

Democrats ... And Rightists

One of the ways in which Democratic Party politicians work to keep us from getting that weapon is to point to the danger of the right wing in American politics. Only by "sticking to the Democrats they argue, can we save ourselves from Reagan and his cohorts. In this sentiment, many sincere liberals concur. If, in fact, sticking to the Democrats were the way to fight the right, then the New Politics movement would be in a serious dilemma. But why, if this is the case, has the growth of the right occurred under Democratic Party

administrations, both nationally and in states like California? Why is it that increasingly Democrats adopt Goldwaterite programs, as Johnson did in Vietnam? How do the Democrats who want us to get behind them to "fight the right" explain why the fact that, increasingly, Democratic politicians create the kind of reactionary public sentiment in which rightist extremism flourishes? Is it not a fact that Johnson's own hawk-like policies make respectable the arguments of Republicans who want to go even farther? (In 1966, Ronald Reagan rode into office on the wave of right wing feeling which was created in Large part by Governor Brown's unremitting attacks upon anti-war liberals and his use of police on the Berkeley campus.)

STANDING TOGETHER

Why does this Democratic liberal accommodation to rightist extremism happen? Are not the Democratic liberals the very same politicians who are most distraught at election time about the insidious right wing? (Remember how terrified LBJ was about Barry Goldwater in 1964) The answer lies in looking not only at the differences between Democratic Party liberalism and the right wing but at the things they have in common. Only a very foolish person would agree to the silly notion that there are no differences between the two. But only a very reckless one would ignore the fact, so clearly exhibited in Vietnam and in the recent ghetto uprisings, that when the American power structure as a whole is threatened, Democratic Party liberals and right wing reactionaries stand together. Even the liberal Senators in the Democratic Party who are now sharply critical of Johnson's war policies say unanimously that they will "stand behind the President" if the U.S. declares war against North Vietnam.

Democratic Party liberals sincerely feel sympathy with the underdog; they are not bound by the outlandish ideological oddities which prejudice Barry Goldwater against concern for the underprivileged. Nor are they bound by a narrow pre-occupation with the commercial success of American corporations. But they are bound by ideology and by their party to the needs of the American power structure as a whole (and in that power structure, corporations play a decisive role.) That comes first, and the needs of the oppressed second.

When those two needs conflict, Democratic liberalism tends either to adopt right wing solutions to the crisis which causes the conflict, or to propose untenable compromises which are away by a dynamic right wing program. An example of the first, is LBJ's Goldwaterite policies in Vietnam. An example of the second is the "loyal opposition" role of Kennedy and Fulbright on the Vietnam War. As public frustration over the war grows, the "solution" of vague negotiations and "critical support" of Johnson seems less and less like a real alternative. The alternative become, more and more, either support to the war effort or real opposition to it. Senator Fulbright implicitly acknowledged this polarization when he announced his refusal to vote to rescind the Tonkin Resolution which President Johnson uses as the rationale for his Vietnamese policies. The public recognizes this polarization by the increasing extent to which it favors — as revealed by the polls, the alternatives of get-

ting out of Vietnam on the one hand, or intensifying the conflict on the other.

KISS OF DEATH

The Democratic Party is the kiss of death for those who wish to check the ominous growth of the right in this country, for those who are concerned about the rise of rightist demagogues like Reagan, for those who fear the unleashing of racist virulence and war terror. The real choice before America are more and more between defense of this society and the struggles by oppressed people to remedy their discontent. The first means greater and greater repression. The second implies a basic change in the power structure of this society. That broader choice becomes concrete; Black repression or black liberation; American control over Vietnam or an end to imperialistic foreign policy; sustained poverty for the benefit of the corporative economy or popular control over American technology.

Public recognition lags behind reality, but shows signs of catching up. As frustration grows over the inability of our society to deal peaceably and justly with its problems, public sentiment gets more impatient in demanding clearcut and viable answers, as in the opinion polls about the war.

LEFT ALTERNATIVES

If the public is not offered a clearcut left wing alternative it will accept what the right wing offers it. Left wing alternatives cannot come from a Democratic Party which as a defender of the power structure either capitulates to the right or offers the "moderate" solutions which create public frustration in the first place. Left wing alternatives can come only from a movement of the masses of people who do not have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo and therefore are free to fight it, and by fighting it, start to reverse the swing to the right. If we depend upon the Democrats and fail to organize our own political opposition, the right wing will be confronted by no alternative. Right wing solutions will create the context for public debate, as in 1964. The right wing will win by default, as it did in 1964.

More Than Programs Away From Isolation

All this points to one thing: An independent Presidential campaign in 1968. If we are ever to win acceptance for our programs, we must present more than the programs themselves. We must demonstrate that there is a political force in America which is dead serious about implementing those programs.

The war in Vietnam shows the difficulties which arise when our program is not channeled into a challenge for political power. The American power structure uses the existence of Communism as an excuse for its own reactionary aggressions.

DEMOCRATIC FOREIGN POLICY

How can the New Politics movement respond to this problem? In their own hard experience in fighting against the American power structure many New Politics activists have learned the vital importance of democracy and civil liberties — not merely as abstract formula — but as irreplaceable weapons in the fight for economic and social justice. These activists, therefore, do not respond to the "anti-Communist" rationale of the State Department by supporting "the enemy of our enemy", Com-

munist. To do that would be to go from the frying pan to the fire.

Instead, these activists propose a third alternative: that America adopt a foreign policy of self-determination for all and massive technological aid to the revolutions against Western domination. A democratic foreign policy of opposition to the capitalist status quo is the best possible answer to the threat to democracy posed by authoritarian elites.

WHO WILL DO IT?

Because of the great discontent caused by the Vietnamese war in the American population, such a program should receive great support. To a large degree, the activities of the anti-war movement and militant blacks have created a receptivity to this kind



of alternative to a rightist foreign policy. But today there is a great barrier to the widespread acceptance of that alternative among the American people. That barrier is the absence of a political force which can put a democratic foreign policy into effect. That policy cannot be implemented by the American power structure. It can become a reality only by the mobilization of the masses of Americans who have no stake in the status quo or the subjugation of foreign nations.

Until such a force emerges as a contender for political power, a democratic foreign policy will be viewed as an idealistic pipedream in the minds of the American people. And until Americans begin to view left-wing programs as real alternatives, and not pipedreams, aggressive rightist imperialism — in Vietnam and after — will appear as the only definite solution to the threats and insecurities of the modern world.

The need for a campaign in 1968 is overwhelming. Along with the need to make our programs real to the American people is the problem of winning a commitment to the New Politics from millions of people who are now uninvolved. We meet in Chicago with a feeling of optimism about the prospects of our movement. But we are well aware of the fact that it is still relatively isolated and must reach beyond its current base in the Negro and white middle class communities. As Negro militance reminds us it is merely suicide to make alliances with groups committed to the status quo. But as the appeal of Negro leaders (inviting Negroes around the nation to come to Chicago this week) pointed out, "political alliances, without compromising one's political or organizational integrity are crucial at this point."

Where can we find such alliances? For many years radicals and liberals have looked for leadership to the trade unions, with little to show for it. Most official leaders of labor support the Administration's foreign policy. Leaders and workers both have been unfriendly to militant Negro

ISCA Conference

The annual conference of the Independent Socialist Clubs of America will be held Sept. 15-17 in N.Y.C. The conference will present discussions from a socialist point of view on such issues as Black Power, Foreign Policy, Independent Political Action and current struggles in the Labor Movement. You are invited to attend. For information write P.O. Box 481, Cooper Station, N.Y. 10003.

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DEFEND THE GHETTO UPRISINGS

The ghetto uprisings which have turned cities throughout America into blazing battlefields are a natural, long-expected and entirely justified counterattack against the police and slum merchants who daily oppress the ghetto. Despite slander and condemnation by the entire spectrum of politicians and the shameful capitulation of the liberal Black leaders, it is clear that the revolts do not represent a "minority hoodlum element". There is much more involved than "lawbreaking", and no mere handful of people could maintain a resistance against thousands of police, national guardsmen and Vietnam-trained army paratroopers using tanks and machine guns. It is true that only a sizeable minority is actually involved in the sniping, burning and looting. More important, however, this minority has the support of the bulk of ghetto residents, who sanction and shield its more active members from the police.

ENFORCERS

There have been few attacks on ordinary whites. The press has reported white snipers as well as Blacks, and there has been a great deal of integrated looting. The main

targets of the revolts have been the white-owned stores which depend on a poverty-created credit system allowing overcharging for poor quality goods, and the hated police. It is not just that the police are physically brutal or that they perpetrate indignities daily on the Black community. Over and above these, the police are the enforcers of the status quo in a community which finds the status quo oppressive. Maintaining "Law and Order" in the ghetto means upholding the exploitative relationships that exist. The violence directed against people is caused by the police, who enter the ghetto to protect private property and are willing to kill in order to protect that property. That is why most of those who have died in the revolts have been Black people suspected of looting. It is the police, not the rebels, who lack the proper respect for human life.

The pattern is quite clear. We are witnessing not some irrational striking-out by a handful of "mad-dogs", or the ghetto equivalent of a college football riot, or a looting spree by a mob crazed by the thought of free goods. Here is a spontaneous uprising of a people who are demanding changes in



society and are consciously attacking their immediate oppressors. The rebels pass over Black-owned stores while systematically looting and burning those owned by

whites.

Our politicians and liberal leaders piously declare that only small numbers of Negroes are involved. In practice, however, the politi-

cians recognize that this is a massive revolt against the institutions of white society, and therefore have virtually declared war on the Black population of the rebellious ghettos. If the politicians really believed that only a criminally element

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demands. But today, for the first time in many years, militant voices resound in union halls, voices of rank and file caucuses in unions like the United Automobile Workers. These caucuses protest the fact that the union leadership is selling the workers short under the pressure of the Democratic Party Administration. (which demands that workers make sacrifices for the war in Vietnam). Concurrent with these rank and file protests on war-related economic issues is a beginning of actual anti-war opinion, reflected by the formation of a national trade union movement against the Vietnam war organized as an autonomous division of SANE.

THE WORKERS, SELF-INTEREST ... AND US

The job of the New Politics movement is not to repeat dogmatic slogans about either how bad the working class is or how wonderful it is. Our job is rather to ask: what can we do in practice to stoke the coals of revolt in the unions and win workers to the fight for peace and equality? Real alliances can be successful only if they express the self-interest of the participants. Every day we see more clearly that the interests of American workers cannot be reconciled with a society dominated by a corporative economy and forced, because of its foreign aggressions, to exact sacrifice by assembly-line workers and to postpone radical solutions for unemployment. To the extent that American workers are subject to establishment racism and militaristic inclinations, they are acting against their own interests as workers. Racism notions among workers coincide with the failure of labor to defend itself against the corporative society.

AN INDEPENDENT ALTERNATIVE FOR LABOR

The awakening to self-interest in the union rank and file creates the potential for a force in the unions which will oppose the labor leadership and advance a program which is militant on the issues of war and the Negro struggle as well. That potential will not

materialize immediately - it must develop out of the workers' own experiences (just as the New Politics movement itself did not spring up overnight).

But the single most important thing that we can do to hurry that evolution is to confront the American establishment with a clear alternative in 1968, an alternative which declares that the American establishment is an enemy of American workers as well as Negroes and poor people. For the anti-leadership caucuses in the trade unions, which have not yet formulated a program of political independence to aid their struggle against corporative pressure, an independent campaign would provide a much needed focus. For the New Politics movement, that campaign would be the opening wedge in a longer campaign to break out of isolation and reenlist the great force of the American working class in the fight for social change.

MARTIN LUTHER KING?

The main decision that this conference must make is to launch an independent presidential campaign in '68. This decision by itself is far more important than the names of the candidates. Yet the candidates can make a big difference in the effectiveness of the campaign, especially given the propensity of the American people to vote for men rather than issues or to blur the two. The independent slate that has been most often suggested is a ticket of Martin Luther King and Benjamin Spock, reflecting the civil rights struggles and the peace movement. As will be clear to readers of the other article in this paper (see page 3), we ourselves would prefer that circumstances make possible a Negro candidate reflecting the militant spirit of the Black struggle and the aspirations of the Black ghettos. From this standpoint, King's drawback is the stand he took approving the use of troops to put down the ghetto uprisings and his not-yet-quite-clear divorce from liberal Establishment circles. As this is written in advance of the conference, we await with great interest the news and reactions of the Black delegates to the conference on this question,

without which no one can really feel in a position to decide. But we can say now, without any doubt, that if the New Politics movement calls on King to head a ticket, and if King does indeed make the fight (thereby cutting more ties to the old machines), everyone should support this ticket firmly and aggressively.

No Substitute

There is no substitute for an independent Presidential campaign in 1968. Running local candidates is not a substitute for a Presidential campaign because it does not do what a Presidential campaign would: namely, help to reverse the tendency for national debate to shift to the right; put forward the only kind of society-wide challenge to the power structure that can make the left into a real alternative in the eyes of the American people.

Restricting ourselves to local campaigns will be an extreme disservice to local movements, which are built, not on "local" issues alone but on the national issues with which local people are concerned. If we do not challenge the warmaker LBJ in '68 we will abdicate a position of leadership in local or national campaigns.

Nor is there a good (or new) argument against the independent Presidential slate. There will be, of course, the argument that the people of America "are not ready" to fight the Democratic Party, that we must "build our movement" first. But THE ONLY WAY TO BUILD OUR MOVEMENT TODAY IS TO TAKE ON THE DEMOCRATS AS AN INDEPENDENT OPPOSITION.

When Can We Begin?

How many times before have we heard that "the people are not ready" from those who are impressed by the disingenuous rhetoric of those radio commentators and old politicians (the ones who say, "you can't fight city hall"). And how many times have we learned that for something to happen, someone must begin it. Before the sitins began, Negroes were "not ready" to sitin. Before the anti-war marches began, Americans were "not ready" to march

against war.

Many people in the community are reluctant to break from the Democratic Party. But what reason can the New Politics movement have for existence if it does not challenge that feeling of submissiveness which is so much of a roadblock to freedom? The psychology that ordinary people are so weak that they must rely upon their oppressors - this psychology can be overcome only by the initiative of those who are prepared themselves to stand and fight, to say, as the New Politics movement has said, that "we can do it ourselves."

An independent Presidential campaign is but the first step towards the eventual new political party which is required if our aspirations are to be fulfilled. That in turn will be only one side of a movement which will struggle in many different ways and on many different levels to win the power which can end oppression.

"The System"

The twentieth century has been cruel to human beings. We march in the shadow of the massive industrial machine which we ourselves fashioned. We answer to the call of corrupt Texan politicians, slick corporative administrators, "benevolent" Communist bureaucrats - men who mishandle our lives with an arrogance which does not seem to befit their own facelessness. Somehow, we have become robots and the robots our masters.

Much of the time we only feel but do not understand the workings of the arbitrary machine which rules us. The "system", what we call the power structure, is everywhere. It is the easy authority of the cop on his beat, the glibness of educational experts and social planners, the bravado of four star generals. It is the cardboard morality we are taught in schools. And because we adjust to that "reality" which is forced upon us, it becomes part of ourselves.

We even talk its language - its words of respect for great institutions like the "two party system." It is so encompassing, this system, that we do not think of

it as a system but as an eternal condition that will always be with us, like an act of fate.

OPENING OUR EYES

But then, our eyes are opened. In the process of struggling against injustice, in the course of our demonstrations and sitins and the various ways in which we victims of American society have been slowly coming to life - we see that this system depends not upon the dictates of fate but on the brute force of its police force and napalm. And with this comes another understanding - that such a system can be fought and destroyed by the organized intervention of the people themselves, at those points of self-assertion which Marx called "festivals of the oppressed."

We know that this has happened overseas; in the victory of the Russian people over autocracy in 1917; in the resistance of East Europeans to Communism in 1956; in the triumphs of colonial peoples over Western imperialism since World War II.

We need only look at the events which have given rise to our own movement to realize how quickly the people can learn their own strength. Out of Birmingham and Watts and Lowndes County came the organizations of Black Power and the beginnings of mass activity in the ghetto. Thousands march against the war who yesterday felt only inchoate murmurings of dissent.

A Turning Point

Are there turning points in history, years when acts of boldness can help to change society's course? If so, then 1968 is such a year and we are convened in Chicago to summon up that courage. This is a time of enormous discontent with the fruits of oppression. We represent the movement which has grown by demonstrating that the most valuable weapon the people have is a consciousness of their own power. It is in our hands to create a new rallying point for that consciousness with a decisive program of independent political action against the major parties which stand for racism and war - an INDEPENDENT PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IN 1968.

Defend the Ghetto Uprisings --

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was involved and that 90% of the ghetto opposed the revolts they would not have hesitated to provide special aid to the residents of the burned-out areas, so that the "good Negroes" would not suffer. Instead, the immediate response of our liberal officials, such as Shriver and Humphrey and their sociologist hangers-on, was that there could be no such aid because that would seem like a reward for rioting. Now that the smoke has cleared, there is some talk of a "Marshall Plan" for the cities, but the main action being taken is to beef up the police and national guard forces. The entire ghetto is in fact being held responsible for the uprisings. In place of the phony war on poverty, we have seen a very real war on the ghetto, with every Black man a presumed enemy. If a building contained a suspected sniper, the police would riddle the entire building with bullets. In Detroit national guardsmen were given orders to shoot at fleeing suspects. "Guardsmen and policemen said they were 'shooting at anything that moves'". (SF Chron, 7/9) In Newark, state troopers and national guardsmen shot up the Black-owned stores left untouched by the rebels.

"LAW AND ORDER"

All of this is in the name of "Law and Order". It is not even for the purpose of restoring peace and quiet or protecting human lives. In Detroit, after police and guardsmen were driven out of a large area (the Chronicle reports) "the neighborhood quieted. Then authorities ordered a counterattack, led by a column of tanks and armored personnel carriers". As in other wars, the aim of the troops was not protection of a citizenry but military occupation and reestablishment of the white political authority in that area at whatever cost to its inhabitants.

The New Militance

The new militancy which has led to armed revolt under the banner of Black Power, has grown directly out of the experiences of the old civil rights movement, which succeeded in raising people's aspirations and expectations, but was unable to materially improve the conditions of their lives. In the course of the civil rights battles, Black militants recognized that the achievement of full equality and human dignity for Black people would not come with the attainment of legal equality. Major changes in the dominant economic and political institutions of American society were necessary to provide decent jobs, housing, schooling and the other basic necessities.

As the struggle against those institutions developed, the Black militants discovered the nature of white liberalism. While paying lip service to the notion of equality, white people demonstrated their real attitude toward Blacks by voting two-to-one against fair housing in California. The "war on poverty" turned out to be puny. In the local communities, most of the money went for administrators' salaries or to the dominant political machines. In a few places "poverty money" was received by

groups genuinely attempting to overcome the causes of poverty by organizing labor unions, political parties, rent strikes, etc. But complaints from local political and economic powers which thrive on the existence of low wages and poverty conditions were sufficient to get these funds withdrawn. As a result, in this period of prosperity, despite all the politicians' promises, the Black man in America is simultaneously experiencing a deterioration of living conditions and rising unemployment.

But if the white liberal "allies" of the Black struggle were unwilling or unable to challenge the



dominant American institutions responsible for poverty, slums and discrimination, these liberals were willing to make demands on the civil rights movement. They demanded that the civil rights movement subordinate its own struggle to the needs of the liberal Establishment. The story was repeated time and time again. Leading liberals demanded that the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party give up its challenge of the 1964 Democratic National Convention, so that party unity (with blatant racists) could be maintained. During the presidential campaign, liberals put pressure on the civil rights movement to declare a moratorium on demonstrations so as not to antagonize possible racist support for the Johnson consensus. Election after election, Black people voted for liberal candidates who gave lip service to the cause of civil rights. But because the Black vote was in the liberals' hip pocket, and because these candidates (including the Black politicians) were responsible not to the ghetto but to the powerful interests that control the Democratic Party, the needs of the movement were sacrificed or subordinated to the needs of maintaining social peace (i.e. the status quo).

As a result of these experiences, Black militants have understandably moved to control their own organizations, to develop their own power and base in the Black community so that they no longer must subordinate the needs of their community to the needs of liberalism. The failure of white society to deal effectively with the needs of the Black community was not a "backlash" reaction to Black Power. Just the reverse. Black Power has resulted from the abysmal failure of the liberals to hold up their end of the "alliance" which promised so much and delivered so little.

BLACK POWER

Although a new militancy has spread throughout the ghetto, it has not yet produced an organized Black movement and leadership. Most of the militant Black groups are organized primarily around the use of weapons. To a large extent they are oriented toward the futile and disastrous notion of

guerrilla warfare, wherein small bands of Blacks would commit acts of sabotage and terror from a sanctuary in the ghetto, rather than organizing a Black mass movement. Given the leadership vacuum, the recent uprisings were a spontaneous and disorganized attempt to do what an organized mass movement would have, in part, been doing -- interfering with the police and punishing the slum merchants and slumlords. The armed organizations, contrary to their plans for guerrilla warfare, found it necessary to engage in the armed defense of the spontaneous mass actions. Similarly, many Blacks who were previously unorganized found themselves a part of the defense of the ghetto. As a result, the potential for organization has increased.

SELF-SUFFICIENT?

Armed resistance to the police is necessary, but a strategy based mainly on guns cannot ultimately be successful. The urban ghettos are not equivalent to foreign colonies of white society (an analogy popular among Black radicals) either geographically, politically or economically. It is not possible to eliminate the white domination of the ghetto, and solve its economic problems, through purely military means. Even if the overwhelming numerical and technological superiority of the ruling Establishment could be overcome the fact remains that the ghettos are not economically self-sufficient, and the Black population is "integrated" into and completely dependent upon the overall national economy. That is what rules out a "separatist" solution, and makes it necessary for a serious Black movement to launch an attack on the political-economic structure of white society itself.

Reliance on a spontaneous and disorganized uprisings as a program can only result in the defeat of the ghetto. Not only are they less effective than an organized movement in the immediate struggle, but more importantly they are not capable of challenging the power structure of white society. That power structure has weaknesses, including the problem of controlling the exploited white population. An organized Black movement could wage vigorous "political warfare" to exacerbate the divisions in white society, thus weakening the enemy and leaving the door open to potential allies from among the dissatisfied whites. The uprisings are progressive in that they do help build the consciousness in the ghetto of the nature of the white Establishment and its institutions. The task is to build out of the spontaneous uprisings a ghetto organization that can lead the tens of thousands of people who have gone into action on their own initiative. Unfortunately, the ghetto is lacking in leadership. Most of the old civil rights leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King, have chosen the path of accommodation to liberalism. This has led them to betray the Black ghetto and to support, in the name of nonviolence, the use of federal troops against their own people. The failure of such leaders as H. Rapp Brown who have solidified themselves with the uprising, is that they are not providing effective leadership. They are acting as spokesmen, articulating the sentiments and consciousness of the ghetto. But in doing so, they are suggesting the blind alley strategy of reliance on spontaneous and disorganized activity, when they should be pointing the way toward the building of an organized mass movement.

The program of that movement must involve an uncompromising

struggle, on many fronts. While not subordinating the needs of the Black community, such a program must potentially attract whites who suffer under the same institutions that exploit the ghetto. This kind of program can be both realistic and revolutionary, unlike the call for a separate Black state (as proposed by many at the Newark Conference on Black Power). The Black Power program should demand full employment, rent subsidies, massive rebuilding of urban areas under local control and ghetto control over the police in the ghettos. Rather than attempting to solve the problem of white economic exploitation by calling for an exploitative Black capitalism, the program should be directed toward the destruction of all exploitative relationships including the slumlords and business profiteers.

Armed Defense ... And a Movement

Armed defense would be a crucial aspect of such a movement, for it would allow new and successful struggles within the ghetto. For example, in the past rent strikes have not usually been successful because the slumlords could rely on the judges and police to order and enforce evictions. A powerful Black movement could commit itself to defending rent strikes from the police in a variety of way, even possibly burning down buildings where the police were effective in forcing evictions. Armed defense as a program-in-itself can only lead to a dead end, but when it is a part of a mass movement it makes new victories for that movement and the ghetto possible.

Black militants must also recognize the level of consciousness in the Black community as a whole. While to day most of the ghetto at least passively supports the revolts, to morrow they may vote en masse for a "lesser evil" Democratic Party politician who is not responsible to the ghetto. It is easier to recognize the immediate enemies who are the police and local merchants, than to recognize and respond effectively to the enemy which is an entire social system with its sophisticated institutions. Without a movement providing leadership and a program of action, the uprisings may simply result in the demoralization of the people who supported them out of an elemental sense of Black solidarity and outrage. After the uprisings are put down by the troops, ghetto residents who have to live in a devastated and burned-out area are likely to experience a return to the apathy and sense of futility which for so long has shrouded their lives, and prevented mass action. They may then come to agree with the liberal Black leaders that the way forward is not through militant struggle, but by accommodation to white liberalism. This is a likely outcome if the small Black militant organizations attempt to substitute themselves for a mass movement, as suggested by their guerrilla warfare strategy. They must address themselves to the Black masses, to destroy the traditional sense of futility by offering a positive program for building a mass-based movement through which the people can force a change in the conditions of their lives.

The Democratic Party

Besides the waging of organized struggles within the ghettos, one of the first steps in the building of the necessary political movement is the recognition that the Democratic Party is not the party of Black people and that independent political organization is needed. It

would be a step forward for the ghetto to move from supporting the Democratic Party to having its own political organization. Such an organization could tie together direct action and electoral action, disrupting the stability of American consensus politics. Electoral action would be a part of the mobilization of the entire Black population, and would also make possible the beginnings of joint action with those elements of the white community, such as the anti-war movement, who are struggling against the Establishment. In 1968, a "Peace and Freedom" presidential campaign based on these elements would be the beginning of a fundamental political attack on the power structure itself. These activities are not going to be organized by the Black politicians. In fact, quite a number of Black politicians have been using the Black Power slogan demagogically to advance their political careers, channeling oppositional sentiment back into the Democratic Party.

Responsibility lies heavily upon the Black militants, who must organize people less radical than themselves. If a movement is organized, the Black revolutionaries will function as its left wing, pressing for still greater consciousness of what needs to be done and who the enemies are. The leadership and program of such a movement will be limited only by the political consciousness of the rank-and-file. The advancement of this consciousness will be the continuing task of the left wing.

The Black movement today can expect little help from most of white America, nor should they compromise their struggles in an effort to win white liberal "allies". The precondition for a worthwhile Black-white alliance must be the emergence of a strong white movement fighting for its own demands against the "white power structure". Such a movement would be impelled toward abandoning its racism out of sheer necessity, in order to forge an alliance with exploited Black people based on mutual strength and mutual need. This is what happened in the great CIO organizing drives of the 1930's when white unions had to admit tens of thousands of Blacks as members and co-fighters; the belief in White Supremacy was stronger then it is today, yet the fruits of that alliance-based-on-necessity far exceeded the miserable handouts now being offered by liberal politicians. If the current labor struggles increase in intensity, it will be possible for Black Power and a militant white movement to join forces against the Police Power of the corporate capitalist state. The task of white radicals is to help build this developing white opposition.

There are the beginnings of a white oppositional movement in America today, against the war in Vietnam. At the present time this movement still retains illusions about ending the war by working within the Establishment and its institutions. Such a movement must be strengthened so that its opposition to the war translates into a complete break from and effective confrontation with the Establishment which is conducting the war. Only then can the anti-war movement be a legitimate ally of the Black struggle.

There are today significant numbers of white militants, particularly among the students, who support the ghetto struggle even now that it has come to armed rebellion. We must make ourselves heard. We have a responsibility to publicly defend the Black Power movement and the revolts at a time when every liberal spokesman is attacking them. For the sake of the kind of future movement that we hope to build, for the sake of future alliances that can overturn the old society and create a new one, we must put ourselves in solidarity with the freedom fighters of the ghettos.

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