United Front Against War & Racism

STRATEGY FOR RESISTANCE

By the Editorial Board of LINE OF MARCH

Once again the drums of war are sounding. Once again the mad cry of an earlier time—"The Russians Are Coming! The Russians Are Coming!"—is somberly proclaimed in order to justify and make palpable massive reductions in social welfare and huge increases in military expenditures.

Once again the Ku Klux Klan has donned its racist nightshirts, its promotion of racist violence only the most visible expression of a more generalized racist attack on minority peoples.

The election of 1980 has brought a rightwing demagogue into the White House. He, in turn, has given a green light to the axe-wielders of monopoly capital, whose zeal in slashing funds is matched only by their enthusiasm for the welfare of corporate profits. Not at all incidentally, the program of social austerity unfolded by the new administration will most severely impact minority communities.

And as if all this were not cause enough for alarm, an organized rightwing tendency bearing within itself the seeds of fascism has emerged as a new and powerful force in U.S. political life.

Under these circumstances, a broad range of left and progressive forces has called for a unified response and resistance. The call for political unity against felt oppression is not a new one, but clearly it assumes a particular urgency today as the true dimensions of a broad imperialist offensive internationally and at home have emerged with sobering clarity.

And yet, unity among the forces calling for it seems to remain as elusive as ever. What is the reason for this impasse?

Is it, as some argue, principally a problem of sectarianism—of a doctrinaire leftist that refuses to unite on any but its own narrow terms? There are such tendencies, of course, but we do not believe that this is the principal difficulty. For even when honestly intended efforts at unity have been advanced in the past, more often than not they have been frustrated.

The key to this process is understanding that unity is fundamentally a political, not an ideological question. That is, it is not primarily a matter of willingness or unwillingness to unite, but of finding the proper basis for unity. The reason for this is etched in historical experience. Unity which is not based on a firm political foundation is inherently unstable.

What constitutes a firm political foundation for unity? All too often this question is answered by compiling a list of the various political issues around which left and progressive groups are organized, and then determining on which of those issues there is political agreement. Such a seemingly "sensible" approach, however, has never succeeded in forging the kind of political unity required to blunt or defeat the concerted effort of a powerful political foe.

For it is not the subjective wishes of the various political forces which provide a basis for unity. What is required is a common assessment of the objective conditions being addressed, including the strategy being advanced by the common enemy, the U.S. imperialist system.

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An essential aspect of such an assessment is to identify those questions which constitute the cutting edge of the confrontation between the opposing forces. Needless to say, we do not think that organization of a popular resistance must wait upon full resolution of this question. We need action, and we need also a strategic assessment of our task. Indeed, the very process of struggle will undoubtedly clarify many of the theoretical questions at issue.

On the other hand, if the struggle for unity is confined to forging fragile and momentary coalitions around one or another demonstration or isolated individual issue, a genuine opposition will never be built. Not only will the unity be unreliable; the movement surrounding it will be characterized by political intrigue and vague moralism.

We also have to guard against a counter-productive impatience in trying to forge unity. For hastily organized coalitions all too often are built on political quicksand. A frank understanding of ideological differences and serious attempt to arrive at a common political assessment will not be achieved overnight. On a spontaneous level, a considerable measure of unity in action may well be achieved in response to immediate questions. Such unity is, to be sure, desirable, but it really should be only the beginning, not the end, of our efforts.

The key to forging a stable political unity, in our view, is to unite those forces who already understand that the causes of the felt injustices, the plans for aggression, the danger of fascism, stem from the very nature of the capitalist system itself. Even among such forces there will still exist a wide array of ideological differences. But if a core of anti-capitalist tendencies and groupings can arrive at a common understanding of the urgencies of the present period, their common efforts can establish a unity stable enough and firm enough to lead the rising spontaneous resistance and make it a powerful force of opposition to the plans of monopoly capital.

To those who can and must constitute the core of the people's resistance we offer a concrete political analysis of the present period and a strategic concept for unity left and progressive forces to build an unified mass response.

Political Assessment

To begin, let us lay out in a fairly concentrated manner the main points of our political assessment.

The present period is characterized principally by the fact that U.S. imperialism, after a period of retreat and vacillation, has gone over the offensive. This offensive is international. It is the concrete political expression of the fundamental contradiction of our epoch between imperialism and the world's people—including the people of the U.S.

The driving force behind the imperialist offensive is U.S. finance capital, which has assumed the burden of...
The entire world was affected by the geopolitical tension caused by the Vietnam War. The United States' intervention in Vietnam, known as the Vietnam War, led to the loss of nearly 60,000 American lives and cost the country billions of dollars. The war also had a significant impact on the Vietnamese people, as well as on other countries in Southeast Asia. The war ended in 1975, with the fall of Saigon, and the United States' withdrawal from Vietnam. However, the effects of the war continued to be felt for many years afterward, both in Vietnam and in the United States. The Vietnam War was a turning point in American history, and it had a profound impact on the political and economic landscape of the world.}

The Imperialist Offensive

The Imperialist Offensive

How Did We Get Here?

U.S. imperialism is not today more reactionary than it has been for the past thirty years. Its history of genocidal warfare in Korea to Vietnam, its status as a chief exploiter of peoples and nations throughout the world, and its domination of dictatorial and repressive regimes, has not been qualitatively altered in recent years. U.S. imperialism plans, and needs the personnel of a “progressive” or “liberal” or conservative Republican in the White House. This is a change—and obviously there is one—has been in the adoption of a more aggressive policy than has been the case for more than a decade, or ever since the U.S. war against China began to escalate... From 1968, when the U.S. government decided that the Vietnam war could not be won, to 1976, when the U.S. government voluntarily decided to cease effectively as an “empire,” U.S. imperialism has been in retreat. That retreat was imposed in the first place by the liberation warfare of the Vietnamese people, and secondarily by the mass popular resistance at home.

The military buildup in Vietnam was accompanied by (induced to) that unprecedented political disaster known as Watergate. As a result of this scandal, the authority of the U.S. state apparatus sank to one of the lowest points in its history. Under such circumstances, it was extremely difficult for U.S. imperialism to act decisively in defense of its own interests.

Nowhere was this more graphically demonstrated than when, in 1975, Angola—aided by Cuba and backed by the Soviet Union—defeated the South Africans and U.S.-backed counter-revolutionary forces who were attempting to扼制 the national liberation struggle. At this point, the leading strategists for U.S. imperialism began to sound the alarm.

The issue, of course, was not just Angola. From the imperialist point of view, there was a revolutionary contigence loose in the world. In Southeast Asia it had rendered a humiliating defeat on the world’s foremost military power. In Southern Africa it was mobilizing tens of millions to throw off the yoke of oppression and wrench themselves out of the imperialist system. In the Caribbean and Central America, inspired by the success and achievements of the Cuban revolution, it
defied the imperialist behemoth “in its own backyard.” In the Middle East, revolution erupted with dramatic force in the oil fields of Iran and the streets of Iraq. Today, at every turn, the imperialist system confronts an angry and determined world.

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Objectively aligned with this anti-imperialist tide are the majority of the world’s socialists. Military and political support from the Soviet Union, Cuba, Vietnam, and the countries of Eastern Europe have been of crucial importance to the successes of the anti-imperialist struggle. As a result, Ronald Reagan would have us believe that the struggle against imperialism is nothing but a Moscow-bred conspiracy, an international cabal of terrorism directed and orchestrated by the Kremlin and operating directly out of Havana and Hanoi.

Such are the convenient myths of the imperialists who would have us believe that the oppressed peoples of the world, from Angola to Palestine and the Philippines, would have no reason for revolution were it not for the manipulations of Moscow. The recently heightened imperialist war games are rooted in the very conditions which imperialism itself has brought into being through its international system of exploitation and oppression.

Of course, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have an objective stake in the success of these revolutionary struggles. Indeed, the triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution more than 60 years ago was itself the first major defeat for imperialism, a defeat whose implications in the non-imperialist world are still with us. Where once the Soviet Union stood alone in the world as an outpost of a new social order on the rise, today the revolutionary impulse is a material force all over the world; and even though the Soviet Union itself is not consistently in the vanguard of that revolutionary struggle, it remains nevertheless an objective and substantial part of the broad international anti-imperialist front, as a result of which it has become a particular target of the imperialist offensive.

And so the cry has gone up: Put Vietnam and Watergate behind us! To U.S. imperialism, healing the wounds of war means paving the way for renewed intervention elsewhere in the world. Thus began the period, 1976-1980, of the transition from retreat to counter-attack. Jimmy Carter presided over this period, launching it with a massive ideological campaign against the myth of “anti-communism.” The purpose of this campaign was to create a new atmosphere in the country—on which the United States is more support of U.S. military activity in the world.

Carter offered the way for the turn to an offensive by a number of devices—particularly the “human rights” campaign; scapegoating his campaign pledge to reduce military spending and increase its use for international development; the “White House traders” in Central America whose anti-Sovietism has led it increasingly into alliance with imperialism; the Camp David agreement, which in effect normalized the “peace” in the Middle East; the Arab world and reinforced Zionism in the Middle East; the ideological crusades against Vietnam and Cuba; and much more. Meanwhile, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe served to underscore the urgency with which the transition was being effected.

Finally, early 1980, Soviet intervention in Afghanistan provided Carter the pretext actually to launch a counter-attack. A whole series of measures—reinstatement of draft registration, repeal of restrictions on the CIA, further military expendi
tures, financing of the “civil war” in El Salvador, sending of the “government” and the “military” to Nicaragua. The opponent was shrunken, the foreign policy had been degraded to a point where the troops of the United States are working.”

By the time of the 1980 elections, it was clear that Carter had accomplished as much as U.S. monopoly capitalism could accomplish. The result was the “government” and the “military” to Nicaragua. The opponent was shrunken, the foreign policy had been degraded to a point where the troops of the United States are working.”

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Reagan: The New Era

Reagan’s strategy is to launch the imperialist offensive with a vigor that has won him the reserved plaudits of finance capital. Paving the way is U.S. imperialism for war, he has sent out a message that the U.S. has drawn the line and will once again take all military measures it deems necessary to prevent the overthrow of puppet and loyalist regimes throughout the world, even if such steps lead it into dangerous military confrontation with the Soviet Union.

Secretary of State Alexander Haig, doing his part, declares that there are worse eventualities than nuclear war. Technically speaking, a war with the Soviet Union in which the U.S. claims a “victory” would mean that capitalism has proclaimed that such a war on a global scale is inevitable unless the Soviet Union abandons its social system. It would be followed by the killing of the U.S. economy and an inevitable price for such provocations, to recall what happened to the last such attempt to bring the Soviet Union to its knees. The United States is a bankrupt, and left an indestructible imprint on the world’s memory.

Today, the testing ground is El Salvador. Tomorrow it may be Nicaragua or Iran or southern Africa—or wherever an oppressed people rises up to reclaim its country and its destiny from the domination of imperialism.

Nevertheless, Reagan speaks openly of offering arms to counter-revolutionaries, and simultaneously signalling that the fascist regime in South Africa is a bulwark of anti-communism and that the pivotal defeat of the South African government by an alliance of Poland, Cuba, Angola, and elsewhere, is a renewed spirit of confrontation and militarity in the Washington administration. In this way, he is attempting to blur the lines between the two threats in Reagan’s plan to escalate the already swollen military budget from a total of $171 billion for 1981 to $365 billion by 1986.

In this respect, it appears that it has fallen to El Salvador to be the signal U.S. imperialism wants to
communicate to the world. Military "advisors" al-
ready have been dispatched to support the unpopular
and oppressive regime in that country, while the U.S.
uses its economic and political influence to support
overly reactionary right-wing terrorists. The pretext:
The revolution in El Salvador is part of a Soviet-Cuban
plot to spread "socialism." Today the testing ground is
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But the country and its destiny from the domination of imperialism. In effect, the escalating U.S. military
intervention is aimed at imposing the untested Truman Doctrine style "counter-measures" to a manner similar to that imposed against Nicaragua, Cuba and the Soviet Union are designed to notify the world that the number one counter-measure is to toughen the military action—no longer with one hand tied behind its back.
But the world of the 1980's is different from that of the 1970's. Most of the countries that have demon-
strated the vulnerability of imperialism. Today the Soviet Union has a rough military parity with the U.S. and even a slight cutting edge. It is already clear that the military balance is not going to make the U.S. capital in its strategies of political and social brutality. Its strategy is a wide-ranging attack on the working class, the brunt of which is directed at its minority sectors.

What is the reason for this racist game-plan? As it has done historically, U.S. capitalism is once again attempting to forge a "white" ideological consensus— a not-so-secret majority— in support of its political hegemony and social brutality. Its strategy for achieving this consensus is through a wide-ranging ideological and political attack on the working class, the brunt of which is directed at its minority sectors.

The threat to a "socialist" democracy in the U.S. is vastly greater. The deaths of people who have been killed as a result of racist and anti-black attacks in the last year have been staggering. The government's response has been to ignore these attacks, further eroding the black community's faith in the system. The government's response has been to ignore these attacks, further eroding the black community's faith in the system. The government's response has been to ignore these attacks, further eroding the black community's faith in the system.

The Rise of the Right

A key element in imperialism's new offensive has been the emergence of an organized racist political force in U.S. life, operating today at a new level of organization, power and influence. These tendencies have been on the scene for more than a hundred years, the current phenomenon is much more serious. Some 85 percent of the present-day conservative organizations which make up the backbone of the country is called the "new right" by the media. This political force is the ideological font for jingoism, national chauvinism, anti-communism, legitimization of racism and support for the reactionary forces that control the women's movement, and an attack on the rights of gays and lesbians.

The function of this revived right-wing tendency has been to prepare the ideological climate for the im-
perialist offensive and to develop a political base in support of it. On both counts it registered significant successes, so much so that the whole financial capital eventually accepted its principal political ideological as their own political representative in the White House. This resurgent right-wing tendency is present in the form of a full-blown fascist movement in the U.S. While not yet focused in a single political party or

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MORE THAN 30,000 COPIES.

of this political statement have been printed and distributed to left and progressive forces throughout the U.S. and around the world.

The Editorial Board of Line of March has advanced the funds for printing this statement because of the importance we attach to it. In addition, we hope to print many more copies of this for further distribution.

If you believe that this struggle to defend and advance our rights is a scale of useful contribution to helping forge a united resistance to the imperialist offensive—whether you agree with all of these points or not—please consider:

1. Help us to cover the cost of this undertaking. Any amount, $20, $10, $5— even one dollar —will help make further printings possible.
2. Order additional copies of this statement for distribution to friends, associates and fellow workers. (Please enclose a contribution to cover printing and mailing costs.)

In addition, the Editorial Board of Line of March is willing to sponsor discussions or other meetings on this subject in cities in which we have representatives, we will be happy to arrange to have a discussion. For others, we can supply study materials.

I would like to contribute $ to help pay for the printing of this statement.

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City/State/Zip

The Reagan budget demonstrates the point. What has been the result of the major programs, the AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) program, CETA (Comprehensive Employment Training Act), Medicare, or the new welfare laws? The answer is clear: an across-the-board attack on the entire class would have extremely negative political consequences for minorities. It is the class struggle, not the "white" consensus, that has been the driving force. Minority workers are all too keenly aware. Therefore this program of social brutality takes into account the stratification of the working class.

For the working class certainly is not a simple, undifferentiated class. It includes both employed and unemployed, skilled and unskilled, union and non-
union, and on the one hand, its "white" consciousness along the color line, making minority workers the least protected sector of the working class. It is this sector which is the principal target of Reagan's program of social au-
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tority.
organization, the resurgent right already is performing the classic fascist function of attempting to disrupt the domestic political arena, frustrated by the rising political and economic instability of the Soviet order, might otherwise turn their anger against the power of monopoly capital. This applies to the right-wing parties, the military and the most protected sectors of the working class, who themselves feel the impact of the rising center of the imperialist system. The New Right encourages them to cling to the illusion that the source of their problems is not with capital but with "so-called fundamentalist" national liberation movements, "welfare cheats," "coordinated minorities," "upstart women," and "degenerate homosexuals."

perialist policies of war and social austerity. With the threat of the general assault on the working class from abroad, the trend of capital is being conditioned—both ideologically and material—toward an increasing capital war against the working class and the broadest sectors of the working class, who themselves feel the impact of the rising center of the imperialist system, the New Right encourages them to cling to the illusion that the source of their problems is not with capital but with "so-called fundamentalist" national liberation movements, "welfare cheats," "coordinated minorities," "upstart women," and "degenerate homosexuals."

The marked political successes of the New Right must be measured not just against the immediate support provided for the imperialist offensive, the growth of the right means that fascism in the U.S. is in the process of developing and expanding on a mass political and social base which, at the appropriate juncture, can become a political force ready to assume power on behalf of the imperialist system itself. Already the intersection between this developing fascist tendency and the policy turns by finance capital signify a ripening of this potential. The closer alliance between the dominant sectors of finance capital (sometimes called the "Eastern Establishment") and the New Right is an important new feature of the present period. In 1964, finance capital "voted" the political representative of the right, Barry Goldwater. That was the significance of Nelson Rockefeller's boycott and sabotage of the Goldwater candidacy. As late as 1976, finance capital made it clear that it still preferred the "moderate" Gerald Ford to the right-wing ideologue Ronald Reagan. But in 1980, as the Wall Street Journal so aptly put it, finance capital was "learning to love Ronald." By the time Reagan fulfilled his imperialist offensive, finance capital was absolutely ecstatic over him. While the principal aspect of this late-blooming romance is clearly Reagan's accommodation to finance capital, it also signifies that a naked alliance between finance capital and the right-wing parties is entering the ideological advance guard of fascism closer to realization than was previously the case.

What does all this add up to?

1. U.S. imperialism has turned to a more aggressive policy of war and counter-revolution. The principal aim of U.S. policy is defense of the U.S. in a strategic global interests and investments and, where possible, reclaiming "lost" areas.

2. U.S. imperialism now has a clear policy of confronting and countering the ideological and physical goals of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union over the past two years has been designed to create a climate for bolder policies. The speeding up of the military and industrial mobilization to a war footing, the people of the U.S. for the necessity for counter-revolutionary activities, largely on the strength of the so-called "Soviet threat."

3. The necessary domestic counterpart to this policy is a program of racially and racially-organized political and social liberation programs. The immediate focus of this policy is the rapidly escalating scale for military intervention in El Salvador. Prevent this, the people of the U.S. of the necessity for such counter-revolutionary activities, largely on the strength of the so-called "Soviet threat."

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LINE OF MARCH is a Marxist-Leninist journal which has been publishing regularly on a bi-monthly basis since May 1980. The present essay is a condensed version of a much longer article which appears in the March/April 1981 issue of Line of March (Vol. 1, No. 5).

In addition to publishing a journal, the editorial board of Line of March functions as a political center whose aim is to create a Marxist political line within the U.S. with a genuine revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party. To this end, a number of organizations and networks for education activists in the basics of Marxism-Leninism and organizing activity in the labor, anti-imperialist and national liberation movement. Members of the editorial board of Line of March are: Bruce Occeca and Irwin Silber (co-editors); Daniel Borgason, Max Elbaum, Linda Burnham, Melinda Parsons, Bob Williams.

Individual copies of Line of March, including the issue containing the complete text of the articles on which the present statement is based, are available for $2.50 each. A one-year subscription to Line of March is $12.00. Line of March is published by the National Center, 30 bathtub, 20th anniversary pamphlets which take up in greater depth many of the theoretical and political questions advanced in the present article.

Orders, inquiries and requests for a free listing of publications may be addressed to: Line of March, P.O. Box 2729, Oakland, CA 94602.