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**American Politics and the
1968 Presidential Campaign**

The Case For an Independent Black Political Party

**Reports on the
American Antiwar Movement
and the
International Situation**

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REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS

Socialist Workers Party

22nd National Convention

The material in this issue of *International Socialist Review* consists of the major resolutions adopted by the Twenty-second National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party together with several of the reports made to the convention held in New York the latter part of October 1967.

Drafts of the resolutions were submitted for discussion to the SWP membership three months prior to the convention date in line with the provisions of the party constitution governing pre-convention debate and discussion. Only minor editorial revisions of the draft resolutions were made to reflect such changes as were proposed and accepted in the course of convention discussion on the documents.

Important conjunctural developments occurring subsequent to the October 1967 SWP convention were not incorporated in the text of the resolutions and reports published in this issue.

In addition to working out a political line for the period ahead the convention nominated a slate of candidates to represent the Socialist Workers Party in the 1968 presidential election.

For the office of President the convention nominated Fred Halstead, a longtime member of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and a leader of the New York antiwar movement.

For the office of Vice President the convention chose Paul Boutelle, former chairman of the Harlem Freedom Now Party and founding chairman of the Afro-Americans Against the War in Vietnam.

This will be the sixth presidential campaign in which the SWP has run candidates on a national scale beginning in the year 1948.

Joseph Hansen

REPORT on the INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

The political axis of our deliberations at the last convention was the war in Vietnam. We analyzed the meaning of Johnson's escalation of the U.S. military aggression in Southeast Asia and considered the challenge it represented to the camp of the workers states, to the colonial revolution and to humanity as a whole. We noted in particular the significance of the swift rise of opposition inside the United States to the war in Vietnam. And we projected the course of action our party might best pursue in helping to mobilize this antiwar sentiment, to direct it along the most effective channels, and to link it up with the worldwide surge of hostility to Johnson's course.

Since our last convention, the situation in Vietnam has not improved. The United States has become more deeply enmeshed in the conflict and the dangers have grown. The war in Vietnam remains the principal issue, the key political question not only for us but for all parties and tendencies both domestically and internationally. It remains preeminent in determining our tasks.

The primary image which the party must continue to maintain is the one sustained so well since the very beginning of the escalation of the war in Vietnam—the party of intransigent opposition to the war.

The continual deterioration of the international situation; that is, the drift ever closer to the brink of a nuclear catastrophe is the problem that is of gravest concern to us as it is to every thinking person in the world today.

To have any genuine hope of solving this problem we must first seek to understand its roots. And to gain that understanding we must turn to the development of the war itself and examine it in the light of Marxist theory.

The results of such an analysis can be arranged under three broad headings which I will list at this point for the sake of convenience:

(1) The development of the war has brought into prominent relief certain broad conclusions about our epoch to which the Trotskyist movement has long called attention. These concern primarily the role of U. S. imperialism in the world today.

(2) The development of the war has shed fresh light on various important international questions that had hitherto remained obscure to many people, including astute and Marxist-minded observers. The reference here is primarily to the nature of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies.

(3) The development of the war has begun to induce shifts in the political sphere of considerable importance. We have been able to see the beginnings of this at first hand in the United States; but it is also occurring in other countries. The most important of these at the moment are openings in the Latin-American revolution of great significance for our movement on an international scale.

U. S. Imperialism

The single most striking feature on the world scene today is the dynamic role being played by U.S. imperialism. There is nothing new about this; for Trotsky stressed it repeatedly in the last two decades of his life. What has happened is that this role has become glaringly apparent.

The basic cause of the war in Vietnam and its mounting threat to humanity lies in the expansive drive of U. S. imperialism.

The proofs are scarcely debatable. It is U. S. armies that have invaded Southeast Asia; it is U. S. bombs that are being dumped on the Vietnamese people; it is Washington that has steadily escalated its targets until U. S. planes are now carrying out forays within a few seconds flying time of the Chinese border. It is top administration figures who try to justify this with appeals to the "vital national interests" of the United States; that is, the vital interests of the capitalist ruling class which they represent.

Much water has gone under the bridge since the days when the rulers of the dollar empire considered it advisable to utilize camouflage like Roosevelt's so-called "good neighbor" policy. In Latin America today, the alleged right of the U. S. government to intervene in the internal affairs of any country at any time American interests appear to be threatened is openly proclaimed. The House of Representatives even went so far as to try to enact legislation to that effect. And in substance, of course, the State Department proceeds exactly as if it were running an old-fashioned empire where diplomatic messages are delivered by gunboat, as was well illustrated in the case of the Dominican Republic. The Cubans are, if anything, engaging in understatement when they call the Organization of American

States the U. S. Department of Colonial Affairs.

The shift toward unilateral, open and brazen deployment of American military might, along with the as yet tentative attempt to justify this by asserting the "vital national interests" of the imperialist United States as the supreme law on this planet is an important new fact in international politics.

What it represents is a new eruption of the volcano of American imperialism.

To correctly grasp what has been happening, it is necessary to view this development in its broad historic context. A few indications of this will suffice as reminders.

U. S. imperialism is a comparative latecomer on the world scene. Despite its previous record in Latin America, it was only at the turn of the century that the United States could properly be said to have reached the imperialist level—the Spanish-American war offers a convenient peg to mark the point of qualitative change.

At the opening of World War I, the United States was still a secondary power, emerging the winner in that interimperialist conflict by serving as quartermaster for the Allies and coming in when the rival camps had exhausted each other and it was possible to seize the spoils of victory at relatively low cost in American casualties.

The preeminence of U. S. imperialism was established before the outbreak of World War II, but the Axis powers gambled on overcoming the odds. They badly underestimated the power of the U. S., not to mention the defensive capacity of the Soviet Union. The European imperialist centers ruined themselves in World War II and assured the triumph of their western competitor.

Today not one of the other capitalist powers permits itself to indulge even in fantasies about challenging the U. S. Instead all of them vie in kowtowing to the master of the capitalist world; and it is difficult to determine which is the most servile, although it is hard to outdo the British rulers and their Harold Wilson in this. Even de Gaulle is cautious in his sniping at Washington's policies, emphasizing that in any showdown his loyalty can be counted on, as if any such proclamation were really necessary from the fifth- or sixth-rate power he represents.

Like France, the other capitalist powers are basically completely dependent on the U. S. and all of them know this to perfection. It is the bedrock of their foreign policies. Germany and Japan are still in the position of occupied countries, while the others are in virtual receivership to the Manhattan bankers.

In face of the power of U. S. imperialism, interimperialist rivalries no longer play the role they once did. Rivalries still exist, they still offer small points of leverage for the workers states, or for some of the colonial bourgeoisie, but the rivalries play only a marginal role; and no one visualizes that they could develop to such a degree as to end in an interimperialist war, especially a war with the U. S.

American foreign policy, as it is practiced, stands in the most glaring

contrast to the democratic slogans that were advanced in the past, particularly in the demagoguery of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In the postwar years, the propagandists of American imperialism continued to inveigh against imperialism in general; and, when necessary or convenient, they pointed an accusing finger at the old imperialist powers—particularly France, Belgium, the Netherlands. And it is true that Washington did favor the national bourgeoisie in some countries in their struggle for political independence from the old imperialist centers. This was rather striking in such instances as Indonesia where the Dutch sought to stage a comeback, and in the Suez Crisis in 1956, when Washington even restrained the French, British and Israelis and compelled them to draw back from their aggression against Egypt.

But this anti-imperialist stance was only one of the aspects of the process of dislodging the old imperialist powers in the colonial world and substituting for their rule the rule of U. S. imperialism.

The process of displacing the British, the French, the Dutch and the Belgians from their areas of domination and spheres of influence was not without its dangers in view of the upsurge of the colonial revolution, with its inherent tendency to pass over into a socialist revolution. And in meeting the revolutionary threat, U. S. imperialism, of course, made common cause with the other capitalist powers.

Nevertheless the outline is becoming more and more unmistakable—as the old colonial empires disintegrate, primarily under the blows of the struggle for national freedom, Washington's policy is to move in with its own proconsuls, its own agents, its own colonial military forces, its own troops from the United States.

The case of Vietnam is extraordinarily striking in this respect. In the first stages of the freedom struggle in that land, following World War II, the State Department and the Pentagon backed the French, facilitated the return of their colonial troops, and provided financial support for the French attempt at a comeback. When this joint effort was partially defeated in 1954 at Dienbienphu, the Pentagon urged immediate escalation of the involvement of the U. S.

This advice was rejected by the top policy makers—for one thing it was premature. The U. S. did not enter the field in order to restore the French empire, but in order to advance the American empire. Time was required to permit the French involvement to fade in the public mind, particularly the minds of the American people, and to give a semblance of plausibility to propaganda about sending in American troops in response to an "invitation" from an "independent" country—South Vietnam.

Thus, in the flood of propaganda pouring out of Washington today, not a word appears about the role of French imperialism and the struggle of the Vietnamese to free themselves from their colonial status under the French flag. The puppet regime in Saigon is pictured as an "independent" government and the massive intrusion of U. S.

imperialism into Southeast Asia is painted up as "aid" for that government in face of an "assault" by an "aggressive" neighbor. The truth is that Washington is attempting to convert Vietnam into a replica of the Philippines or of Puerto Rico.

It is necessary to be very clear about what is happening. Much more is involved than a mere tactical adjustment of U. S. imperialism to the pressure of the colonial revolution. The aggressive policy of the State Department in openly intervening in the internal affairs of other countries and the Pentagon's efforts to improve its counter-guerrilla tactics represent something much deeper than a shift in tactics. These are but surface manifestations of forces at work in the main structure of world capitalism, the heart of which is located in the United States.

The capitalist system is expanding due to its own inherent drives, which were long ago explored and elucidated by the Marxist movement. This expansionist tendency, occurring today under the flag of U. S. imperialism, with the other capitalist powers reduced to not much more than the status of junior partners or satellites, or "client" countries is of an especially malignant nature. The expansion is occurring in the stage of the death agony of this economic system; and it is occurring in face of a deep-running and irreversible tendency among the nations of the earth to move in the direction of socialism.

Thus American imperialism confronts the world with a contradiction hitherto unknown in history in scale and depth. On the one hand, U. S. imperialism is undertaking the most aggressive actions, utilizing the most violent methods, including military invasions and wars in which firepower is brought to bear on a level as high as that of World War II, and maintaining dozens of the foulest dictatorships the world has ever seen—all this under a deliberate and calculated policy of repressing the aspirations of the majority of mankind for a decent standard of living. And on the other hand, U. S. imperialism fosters those aspirations by displaying its own national wealth and well-being.

Furthermore, it exacerbates everything by assuring an ever-widening gap between the level of income in the underdeveloped countries and the imperialist centers. Then it chokes off democracy, sets up and maintains dictatorial regimes, and teaches the peoples through daily practice that they have no hope of emancipation except to rise up against the foreign imperialist oppression and its native agents. Finally, it transports great masses of modern weapons into those countries under the illusion that these instruments can keep the workers and peasants at bay.

In the final analysis, it is obvious, U. S. imperialism will lose out. The fundamental relationship of forces between imperialism on the one hand and on the other hand the workers states, the colonial revolution and the proletariat and their allies in the advanced countries is such that the capitalist rulers, no matter how aggressive they

are, no matter how persistently they seek to maintain the initiative, are bound to end up in a major catastrophe.

But it would be a great mistake for revolutionary socialists to think that this can have only a beneficent outcome. On the contrary, in view of the development of technology, particularly in the nuclear field, the catastrophe brought on by the capitalist rulers, instead of just signifying suicide for themselves, can mean doom for all of mankind.

It must be emphasized that the reduction of the importance of inter-imperialist rivalries, as compared with the period of World War I and World War II, has not lessened the tendency of imperialism to bring its internal contradictions to a head in war. On the contrary, it has, if anything, heightened that tendency while giving it some new twists.

First of all, it has given American imperialism a freer hand in its drive toward organizing the entire planet under its own rule. This was, of course, quite obvious when European capitalism lay prostrate and had to be rescued and put back on its feet by the American bosses. It holds even truer today, for while the European powers were being given blood transfusions, the U.S. was advancing to new levels of strength. The arrogance of the Americans today is a measure of the economic and military heights from which they look down at their "clients." The unfortunate "clients" or allies are dragged along toward war in accordance with the roles assigned them by the strategists in the State Department and the Pentagon.

Secondly, the altered world situation as compared with the decades preceding World War I and World War II has brought about a considerable shift in the character of the wars of today.

World War I, if we leave out the period of intervention against the Bolshevik Revolution, was an inter-imperialist conflict. World War II included an inter-imperialist conflict between the Allies and the Axis; a war between imperialism and a workers' state, involving the Axis and the Soviet Union; and, on top of this, an admixture of national independence struggles such as the war between Japan and China. A final complication was revolutionary guerrilla movements as in Yugoslavia, in Greece and in China.

The war period we are now in, which has been characterized by some figures like U Thant as possibly representing the opening stages of World War III, has shifted still further so that the world capitalist system as a whole has been lined up under American leadership on one side while on the other side appear revolutionary forces ranging from those seeking national freedom to those consciously representing revolutionary socialism.

The success of U.S. imperialism in reducing the relative weight of inter-imperialist rivalries in the world scene, of enlisting the other capitalist powers to go along with the strategy of the State Department and the Pentagon, constitutes a considerable source of strength for Washington. A still greater source of strength, however, is the

disarray and weakness displayed by the forces against which U. S. imperialism is aiming its blows.

Reaction of Moscow and Peking

Potentially, these forces are capable of bringing the capitalist epoch to a close in a matter of days. It should not be a great problem for them to at least contain U. S. imperialism. It would seem all the easier for them to inflict a military defeat on U. S. imperialism in the first phases of an Asian land war. Indeed, this was long taken for granted by the Pentagon itself and the American military strategists moved very cautiously into Vietnam. But what happened? No effective counter-measures were instituted by either the Soviet or Chinese bureaucracies. Johnson was able to escalate the American involvement in the civil war in Vietnam until the level of U. S. troops engaged there is now maintained at a half million men. Johnson moved as if the split between Moscow and Peking constituted an invitation to proceed. Their subsequent failure to react was taken to confirm the accuracy of the Pentagon's calculation that attractive military gains could be made and Vietnam could be converted into an American colony.

The Kosygin-Brezhnev team have played a most miserable and treacherous role in this dangerous situation. In the beginning they engaged in rather vigorous denunciations of Johnson's course in Vietnam. This response was discounted by Washington as mere demagoguery intended for the record and nothing more, demagoguery that was completely predictable from this weak and incompetent leadership. Moscow has doled out aid to Hanoi; but never on such a scale up to now as to disconcert the Pentagon. The Kremlin's aim is not victory but "peace"; that is, reestablishment of the status quo as it existed before Johnson's escalation and before the intensification of the civil war in Vietnam.

Worse than this, the Kremlin has continually sought to weaken and undermine the Vietnamese cause by attempting through secret diplomacy to get Hanoi to come to the "negotiations table" in line with the pressure from Washington—as if Hanoi were at least partly at fault in the conflict or had advanced undue claims, whereas the simple fact is that the Vietnamese are defending their country against an invasion by an imperialist power.

Most reprehensible of all has been Moscow's response to the blandishments of the Johnson administration. In face of the crucifixion of the Vietnamese people and the ever-mounting threat to China and ultimately the USSR, the Kremlin continues to babble about "peaceful coexistence." Kosygin even granted Johnson the completely uncalled for coup of the Glassboro conference. This was a stiff blow against the antiwar movement everywhere, enabling Johnson to temporarily reverse the decline in his popularity as registered by the polls.

What does this course reveal about the Soviet bureaucracy? It

shows how little effect the "de-Stalinization" process has had on the Kremlin's foreign policy. The parallel that immediately comes to mind is the suicidal policy followed by Stalin in relation to the expansion of German imperialism, particularly during the days of the Stalin-Hitler pact.

In their opposition to a revolutionary foreign policy or even a vigorous defensive foreign policy, Kosygin-Brezhnev show how deeply Stalinism is still entrenched in the Soviet Union. Those who hoped, like Isaac Deutscher, that the Soviet bureaucracy might undertake to reform itself can draw little comfort from the course followed by Moscow since Johnson escalated the war in Vietnam. It is to be noted that Deutscher himself began to reconsider this question in light of the experience of the past two and a half years.

Similar conclusions must be drawn in the case of the Chinese bureaucracy. It is quite true that the principal responsibility for the failure to rally adequately in defense of the Vietnamese cause lies with the Kosygin-Brezhnev regime which, after all, is in charge of the world's second power, a country quite capable of compelling the U. S. to respect the territory of any workers state such as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. But Peking's policy has served to facilitate the treachery of the Kosygin-Brezhnev team. Mao's rejection of a united front in bringing material aid to the Vietnamese has provided the Kremlin with a most convenient pretext to limit the aid it sends and to blame any deficiencies on the Chinese.

Still worse, Peking has blocked the possibility of organizing an international aid movement on a huge scale, a development which in and of itself would have thrown a scare into Washington and perhaps induced the Pentagon to de-escalate its aggression.

This is not all. The Chinese leadership bears the main responsibility for the defeat in Indonesia. The rank opportunism of the Maoist regime in relation to the Indonesian national bourgeoisie and the Aidit leadership of the Indonesian Communist Party helped pave the way for a defeat of major historic proportions and the slaughter of as many as 500,000 Communists in a country where these same Communists had every chance, with a correct policy, of winning a victory that could have altered the entire picture in Southeast Asia and indeed the whole world.

The subsequent ultraleft course of the Maoist faction has not helped matters. It has served to further isolate China and destroy the prestige of its leadership among the revolutionary vanguard internationally. The accompanying "proletarian cultural revolution" and the deification of Mao have provided plenty of smoke but not enough to hide the disastrous consequences of Mao's foreign policy. These consequences, plus the convulsive factional struggle now racking the regime, have made it possible to gain fresh insights into the bureaucratic sclerosis affecting the Chinese revolution and particularly a better appreciation of how little can be expected from the Mao regime in

the way of leadership of a caliber to meet the challenge of American imperialism.

The incapacity of the Mao regime is measured by the Pentagon and the White House in their own way. Rusk, Humphrey and the other leading "hawks" are talking more and more about the alleged threat of a "billion Chinese" armed with nuclear weapons in the seventies. What they really mean is how inviting it appears to them to attack 700 million Chinese today in view of the current turmoil in China, in view of the openings provided by a leadership that is not qualitatively different from the one in the Kremlin, and in view of the deep division between Moscow and Peking—with Moscow anxious to placate Washington.

While we are noting what the test of the war in Vietnam has revealed about the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies, we should mention the Social Democratic and trade-union bureaucrats.

In Europe the tone has been set by Harold Wilson. At first he claimed to have special diplomatic pipelines, enabling him to induce Hanoi to negotiate, and "special relations" with Washington, enabling him to influence Johnson. This farce did not last long. Wilson is now starring in a different show where only a man with his long experience in playing dual roles could achieve such virtuosity—he is both the statesmanlike head of Her Majesty's government, and the slapstick British butler in the White House.

In London, Wilson kisses the queen's hand; in Washington, of course, he is provided with a more democratic and plebian object.

To varying degrees, the Social Democrats and trade-union bureaucrats elsewhere in Europe have either followed the example of Harold Wilson or have joined the Stalinists in sabotaging any vigorous expression of opposition.

In the United States the top union bureaucrats are among the worst "hawks" and flag-wavers, acting as if the CIA demanded that they stand to the right of the Chamber of Commerce and the American Legion although the disclosures in the past year shows the CIA does not object to its "clients" taking a more "sophisticated" stance. It is true that some of them feel a little uneasy in view of the growth of the anti-war opposition, but taken as a whole, the American trade-union bureaucracy, under the test of war, has displayed precisely the characteristics indicated long in advance by Marxist analysis; namely, hardening of the arteries, enlargement of the skull, shriveling of the brain, and loosening of the kidneys.

To complete the picture of the present role of U.S. imperialism in international affairs, it is necessary to note that there has been an uninterrupted series of setbacks to the revolutionary cause in the past few years. These began about 1962 with the so-called missile crisis in the Caribbean and include such important events as the military coup d'etat in Brazil in 1964, plus a number of similar coups d'etat in other Latin-American countries, a series of defeats in Africa, the debacle in Indonesia, the defeat suffered by the Arab

revolution at the hands of the Israeli imperialist spearhead, the military coup d'etat in Greece, and a series of reverses for the guerrilla movement all the way from Guatemala, to Bolivia, to the Congo.

It would be the height of folly for the revolutionary Marxist movement to disregard the effect of these defeats or to attempt to cover them up with hollow optimistic affirmations intended to be inspirational. The truth is that these defeats have acted as depressants on the masses while on the other hand bringing elation to the most rabid wing of the warmongers, who point to these accomplishments of Johnson's "hard" policy as confirmation of its correctness and justification for continuing and extending it.

The correct approach for the revolutionary Marxist movement is to analyze the reasons for the defeats, to assess them objectively and take them into account in working out strategy and tactics for the next period. That is the only way in which something can be learned from the defeats in order to better assure victories when new opportunities arise, as they will inevitably and without long delay.

The world Trotskyist movement, in accordance with its tradition in this respect, has already done much along these lines and will continue to make contributions in the task of working out the specific problems that have arisen.

If we are to draw a general balance sheet of how things appear at the moment, after two and a half years of escalation of the war in Vietnam, it must be granted that U.S. imperialism stands at a pinnacle of power that is absolutely unprecedented whether in its own history or in world history. It has the capacity to destroy mankind and all the higher forms of life. It brandishes this power in the face of all other nations as if it had gone berserk. It has built hundreds if not thousands of military bases up to the very borders of China and the Soviet Union. It keeps planes in the air and submarines at sea armed with sufficient nuclear weapons to reduce entire portions of the globe to radioactive ruins. Its agents, in the guise of "advisers," constitute the final authority in dozens of countries. It dominates the entire capitalist world in almost absolute fashion. It has established a major military beachhead on the Asian mainland and is weighing whether to escalate this into an invasion of North Vietnam and even a preemptive nuclear strike against China. No opposition effective enough to compel a retreat has yet appeared. Instead, U.S. imperialism has been able to mark a series of victories on a number of widely separated fronts. On the surface, this power would seem to be invincible and to represent the wave of the future.

The Counterforces

Yet there are very few serious political observers in the world today who are prepared to say that this picture comes anywhere near offering a faithful reflection of the reality. In fact certain developments

have occurred that make the future look very dim for U.S. imperialism.

First of all it should be noted that if the capacity of other capitalist powers to play the role of an opposition has been greatly reduced, if not completely suppressed, in return a considerable rift has occurred in the American ruling class over Johnson's foreign policy. Remarkably enough, the sharpest criticisms of Johnson to be found among the bourgeoisie are not appearing abroad. Instead they are being voiced right inside the United States.

It is essential to understand the reasons for this and above all the limitations of this opposition. It is not an anti-imperialist opposition; it is not even an antiwar opposition; it does not even go so far as to advocate an American withdrawal from Vietnam. What it represents is an opposition to the brazen tactics being followed by Johnson, his disregard of diplomatic niceties, and — more importantly — his too exclusive reliance on military force. The bourgeois opposition inside the United States fears that Johnson is over-extending what they call the "commitments" of the U.S.; that in staking everything on military force he will eventually stir up counterforces completely beyond the capacity of even American economic and military might to handle.

The Fulbrights and similar statesmen are reminding themselves that war often proves to be the mother of revolution and that whatever the initial successes, a war can end in a revolutionary disaster for the imperialist power that starts it. Their estimate is that Johnson's course has become needlessly adventurous and therefore needlessly dangerous. They prefer greater flexibility in pursuing American imperialist aims. They see no gain in driving so hard against China as to compel Peking and Moscow to close ranks; they prefer to build some bridges for Ho Chi Minh that would make it easier for the Kremlin to sell him a bill of goods. Above all they dislike some of the domestic consequences of Johnson's course which threaten to advance the class struggle inside the United States until it breaks through on the political level in a massive way.

It goes without saying that revolutionary Marxists place no political confidence whatsoever in the bourgeois opposition to Johnson even where it assumes an antiwar guise. The only alternative the bourgeois opposition offers is a more palatable figure in the White House; that is, a figure better able to divert the antiwar movement and block it from breaking out of the two-party system.

Nevertheless it must be recognized that this bourgeois opposition inside the United States has played a role up to this point in helping to shield the antiwar movement from a major witch-hunt and in providing it with a certain legitimacy. It has performed this function, of course, out of defense of its own interests and no political gratitude is owed it.

Incomparably more important than the appearance of a bourgeois opposition has been the rise, at an extraordinary tempo, of the anti-

war movement in the United States. Since consideration of this development is one of the main items on the agenda of the convention, it is sufficient to indicate here that it has had worldwide impact and has become a significant source of inspiration to the vanguard on all continents. This is evidenced by something completely new internationally—the staging of militant antiwar demonstrations in many lands timed to coincide with those organized inside the United States.

The American antiwar movement has thus become a focal center of genuine opposition inside the United States to Johnson's war in Southeast Asia and at the same time a key force in reviving the spirit of international solidarity among the oppressed of the world against the common foe.

The potentialities of this new development are enormous. If it succeeds in linking up with the black power movement and achieving together with this movement an organized and cohesive expression, it can alter the entire political scene in the United States in short order. If the American working class begins moving in a parallel way—and there are many signs of its uneasiness over the war in Vietnam—then it will become feasible to compel Washington to retreat. Even more, such a situation would open up great new opportunities for the swift growth of the revolutionary Marxist movement in this country. The effect on the masses of many other countries would undoubtedly be even more dramatic.

The uprisings in the ghettos of America are an indirect result of the war in Vietnam. An administration which is spending the equivalent of more than the entire national budget of France each year for a war on the other side of the Pacific has undermined its capacity to soften the class struggle in the United States by granting genuinely significant concessions to the sectors of the populace in the lowest income brackets, those who are unemployed, subjected to discrimination, segregation, miserable housing and the denial of minimal educational opportunities. In view of the expectations that had been aroused and whetted by civil-rights legislation and demagogy, including Kennedy's "New Frontier" and Johnson's "Great Society," the pent-up grievances reached the point of explosion. That a series of explosions did occur, beyond anything yet seen in this country, shows that a foreign diversion like the escalation of the war in Vietnam is not capable of turning the black people away from struggling for redressment of their grievances.

This development shows how deep-going the social contradictions are in American society, how much they have ripened and how close they are to finding the most violent expression.

Another most ominous sign for the domestic stability which American imperialism requires in extending its empire and putting down the colonial revolution, is the growing solidarity which the black people feel for the oppressed masses in the lands under attack. It is the other side of the estrangement they feel in American society and their rejection of the white power structure.

This development is of the utmost international significance as has been universally recognized, not least of all by Hanoi and Havana much to the irritation of the American ruling class.

There are other developments, directly related to the war in Vietnam, of immense political import. The first of these is the stubborn refusal of the Vietnamese people to bow their necks to the imperialist aggressor. The example of their heroic endurance in face of the savagery of the Pentagon constitutes one of the brightest pages in the history of humanity. It has stirred the masses throughout the world and thus served to help counteract the depressing effect of the series of defeats and setbacks elsewhere. This has become quite disturbing to the White House and is one of the reasons for Johnson's evident dismay. The easy victory he visualized has not materialized. Instead he has become involved in a costly conflict which may well end in finishing his political career and which in any case has converted him into the most hated and despised president in history.

The will to struggle displayed by the Vietnamese people is not something peculiar to them. The Korean people displayed similar qualities during the war inflicted on them during the Truman administration. The Algerians showed the same heroism against an army of one million French troops. The Cubans struggled the same way to overthrow Batista. Taken together, these examples offer fresh proof of the readiness of the masses to endure the worst hardships and make the greatest sacrifices in order to win their freedom if they think that a reasonable possibility exists to achieve victory. We can be absolutely sure that in the period now opening up, the world will see other examples equally heartening and inspiring.

Leadership and Openings

In the defeats and setbacks suffered in recent years, as in similar instances in previous decades, the decisive element was not the readiness of the masses to struggle but the absence of a competent leadership. This was glaringly obvious in the case of Indonesia where the largest Communist party in the capitalist world existed. It was not less true in the case of Brazil where the Communist party's long years of following the line of "peaceful coexistence" with the national bourgeoisie and relying on their so-called "progressive" sector for leadership assured the crushing defeat of April 1964. It is certainly the bureaucratic leadership in the Soviet Union and China that bears full responsibility, however it is divided between them, for the prolonged agony being suffered by the Vietnamese people and the mounting threat represented by the expansion of the U.S. beachhead in Southeast Asia.

One of the most encouraging developments in the recent period—a development greatly accelerated by the war in Vietnam—has been the growing realization among sectors of the vanguard that have

hitherto been influenced if not swayed by the Soviet or Chinese leaders that these leaders are not to be relied on. The clearest manifestation of this centers around the Cubans but it is also apparent among the Vietnamese, the North Koreans, among circles in and around certain Communist parties and among sectors of the intellectuals in the Soviet Union and the East European countries.

The Cuban revolution is acting as a polarizing center for this critical sentiment. The Cuban revolution is serving in this way precisely because of the high level of consciousness of its leadership and the conclusions they have obviously drawn from the course of the war in Vietnam.

We very early came to the conclusion, it will be recalled, that the Cuban leadership represented something new. It was not shaped in the school of Stalinism. Its political consciousness had deepened in the very process of revolution and it had independently developed revolutionary Marxist conclusions out of the practical experience gained in making a revolution. We foresaw that there were excellent chances for this leadership to go much further in its development. In any case we were convinced that it marked the beginning of a new important phenomenon—the rise of a genuinely revolutionary-minded generation free from the blight of Stalinism.

We are now able to state that these estimates were not wrong. In fact, the way the Cuban leaders have acted in response to the war in Vietnam has served to confirm our prognosis in the strongest and most striking way.

At the recent OLAS conference in Havana, this leadership reaffirmed the need for the masses to take the road of armed struggle and it condemned the decision of the right-wing leadership of the Venezuelan Communist Party to turn away from that road and to revert back to mere electoral politicking as nothing less than a betrayal of the socialist revolution. A new influential voice was thus added to the long list of revolutionists who reached similar conclusions concerning the attitude and actions of the bureaucratic CP leaderships. But this condemnation represents a historic first. It is the first to come from the leadership of a workers state since Trotsky began the struggle against Stalinism and in defense of the program of socialist revolution.

The condemnation of the right-wing Venezuelan CP leadership at the OLAS conference was another step in the process that began inside Cuba with the struggle against bureaucratism, a high point of which was the condemnation of Anibal Escalante and his supporters. The showdown at OLAS, however, was a reflection of international and not domestic developments.

In relation to the Latin-American revolution as a whole, the differentiation between the Cuban leadership and the right-wing CP bureaucrats has proceeded around the issue of armed struggle as the only means to victory where all other possibilities have been barred by dictatorial regimes backed by U.S. imperialism. Holding

up the Cuban revolution as an example, the Castro leadership has exerted increasingly heavy pressure on this issue ever since the beginning of Johnson's escalation of the war in Vietnam. The right-wing CP leaderships did their best to evade the issue or to pay lip service to it while they actually sabotaged it.

We observed this struggle very attentively despite its muted nature until recently. Even Castro's attack on "Trotskyism" at the Tricontinental conference in January 1967, which we of course answered immediately, did not cause us, out of anger or resentment to lose sight of the reality and turn away. We noted the very positive steps taken at the Tricontinental conference to reinforce the revolutionary struggle in Latin America. We realized that if the resolutions adopted at that conference were actually applied it could not but facilitate the exposure of the pseudo revolutionists and help speed up the process of building a revolutionary leadership on a continental scale. The Cubans demonstrated that they meant what they said and the differentiation with the treacherous right-wing CP leaderships speeded up accordingly. The showdown came at the OLAS conference in Havana in August.

The political meaning of the decisions taken at the OLAS conference are crystal clear. They represent a definitive break with the treacherous leaderships whose advocacy of "peaceful coexistence" really signifies a line of maintaining the status quo and doing everything possible to block the masses from taking the road of revolution. The OLAS conference thus represents an important ideological advance, offering the greatest encouragement to revolutionary Marxists throughout the world. One of its first consequences will be to facilitate a regroupment of revolutionary forces in Latin America and to speed up their development along programmatic lines. Even a setback as severe as the death of Che Guevara will not halt this process. The turn marked by the OLAS conference conforms with the political realities of Latin America and the imperative need to build a revolutionary leadership capable of correctly absorbing and applying the lessons of the Cuban revolution on a continental scale.

In some quarters it has been maintained that the Organization of Latin-American Solidarity, which was set up at the Havana conference in August, represents the appearance of another international. For instance, John Gerassi, writing on the OLAS conference in the October issue of the *Monthly Review*, asserts that Castro has launched a "new, Fifth International."

A conclusion of that kind is hasty, to say the least. However well-intentioned and internationally minded such a conclusion may be it indicates a serious underestimation of what a task it is to create an international; that is, a genuine, revolutionary Marxist international. The underestimation derives most likely from lack of study of the history of what has been done in this field. Above all, it reveals an underestimation of the role of program in constructing an international.

In this respect, the Organization of Latin-American Solidarity has

much to accomplish before the claim can seriously be advanced that it constitutes a new international. First of all, OLAS must consider the problem of the revolutionary struggle in the industrially developed countries, particularly the main power center of world imperialism, the United States. This is not an unimportant question since American imperialism is the principal prop of the oligarchies and dictatorial regimes that directly confront the revolutionary movement in the colonial and semicolonial world. The industrially developed countries are also where the final and decisively important battles will be fought in the struggle for world socialism.

Secondly, OLAS must consider the problem of the revolutionary struggle in the workers states, the question of a "revolution in a revolution." Again, this is not unimportant, as is proved in the clearest possible way by the course of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies in the Vietnam war.

Thirdly, even in Latin America, the area of primary concern to OLAS, some very important problems remain to be worked out, particularly the problem of providing revolutionary leadership for the masses in the cities through the development of transitional slogans and partial struggles, breaking the way for broader and more decisive battles.

Fourthly, the immense problem of the internal life and functioning of an international must be considered. A rich experience testifies to the immense difficulty of constructing an international party—for that is what an international is—even with the most skilled and knowledgeable application of the principles of democratic centralism. But the statutes adopted by OLAS at the Havana conference show that these principles have yet to be grasped by the founders of the organization. This question, however, stands at the heart of constructing a viable international.

It is to be hoped that OLAS will take up these problems. I think that it is completely in the logic of the progress already made by the Tricontinental and OLAS conferences to turn toward serious consideration of these problems. I believe that significant contributions in these areas can be expected from the revolutionary figures who have assembled in the Organization of Latin-American Solidarity. But it is certainly quite premature to credit them with already having established a new international, a claim which they themselves have not as yet ventured to assert.

The role of the war in Vietnam in nurturing the differentiation between the revolutionary orientation of the Cuban leadership and the right-wing CP leaders in Latin America can easily be followed. From the very beginning of Johnson's escalation of American involvement in the civil war in Vietnam, the Cuban leaders pointed out the need for vigorous counter-measures. As both Moscow and Peking permitted things to drift, the Cubans became more and more concerned. This was evident in the increasing stress they placed on the danger which the war in Vietnam signified for the Cuban revolution.

If the Vietnamese should be defeated, then it is certain that the Cubans will be next. Another significant indication of the trend in their thinking was the alteration of the slogan, "Cuba does not stand alone," to a new slogan: "We Cubans must rely on ourselves." Along with this, heavier and heavier stress has been placed in Cuba on the heroic example of the Vietnamese.

Preparations for the armed defense of the island against a new invasion have been stepped up considerably so as to make any attempted invasion as costly as possible to the imperialist forces. All these developments are indications of the lessons which the Cubans have drawn from the course of the war in Vietnam.

On the international front the Cubans have vigorously advanced two themes: First, the need of the revolutionists in each country to make the revolution. Second, the need to bring effective aid to the beleaguered Vietnamese.

They state, quite correctly, that the best way to help the Vietnamese is to make the revolution in other countries. This is the meaning of the slogan advanced by Che Guevara: "Create two, three . . . many Vietnams." It was also the central meaning of Che Guevara's action in attempting to organize a guerrilla focal center in Bolivia. He wished to set another example, to provide a living contrast between the lip service being paid to the Vietnamese cause by Moscow and Peking and the resolute action which the situation requires.

The effect upon the outlook of independent-minded revolutionists like the Cubans is, in my opinion, the single most important consequence of the escalating war in Vietnam. The Cubans display this effect to a striking degree but it is also observable elsewhere, as we have indicated.

In a less conscious way, a similar effect is observable among broad social layers. The rebellious mood among the American youth, particularly on the campuses, is a good indicator of the radicalization being induced by the war in Vietnam. We are being provided with fresh proof of the inherent tendency of a reactionary war to inspire a progressive countertendency. As revolutionary Marxism noted long ago, a reactionary war tends to become converted into a civil conflict, into a civil war. It tends to sponsor mass resistance and to prepare the way for a new generation of revolutionary leaders capable of organizing this resistance so as to provide society with a road out.

We stand at the beginning of this development on an international scale. It is this which disconcerts and worries those in the capitalist class still capable of observing what is happening. It is this which gives our movement reason for the greatest optimism and confidence. The stream of history is turning our direction.

AMERICAN POLITICS and the 1968 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

The continuing and widening war in Vietnam is the central issue in both national and world politics today. The genocidal intervention against the liberation struggle in the south and against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north are direct by-products of the global imperialist aims of the capitalist ruling class of the United States. Every socialist, everyone who stands for democratic rights and national self-determination, is duty bound to oppose and combat this criminal war. Every political tendency in this country is being tested by its response to this challenge.

Washington's escalation of the war in Vietnam is another "police action" in a long series undertaken by American capitalism since the end of World War II. Their purpose has been to uphold the world capitalist system, to stabilize it and to extend it at the expense of the workers states. It is part of the policy of containing and rolling back the Russian revolution and its extensions in Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, North Vietnam and Cuba; of blocking the colonial revolution either by smashing it or diverting it from its tendency to break through the limits of private property. The interlocking network of alliances, including NATO, SEATO, CENTO, and the OAS, are designed to advance the military side of this imperialist foreign policy, constituting part of the preparations for what could be a third and final world war.

This twenty-year period has been marked by two main trends.

The first is displacement by the United States of the older imperialist powers (Britain, France, Holland, Belgium) from their uppermost positions in the colonial world. Among the capitalist countries, the U.S., with its colossal wealth and nuclear stockpile, has become the chief exploiter and principal military gendarme of the colonial areas.

The second is direct intervention in the internal affairs of other

countries, either through CIA operations or open use of troops, whenever capitalist power and property is seriously threatened. Some outstanding examples since Korea have been Iran, Guatemala, Cuba, the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam and the Middle East. The mask of liberalism is dropped and the most barbarous terror is used and encouraged whenever the indigenous ruling class proves unequal to the situation.

Despite all these efforts, however, the central goal of the American rulers has eluded them. The past twenty years have been marked not by the stabilization of world capitalism but by extreme political instability.

Governments have been continually upset by forces eluding the control of either the U.S. or the USSR, whose conservative bureaucratic regime favors maintaining the status quo. These forces are constantly set in motion by the very conditions required to perpetuate the world capitalist system. They are under the control of no leader or groups of leaders. Thus the search for capitalist stability, like the search for "peaceful coexistence" between classes and countries with opposing social systems, is in the long run a fundamentally hopeless objective. The Pax Americana sought by Washington is undermined by ever renewed intensification of the class struggle; and the strenuous efforts to contain anti-imperialist and anticapitalist aspirations by harsh police efforts and preventive coups d'etat merely defer the settlements and make them more explosive. This can be seen in a whole series of countries, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Ghana, Greece and Nigeria constituting outstanding examples.

The imperialist policy has proved most successful on the economic level, reestablishing the war-shattered economies of Western Europe and Japan and paving the way for genuine booms. But the success has not been unalloyed. It has signified far-reaching American financial penetration of the rest of the capitalist world and, along with it, intensification of international monetary instability. What happens to one sector of the world capitalist system now more readily affects the system as a whole. While a recession in one sector may be cushioned by a boom in other sectors, the development of concurrent recessions in the major capitalist nations would have devastating consequences. The fading of the European and Japanese economic "miracles" thus cause the American imperialists to watch the state of health of their own economy with all the greater anxiety.

At the same time, the gap in productivity levels and living conditions between the highly industrialized countries and the colonial world continues to widen. World trade conferences, international monetary agreements and further investments, ballyhooed as a means of lessening the gap, actually serve only to accentuate it.

Imperialism's incapacity to solve the elementary economic and social needs of the colonial peoples breeds permanent unrest. This results in repeated eruptions seeking to break the imperialist grip. Although the imperialists have managed to beat these back again and again, the

colonial masses, inspired by successes such as the Chinese and Cuban revolutions and the great example of the swift rise of the Soviet Union to the second world power, have displayed remarkable capacity to recover from defeat and to renew their struggles. Their tenacity and determination to fight over a long period despite formidable odds, and periodic setbacks reached heroic heights in both Algeria and in Vietnam.

Johnson's escalation of aggression against the Vietnamese revolution takes place in this context. It is part and parcel of the basic post-war drive of U.S. imperialism toward world domination. Johnson's "escalation" is a continuation of Truman's "cold war," Eisenhower's "containment," and Kennedy's "showdown." The Republican and Democratic parties share equal responsibility for this foreign policy of blockades, blood and napalm, and flirtation with a nuclear conflagration.

The escalation of U.S. intervention in the Vietnamese civil war unfolded during the favorable domestic economic conjuncture of the first six years of the 1960s. After a slowdown at the close of the Eisenhower administration, the American economy experienced the longest "peacetime" boom in its history. This provided the economic springboard for an aggressive and sustained counter-offensive abroad after the 1959-60 victory of the Cuban revolution. U.S. capitalism has roamed the globe from Western Europe to South Africa seeking out new areas for investment. Between 1960 and 1965 the gross national product in the U.S. increased by 34.2 per cent, corporate profits by 50.3 per cent, and direct foreign investments by 45 per cent. The expansive "New Economics" of the Kennedy-Johnson administrations has been imperialist economics par excellence.

This expansion has been facilitated by the successive, severe setbacks for the world revolution in the Congo, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Algeria, Indonesia, Greece and the Middle East.

The deepening divisions among the workers states, particularly the USSR and China, and their incapacity to join forces at a governmental level for a common defensive effort or counter-thrust, have further encouraged the imperialist offensive.

On the domestic level, the sustained economic prosperity has acted as a damper upon social and political opposition by the organized working class.

Washington's policy has been to take all possible advantage of the openings provided and to press forward as far as possible. This is seen clearly in Vietnam where the paralysis of Moscow and Peking is most glaring. The net effect has been to greatly heighten the danger of drifting into a nuclear confrontation.

The "East of Suez" role, formerly assumed by the European powers, has been taken over by the U.S. It has installed its own formidable military bases in Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries in preparation for widening the war there. Meanwhile the conflict in Vietnam has been more and more Americanized as the forces of Saigon

have eroded and near collapse. Unlike the Korean adventure, the Vietnamese war is being waged without military support from the major satellite powers of the U.S. and without the cover of the United Nations flag. Strains in the NATO alliance have been increased because of the widespread popular disapproval in Europe of Johnson's course.

The escalation of American involvement finds a grim reflection in the war statistics. Casualties among the U.S. troops have increasingly tended to rise above those of the Saigon forces. More U.S. troops have been committed to Vietnam than at the high point of the Korean conflict; and, despite the periodic promises of an early victory, the Pentagon continually presses its demands for more GIs.

As the troops, the costs and the casualties continue to mount, Johnson's aim of achieving a military victory before the 1968 election is seen to be less and less likely in face of the resistance of the Vietnamese people. At the same time, the effort to break their will by raining more and more napalm and high explosives on them and by stepped up measures to "cut off the avenues of flow of military supplies" increases the risk of a direct military collision with China. The "controlled" escalation tends to become increasingly uncontrolled.

This pattern is ominous but not new. America's rulers have pushed ahead upon this risky path several times in the postwar period. And each time the American imperialists have been checked and slowed down, not by any incapacity to understand or promote their global interests, but by their recognition of the real relationship of forces between the contending camps on an international scale as verified by repeated reconnoiters.

Each time they were stopped from advancing, and even forced to retreat and postpone their schedule of engaging in a major conflict, because of a combination of factors unfavorable to their designs. The most weighty of these have been: (1) an upsurge in the colonial revolution; (2) instability in Europe and Japan; (3) a strong showing by the Soviet Union as in the swift recovery from the devastation of World War II and the early development of nuclear weaponry; and (4) antiwar sentiment inside the U.S.

Recent shifts have occurred in these four main areas which the American imperialists must take into consideration in calculating their aggressive moves in the direction of war.

The colonial revolution has undergone a series of defeats which though temporary are substantial and demoralizing. The defeats have served to encourage the strategists of American imperialism.

While the war is unpopular in Europe and Japan the degree of economic and political instability in these areas is not yet so great as to constitute a major deterrent.

The Kremlin's response to the escalation of the war has been to escalate the diplomacy of "peaceful coexistence." Far from winning "understanding" from the Johnson administration, this has been taken as an invitation to proceed further along military lines, since the Kremlin's diplomacy amounts to a virtual guarantee of lowcost victories so far

as the hazards of any significant response are concerned. Peking's policy of rejecting a united front with Moscow in confronting imperialism plays into the hands of the latter day Khrushchevists, assisting them in their policy of avoiding any effective countermeasures to the American military aggression against the Vietnamese workers state.

What is now notably significant in the situation is the deep-going resistance inside the United States, unique in the twentieth century. For the first time since 1946, domestic resistance is keeping pace with opposition in other sectors of the world, inspiring and linking up with it. This promises to be a major element in staying the hand of the capitalist rulers and reinforcing the international opposition to them.

On the Domestic Front

In addition to the planned escalation in Vietnam, the U.S. capitalist rulers must be prepared to keep putting down similar uprisings in other places. Fresh upsurges in the colonial world, the prospect of two, three, many Vietnams as heralded by Che Guevara, flows inevitably from the historic crisis in which capitalism finds itself.

The entire coming period will take place under the sign of war and continued militarization of American life. The war budget tends to become an ever greater determinant in the state of the economy.

The Vietnam war will be more and more used to exact and justify "sacrifices" from labor, Afro-Americans and student youth. It will cut into and reverse the promises of the "great society," the "war on poverty," social reforms, civil-rights legislation and concessions, the right to strike and the right to dissent.

This will widen awareness of the implications of imperialist war, the class character of the government that pursues it, and increase opposition to it.

Social tensions will grow even if relative economic prosperity is maintained.

Due to mounting costs of the war, it becomes increasingly difficult for the ruling class to grant concessions to labor. The workers are thereby compelled to put up greater resistance in order to maintain their standards of living, job conditions and basic rights. The same holds even more for the black masses in their fight to control their own lives and future and for the youth in the high schools and colleges who want a society that measures up to their needs and ideals.

The Vietnam war has been accompanied by the development of an open schism in the officialdom of the American unions and the beginnings of a new spirit of militancy in the ranks.

Reuther's description of the AFL-CIO as "arteriosclerotic" is his way of calling attention to the stagnation and erosion of the American labor movement. He, of course, does not acknowledge that this is the result of its subordination to the Democratic Party machine and its support of the reactionary bipartisan foreign policy of the Democrats

and Republicans which he has been vigorously upholding. This sad state is the culmination of decades of service which the labor lieutenants have performed for the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency. It is the result of their long years of ultrachauvinism, of cold-war-inspired expulsions of "Communists" and the unions influenced by them from the AFL-CIO topped by the ousting of the Teamsters. These moves have gone hand in hand with failure to lead the ranks in struggle against the corporations or to extend the benefits of unionism to the unorganized.

This policy, which has been substituted for any sustained efforts to undertake solving the crucial problems facing American society, has entailed a loss of influence and prestige for both the labor movement and its official leaders and has won them growing contempt from the best militants and the youth within as well as outside the working class. The loss in standing finally induced Reuther, the representative of the social democratic elements in the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, to dissociate himself from Meany's crudities, although not from the basic class collaborationist policies they hammered out together.

The deepening dissatisfaction in the ranks was evidenced in earlier replacements of entrenched leaderships in the United Steel Workers, the International Union of Electrical Workers, and the United Rubber Workers. The boom of the past few years has brought about a significant influx of youth into basic industry and into the unions. When Reuther says these youth did not build the unions and must be educated, he means they have not been tamed to a point acceptable to the official leadership.

Rank-and-file rejections of contracts negotiated by union leaders is an important sign of the changing mood in the membership. Younger workers don't want labor "statesmanship" from the leaderships of the International Unions; they want bigger checks and protection against inflation instead of fringe benefit packages. They want concrete gains and are willing to resort to militant action to get them regardless of how this may upset routine negotiations.

With the biggest "peacetime" war budget in U.S. history—more than \$70 billion for fiscal 1968—congressional estimates place the budget deficit in fiscal 1968 at up to \$25 billion. This would be the biggest postwar deficit, measured either absolutely or as a percentage of the gross national product.

The restiveness of the workers is heightened by the effects of this mounting war budget. Federal deficits swollen with war costs increase inflation, thereby increasing pressure on real wages while maintaining corporation profits. These inflationary pressures stoked by escalating budget deficits are especially important. Even when a downturn in the business cycle has occurred, such as the one beginning in the middle of 1966, the inflationary spiral continues.

Under inflationary conditions, and with the rising demand for military goods by the ruling class, the Johnson administration must eventually try to impose on the unions, through federal intervention and

action, an austerity program designed to transfer more of the costs of the war to the workers. Johnson's policy is to keep the rise in money wages small enough and the tax level high enough so that in the face of rising prices, real wages can be reduced.

A series of militant strikes which included rank and file insistence on a just settlement before contract approval, began with the New York transit and airline mechanics strikes in 1966. These destroyed Johnson's wage-price guidelines, the first step by the new administration to hold the line on real wages.

New attempts to undermine the ability of the unions to exercise their independent powers and fresh efforts to prevent the ranks from utilizing their democratic rights is in the offing.

To the corporations, rank-and-file rejection of contracts approved by official union leaders is akin to anarchy. This accounts for demands in Congress and the press to amend the Kennedy-Landrum-Griffin Act to restrict the right of workers to vote on their own contracts. The capitalists see the right of workers to reject recommended settlements as an "abuse" of democracy.

The Johnson administration is preparing to go beyond the use of injunctions to prevent strikes. New legislative proposals will be introduced to more sharply curtail the right to strike. The logical culmination of the structural shift of the economy onto a war basis is some form of wage control and compulsory arbitration.

The Role of Public Workers

Public workers are the fastest growing sector of the labor force. In the last five years they increased in total number by one-third. They are also the fastest growing sector of organized labor. Today there are more than 1,500,000 unionized public workers.

Their rise in militancy can be judged from the following figures. In 1962 they engaged in 28 strikes. In 1965 the figure rose to 42. In 1966 there were 150 strikes; and from January to May of 1967 more than 150 had already occurred.

These strikes have a special character.

First, they are directed against the government as *both* employer and strikebreaker. Secondly, they have usually been carried out in the face of existing antistrike legislation directed against them in particular. Thirdly, they are faced directly and immediately with the problem of political parties, since these run the government which employs them. The experiences gained and tactics used in these struggles have had a sharply political edge. They are forerunners of the battles that will face the heavy battalions of American labor as they fight to maintain their living standards.

The public workers' unions are an important link between labor and the younger generation undergoing increasing radicalization. Young people make up a large portion of this section of the work force, es-

pecially among the teachers. It is not only one of the most youthful sectors of the work force, but also includes a high percentage of women. It is an area where many young recruits to socialism are gaining their first union experiences; and it is also an area where the question of the war in Vietnam has first been brought into the unions.

The militancy of teachers affects the thinking of their students on the character of unionism and labor solidarity when they see their teachers joining unions and striking to get better pay and working conditions.

The struggles of the public workers undermine the idea that the government stands impartially above the boss-worker conflict, thus bringing into question the whole strike-breaking structure constructed and maintained by the ruling class through its government.

Up to now, the struggles engaged in by the American working class have been defensive in character, conducted by traditional union means. They promise to become intensified by inflation and other war pressures and attempts by the government to use the Vietnam war as an excuse to break strikes.

Rising discontent in the ranks, coupled with strike action do not yet amount to a political radicalization of the working class. This will come only as recognition spreads among the most conscious sectors of the workers that the bosses are using the Vietnam war to depress their standard of living in face of large corporate profits and that struggles against management can be won only if the government stays out or is kept out. It is this realization that can lead to going beyond job actions to a broader struggle in the form of a political offensive.

Present Stage of Black Nationalism

The struggle of the black millions against inequality and racism continues to mount in intensity. Opposition to the imperialist war in Vietnam has accelerated the process of radicalization stemming from the lack of progress in the fight for freedom in America. This radicalism is expressed by the deepening identification with black nationalism.

While the roots of the struggle of Afro-Americans and their radicalization both predate the Vietnam war, the war has added new dimensions to the struggle. Black people are forced by American capitalist society to assume the heaviest burdens in financing and fighting the war. A disproportionate number of black youths, few of whom are able to obtain student or other deferments, are drafted by lilly-white draft boards. Due to increased draft calls and the alteration of qualifications determined by educational opportunities, the draft rate for black people was increased in 1967. The draft is not the only area where Afro-Americans face greater odds. Once in the army, a higher percentage are thrown into combat and killed.

Black people are also hardest hit by the domestic consequences of the war, by rising prices and cutbacks in social welfare programs.

The immediate enemy faced by those fighting for black progress is not an individual boss but the state, the executive agency of the capitalist class. Thus the responsibility for the lack of progress and growing economic inequities is placed by more and more black people squarely on the national government. This, along with the Vietnam war and the repression of black people through the use of antiriot laws and police terror, is helping to pose the question of political action. Fewer and fewer believe that reliance on civil-rights laws and gandhian forms of direct action will substantially or sufficiently change this racist society.

The war and the radicalization of new layers of black people have deepened the schism between the conservative and militant wings of the Afro-American movement. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) continue to grope for a consistent program and an organizational vehicle which can weld the black masses into a more unified and powerful force. As of now, their radicalism consists of a mood of militant opposition to the "system" and government policies rather than a thought-out and effective alternative to reliance on the government and the two capitalist parties.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Urban League back the government on all important questions. The Johnson administration is turning more and more to leaders like Roy Wilkins and Senator Brooke as shields against criticism in an attempt to give the federal government a "pro-Negro" image.

Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) maintains a vacillating and mediating position between the more militant black radicals and the conservatives of the NAACP and the Urban League. While the SCLC rejects the nationalism and radicalism of the black power tendencies, the pressure of the black masses and the continuation of the Vietnam war pushes its leadership into opposition to the U.S. role in the conflict and toward support for militant mass action. This often puts them at odds with the government and the more conservative organizations and leaders of the black community.

As the focal point of the struggle has shifted from the rural South to the urban ghettos, rebellions following the prototype of the Watts uprising are becoming a permanent feature of black resistance to the economic and social degradation that marks America's racist society. These explosions have no program or organized leadership. They are elemental explosions against one of the central features of American capitalism—white control of the black community. The mortgage holders and landlords, merchants and bosses, teachers and curriculum, social workers and cops are overwhelmingly white. These are the immediately identifiable agents of the total subordination of the national minority of Afro-Americans.

In the first half of 1967 alone, nine cities experienced major rebel-

lions—Nashville, Jackson, Houston, Cincinnati, Dayton, Boston, Tampa, Atlanta and Buffalo. The youth spearhead and are the main participants in these ghetto revolts. They take the risks and provide the spark, just as they did in the sit-ins and freedom rides of the early 1960s. These youth are the hardest hit by unemployment, the draft and inferior black schools, and face the bleakest outlook for the future.

The ghetto rebellions signify rejection of reliance on moral appeals to the government and "love your enemy" as adequate vehicles for changing society. They reflect the belief that racist violence must be resisted and that black people can earn respect and make gains only by defending themselves—aggressively. These ghetto rebellions carry on the finest American traditions of mass struggle by any means necessary, traditions set by the rebels of 1776, the black and white Abolitionists in the struggle against slavery, and the militants who manned the picket lines that built the CIO.

It is noteworthy that the first three explosions of 1967—Nashville, Houston, and Jackson—were large-scale confrontations between black college students and the police. These battles, provoked by the cops, are indicative of the growing militancy of black students even in the traditionally conservative middleclass Afro-American colleges. They express the shift of politically conscious black students who are today reading Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X more than Albert Camus and Mahatma Gandhi, away from the liberal ideology of the civil-rights movement toward identification with black nationalism and the proletarian masses of the black ghettos.

The Vietnam war has deepened this student radicalism and strengthened the internationalist aspect of black nationalism. The nationalist students and radicals are the most vehement opponents of the war. They are acutely aware of the racist overtones of American imperialism's inhuman brutalization of nonwhite peoples. They more and more speak of the common bond between black people and the Vietnamese in their parallel struggles for self-determination. Jim Crow was institutionalized during the rise of American imperialism and it, in turn, was subtly used to justify the dehumanization of colonial exploitation. The heroic struggles and victories of the colonial masses, nonwhite in their overwhelming majority, are sources of pride and self-confidence for black nationalists.

Black students are starting to organize on the basis of their new nationalist consciousness by forming Afro-American campus organizations many of which are opposed to the war and the draft, as well as by organizing in black communities where their colleges are located. From their ranks will come new cadres to give sorely needed leadership for the struggle.

As long as no alternative to the capitalist parties exists, reformist alternatives such as a "third force" within the capitalist framework and black Democratic Party politicians will sap and disorient the radicalism of the black masses. The political vacuum also gives undue room

for "undergroundism" and other ultraleft substitutes for the open propaganda and education required in the long and hard task of gathering together the cadres and organizers of an independent black political party. Tactics of frustrated ultraleft groups lead to demoralization or victimization by police provocation, not to black control of the black community.

The organization and unification of black people and the development of a leadership have lagged behind the increase in number of people ready to fight back against the racism of American capitalism. The next stage of the struggle of Afro-Americans to control their own destiny demands a leadership and a program to develop a black political party which can organize and lead the struggle in all areas, including the electoral arena, and by any means necessary.

Student Radicalization and the Vietnam War

Antiwar sentiment is at present expressed more among the youth than in any other sector of the population. The student milieu was already sensitized by a previous radicalization that began to develop around the end of the 1950s in response to certain aspects of the colonial revolution and the Afro-American struggle in the U.S. This earlier radicalization was expressed in support to the sit-ins, the freedom rides, in solidarity with the Cuban revolution, the formation of the now defunct Student Peace Union and demonstrations for campus reforms. Opposition to U.S. involvement in Vietnam brought into political activity a wave of new and previously unaffected students many times the number of existing radical youth.

This student radicalization has special features and limits. Although it originated in response to events in the class struggle, it has not unfolded along class lines or developed a socialist or Marxist understanding of the world conflicts in progress. Developing in a period of relative quiescence of the labor movement and in the absence of a mass or influential socialist party, it has remained primarily a movement of militant moral protest in reaction to the hypocrisy and brutality of world capitalism.

The student radicals challenge the entire fabric of the present social system, questioning the truthfulness of its rulers and the legitimacy of their policies on issues ranging from the explanation of the Kennedy assassination to war crimes in Vietnam.

The character and conduct of the war cut across all the liberal bourgeois values which democratic-minded and idealistic youth have been taught to believe in. The government betrayals and lies, the genocidal aspects of the war and the crimes committed there under the Johnson administration have incited the strongest reactions. Most of those over twenty-one, who tried to vote for peace by supporting Johnson against Goldwater in the 1964 elections, felt they had been betrayed by the bombing of North Vietnam early in 1965. The moral revulsion and

the political level of the student radicals is voiced in the popular chant: "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today"?

While there has been a growing shift towards political sympathy with the struggles of the workers and peasants around the world, moral indignation remains the central element around which these students mobilize and around which new waves of reinforcements for the antiwar movement are won.

The New Antiwar Movement

The new movement based on the antiwar sentiment of broad sectors of the population grew directly out of student circles and is still marked by these origins. It was initiated early in the spring of 1965 with the organization of the April March on Washington called by the Students for a Democratic Society, coinciding with the chain of campus-based teach-ins across the country.

During the period of organizing for the 1965 March on Washington the nonexclusive character of the antiwar coalition was established in a fight with some leaders of the Socialist Party and League for Industrial Democracy. Since that time the Social Democrats and their allies have played a minor and peripheral role in the antiwar movement. This first big action not only cut across the stifling legacy of the past two decades of red baiting but set the example for periodic large-scale local and national street actions. These periodic actions have been the kind of independent political action in opposition to the imperialists in Washington that can be utilized by a massive but diversified milieu, not led by any dominant party or established mass organization.

Many of the features and resulting tactical problems of the antiwar movement have been unprecedented.

For the first time in American history a visible and vocal mass opposition expanded and was intensified during the opening stages of an imperialist war. The struggle involving this opposition has been conducted and hundreds of thousands have been mobilized for action without the existence of a mass labor or socialist party and outside the existing mass organizations.

The entire antiwar movement has developed and grown prior to a general labor radicalization. It has seen a split in the ranks of the pacifists that resulted in the emergence of a radical wing that has consistently opposed an imperialist war, not only before it broke out, but even more militantly while it is being fought.

The fact that no existing strong mass organization has become part of the antiwar struggle has reinforced the concept of the majority of antiwar radicals that no significant mass forces will move in an anti-capitalist direction. This has led to confusion over perspectives, especially the perspective for a mass alternative to the capitalist political parties and capitalist rule and to a groping search for effective tactics and forms of opposition to the war. The problem of widening and

deepening the opposition to the war has to be seen within this context.

The students have strengthened the left wing of the antiwar forces and continually pressured the conservative wing into more radical actions. Unlike the left-bourgeois liberals, the students by and large are not inclined to be patient or halfway critics of imperialist policies. The students pressed for a non-exclusive united front of all tendencies and organizations, which was actually constituted around periodic national protests and which has been the main organizational vehicle of the antiwar movement.

They played the central role in the fight to win the antiwar movement over to what has become the pivotal political demand: "Withdraw the U.S. troops."

Most importantly, the students from the first originated and pushed for mass mobilizations as the main mode of action against the imperialist warmakers. They were the key element both in terms of their own numbers and the work done to organize others. These mass demonstrations are the principal form of independent political action available to the antiwar movement in the absence of a mass working-class political party that might open up another line of action.

The antiwar movement has been the arena of continual struggle between the thrust of the student radicals and their revolutionary allies toward actions and organization independent of the capitalist political parties, and the class-collaborationist forces headed by the Communist Party and the bourgeois liberals who want to keep the antiwar movement tied to and ultimately used as a pressure group within the Democratic Party.

Organized into local and national coalitions, the antiwar "movement" is an ever-shifting sum of political tendencies, organizations and individuals. The components are widely differentiated so that the antiwar movement as such has no general political program. Each tendency and aggregation of tendencies has to be judged separately and on its own account.

The actions in the streets, which have been carried on by these broad united fronts, are wholly progressive and objectively anti-imperialist in character. That is why the issue of mass action has been the central dividing line in the movement. Opposition from the liberals, the Social Democrats and often the leaders of the Communist Party has had to be overridden before the antiwar movement could call for and carry out mass mobilizations against the belligerency of the Johnson administration in Vietnam. It has taken unremitting efforts to prevent class-collaborationist politics or impatient adventurist projects from being substituted for or diverting these mass actions.

The two-year series of mass mobilizations culminated on April 15, 1967, when the largest antiwar demonstrations in U.S. history were organized in New York and San Francisco right in the midst of an imperialist war. The success of the April 15 mobilization in drawing in new forces from the organizations of the black community and even a few trade-union figures, and the growth of the trade union division

of SANE indicate the openings that are becoming available to the antiwar movement to reach broader layers of the population.

The few reformist leaders who have been brought into the antiwar movement and those that can be expected to follow them play a dual and contradictory role. While they add weight to the right wing, they at the same time open up new possibilities for reaching out with antiwar propaganda and agitation to greater components of the mass movement. This advantage outweighs the danger represented by their moderating influence, provided the movement continues to expand and to engage in mass confrontations.

As the antiwar sentiment grows among the people, it will be increasingly difficult for leaders of mass organizations to stand aloof from antiwar protests. In adapting demagogically to the antiwar sentiment they will counterpose anew the issue of withdrawal versus the "negotiations" line which they espouse; they will attempt to reverse the non-exclusion policy of the antiwar movement in order to isolate the most militant sectors and the "Communists," and they will attempt to channel the movement behind pro-capitalist "peace" candidates.

At the same time they cannot avoid providing new and important openings in the labor movement and black community for antiwar appeals. Some young antiwar activists make the mistake of thinking that the mass of the working-class Americans will respond to nothing but "bread and butter" questions. They do initially express their lack of support to the war indirectly and when they act in large numbers they do so through their existing mass organizations. However, many of the same reactions and responses that move the student youth into action occur among the working people, black and white. Mothers and fathers, wives and friends, see their sons and men of their generation drafted and sent abroad to fight and die in a dirty colonial war. Johnson's course in Vietnam and the opposition to it are bound to further advance the politicalization of the labor movement and black community. The major contribution of the antiwar movement has been to make visible to the entire population the active presence of opposition to this war. This has helped create an atmosphere in which the mass movement itself can carry on struggles for gains in spite of the war.

Over the past two and a half years, the antiwar movement has provided a first-rate arena for training young militants. Those coming to socialism in the sixties have been given their first opportunity to learn how to do revolutionary work within a mass movement. They are learning through concrete experience how to withstand opportunist pressures as well as avoid the formalism and ultimatism of the ultra-left sectarians. The antiwar movement has been a school for applying the concepts of a transitional program designed to meet the issues as they exist while promoting anticapitalist consciousness and an anti-capitalist program and leadership.

The antiwar movement has also provided fresh object lessons on the power of cadres of the revolutionary party within a situation developing in a radical direction. The progress of a mass movement, it has

been shown once again comes in no small measure from the conscious intervention of the ideas and proposals of the Marxist vanguard.

The struggle for decisive influence among the antiwar forces is an essential part of the preparation for leadership of future mass movements on a much broader and more highly advanced political basis, especially in competition with the line of "peaceful coexistence" with capitalism promoted by the Communist Party.

Since the November 1965 convention in Washington called by the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam, the debate and struggle over policies within the antiwar movement has underscored and reinforced all these lessons. At that convention the NCC sought to impose class-collaborationist policies on the antiwar movement. As against this, the most militant sector of the left wing advanced the slogan of withdraw the troops and the line of building a broad united front to initiate mass actions. The successful outcome of this struggle turned out to be the major determining factor in the subsequent evolution of the antiwar movement.

Since its formation in December 1966, the Student Mobilization Committee, has been the most advanced expression of student radicalism in the antiwar movement. One of the initiators of the April 15 mass actions in New York and San Francisco, its program has three central planks—Bring the Troops Home Now, Abolish the Draft, and No Campus Complicity with the War Effort. As it draws into its ranks a significant number of the thousands of students who demonstrate around these very demands it will become the largest and most influential wing of the antiwar movement. It will also be a bulwark, as the 1968 elections approach, against the antiwar movement's substituting various class-collaborationist schemes around the Democratic Party for militant and mass actions against the war.

The 1968 Presidential Elections

Between the 1964 presidential elections and the 1966 congressional elections, the most important development in American politics was the erosion of the "consensus" around the Johnson-Humphrey ticket. Part of this process was the rapid crumbling of pro-Johnson sentiment on his left flank.

The new stage of escalation of the Vietnam conflict generated splits over this issue not only in the labor movement and among the major organizations of the black community but also within the ruling class. These disagreements at the top are not fundamental; none of them yet propose to get out of Vietnam. But spokesmen for the contending groupings clash over how best to promote the imperialist interests of the United States under the given conditions.

On one side these openly expressed differences within the ruling class have facilitated the development of the antiwar movement while that

division in turn has been deepened as the antiwar mobilizations have grown and clearly represent a vast sentiment. This could be seen when congressional critics of the war reacted sharply after April 15 against McCarthy-like attacks on the antiwar movement and those in the bourgeois camp opposing further escalation of the war. They responded to General Westmoreland's verbal tirade against the antiwar movement by defending the right to dissent, particularly their own. At the same time, these "doves" joined the "hawks" in approving the biggest war budget in U.S. "peacetime" history.

The differences that have appeared and are growing in the ruling class over tactics in Vietnam are reflected in the jockeying around prospective candidates for the 1968 presidential campaign. This campaign will rapidly become the focal center for the debate over Vietnam. In this sense the 1968 presidential campaign was off to an early start for the ruling class, the antiwar movement, the mass organizations and the radical vanguard.

The strategy and tactics of those in the two capitalist parties who are hesitant about the war will be worked out with two possibilities in mind: (1) blocking Johnson's renomination by the Democratic Party; (2) nominating a Republican "peace" candidate. Neither alternative seems likely.

The Communist Party is faced with a serious problem. After working for three decades in the Democratic Party it is difficult for them to shift over to support of a "lesser evil" Republican, should the Democrats renominate Johnson. Thus they incline to favor a national campaign in 1968 on the model of Wallace's Progressive Party in 1948. But conditions are very different today. They can scarcely aspire to setting up even a third peace ticket under their own steam with any semblance of broadness. But they do look yearningly to a "third ticket" coming out of the "peace movement" which would give them an anti-Johnson cover and yet permit continued political activities in the Democratic Party.

Under the impact of the Vietnam war, bids have been made to organize some kind of electoral activity to the left of the Democratic Party on the issues of war, racism and inflation. To a certain degree these reflect praiseworthy attempts by the more advanced sectors of the American people to break the capitalist monopoly in the electoral field. However, formations like the National Conference for New Politics (NCNP), under an inveterate reformist leadership, seek to exploit this sentiment and deliberately channel it towards class-collaborationist politics. Their initial attempt to field a "third peace ticket" ended in an utter fiasco at the NCNP September 1967 Chicago convention. The majority of the delegates, many of them young activists from the student movement, rejected by a narrow majority the formation of a national presidential slate. This set back the timetable of the Communist Party especially, which was banking on an NCNP decision to field a peace ticket.

The gamut of tactics now under consideration by these "new

politicians" includes the election of "anti-LBJ" delegates to the Democratic convention, a third "peace and freedom" ticket, the defeat of LBJ in at least one presidential primary, local grassroots organizing for both Democratic primaries and independent campaigns, and support for those "dove" Democratic and Republican congressmen who have been marked out for defeat by right-wing forces.

1968 SWP Presidential Campaign

To whatever form of class-collaborationist politics that emerges from pseudo-independent political circles, "new" or "old," the Socialist Workers Party will counterpose its class-struggle national election campaign.

The 1968 campaign takes place within the context of a continuing radicalization. It is important to note the specific characteristics of this radicalization which differs from that of the 1944-46 period both in its initial form and in its prospective political evolution.

In 1944-46, labor took the lead, pulling the movement for civil rights and the middle class along. Today the radicalized students and the antiwar and black freedom movements are in the vanguard with labor lagging far behind. During the freeze of the cold war, general prosperity and political reaction, all labor radicalization was shut off and cut off. The civil rights movement was contained by illusory hopes in legal reforms like the 1954 school desegregation decision and the student movement remained relatively passive throughout the fifties. Today a thaw has begun.

The main difference between the union-led militancy of the 1944-46 period and today's emerging radicalization will be its tendency to move onto a political level. This gives exceptional importance to the 1968 presidential campaign of the Socialist Workers Party. Since there is no immediate prospect for a labor party based on the unions, the class character of the incipient political radicalization can be expressed in 1968 only through a socialist campaign on a national level. The single available electoral avenue for identifying with the perspective of working-class struggle against capitalism is through support of the candidates and platform of the vanguard of the working class, the Socialist Workers Party. This in turn should hold out increased possibilities for direct recruitment to the American Trotskyist movement.

The political weakness of today's student radicals is not due simply to their numbers nor to their middleclass background. In fact they are much more numerous than previous generations of students and a far higher and growing percentage come from working class families. Their political weakness is primarily due to the fact that they are familiar with only an uncombative labor movement and see in practice no working class alternative to the ruling class parties. They are deterred from accepting a Marxist outlook by the numerical

weakness of American socialism, the repellent legacy of Stalinism, and the small size of the revolutionary party. These circumstances lead them to reject the concept of the working class as the prime agent of social change. Groping for answers and possible alternatives, they are highly susceptible to political formulas that offer seemingly plausible substitutes such as "independent" formations and militant "third forces" that stand above the classes.

The labor movement is inherently capable of building a labor party just as the black community is inherently capable of building a black party. But the students and middleclass radicals do not themselves constitute a social base upon which can be built a viable student or "new left" party. To fight effectively against capitalism, they must be won over politically to the working class. At this stage that means support to the program of its revolutionary party. This program offers the alternative of independent working-class political action and support for an independent political party of Afro-Americans, differentiated from all forms of class-collaborationist "independent" new politics.

If both the openings and the limitations are kept in mind, the 1968 presidential campaign offers the Socialist Workers Party its most favorable opportunity in two decades to recruit new members and to increase the influence of its class struggle program in opposition to the class-collaborationist lines of other radical groupings, particularly the Communist Party with its Khrushchevist orientation of "peaceful coexistence." For all members of the Socialist Workers Party this campaign must be the central focus of activity from now through November, 1968.

To the American people the following message will be urgently conveyed: "This is not your war. The Democratic and Republican Parties are not your parties. Your enemy is not the people of Vietnam but the capitalist rulers in Washington. Stop the war; abolish the capitalist draft; release all draftees; bring the troops home now!"

The Socialist Workers candidates and campaigners will be leading activists in the actions of the antiwar movement—from the referenda campaigns to the mass street demonstrations. The battle for correct political leadership within the antiwar movement will be carried to a higher level as the Socialist Workers Party explains and expounds its electoral platform. The antiwar militants will be urged to organize and reach out to the mass movement, to the trade unions, the black people, the GIs and the youth, thereby broadening and deepening the opposition to the war and multiplying their effectiveness.

The only uncompromising and principled "peace ticket" in the field will be the slate nominated by the Socialist Workers Party. The Socialist Workers Party will solicit support, contributions and aid on the basis of its clear antiwar stand.

The Socialist Workers Party will campaign to popularize a program of uncompromising and independent struggle by the mass of Americans for their basic needs. It is a program that points toward a

complete break from collaboration with the capitalist rulers, in everything from day-to-day struggles to electoral action. When black people, and workers as a whole, cease supporting the Democratic and Republican Parties and organize parties of their own, a gigantic step forward will have been taken in the struggle against capitalism.

The Socialist Workers Party will campaign to:

Support the black people's fight for freedom, justice, and equality through black power: Black people have the unconditional right to control their own communities. The black communities should have control over their schools; and city, state and federal funds should be made available to them in whatever amounts needed to overcome years of deprivation in education.

Appropriate whatever funds are necessary to provide jobs for every unemployed Afro-American, with preferential hiring and upgrading to equalize opportunities in apprenticeship programs, skilled trades, and higher paying technical and supervisory occupations.

In place of price-gouging merchants and landlords preying on the black community, black nonprofit cooperative shops and housing projects should be set up with federal financial aid. Price committees elected by the community should police prices.

It is the right of Afro-Americans to keep arms and organize themselves for self-defense against attacks from any quarter.

Keep the troops and racist cops out of the black community, and replace them with deputized, elected representatives of the community. As an immediate step, organize genuine review boards, elected by the black community, to control the cops.

For an independent black political party to organize and lead the struggle for black power on all fronts and by any means necessary.

Support labor's fight against inflation and government control: No freeze on wages. For union escalator clauses to offset rises in the cost of living. The trade unions should take the lead in setting up general committees of consumers to regulate prices.

Repeal all anti-labor laws. Defense of the unconditional right to strike. Complete union independence from government control and interference. Rank-and-file control over all union affairs.

A reduced work week with no cut in pay, and unemployment compensation at the union wage scale for all jobless persons 18 and over, whether or not they have been previously employed.

For a crash program of public housing and other public works. Take the billions spent on war and use them to build decent, low-rent homes for the working millions who need them, and to build schools and hospitals instead of bombs.

Equal rights in the union and on the job for black workers and for members of other minorities, and full union support to the Afro-American struggle for equality.

For an independent labor party based on the trade unions, to defend the rights of all working people against the parties of the bosses, and to fight for a workers government.

Support the demands of America's youth:

The right to vote at 18.

Free public education through the university level, with adequate pay for all students who need it. Student participation in all university decisions and functioning.

Support to young people's rejection of the sterile cultural values of our decaying capitalist order.

For a planned, democratic socialist America: Nationalize the major corporations and banks under the control of democratically elected workers committees. Plan the economy democratically for the benefit of all instead of for the profit of the few.

A socialist America will be an America of peace and prosperity, without poverty or slums or unemployment, and without wars like that in Vietnam. It will forever end the threat of imperialist war with its nightmare specter of a nuclear conflagration. It will put an end to racism and, for the first time after over 400 years of oppression, guarantee unconditionally, the right of self-determination for black Americans. It will signal an unparalleled growth in culture, freedom and in the development of the individual.

* * *

The Socialist Workers Party expects a number of direct gains from the 1968 presidential campaign.

Foremost will be the recruitment of young militants opposed to the war on one or another ground. The extent and the quality of this recruitment will provide a fresh gauge of the point reached in the process of radicalization underway in the United States as well as a measure of the timeliness and correctness of the program of the Socialist Workers Party and its capacity to swing into action.

Beyond this, the campaign will bring the voice of revolutionary socialism to hundreds of thousands of people who will be influenced to one degree or another. It will see the dissemination of socialist literature on a broad scale at a time when political attention is turned receptively toward the electoral arena.

Finally, the Socialist Workers Party will stand out with greater prominence as a revolutionary socialist grouping noted for its principled program, its capacity for struggle and sacrifice, its ability to renew its ranks, and its unyielding devotion to the struggle for a socialist America in a socialist world.

THE CASE for an INDEPENDENT BLACK POLITICAL PARTY

The most dynamic demand among Afro-Americans today is for black power. Although they are the biggest minority in this country, numbering 22 million people or over 11 per cent of the population, making up about 20 per cent of the work force, and due to become the majority in ten of the larger Northern cities by the 1970s, black Americans have been permitted little power of any kind, economic, social, cultural or political. The denial of real or proportional political representation to such a key sector is one of the most glaring injustices of this capitalist society.

How has the racist ruling class managed to keep black people in such a politically powerless state? How can this condition be overcome? This is one of the most pressing problems facing black Americans — and their future depends upon finding the correct solution to it.

To the extent that black people have participated in politics to date, it has been almost entirely through the two big capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans, that is within terms laid down by the representatives of their oppressors and exploiters. The main reason for the meager results achieved after 13 years of struggle since the 1954 Supreme Court decision has been their dependence upon the two capitalist parties which have conceded little but a series of phony "civil rights" bills.

The lack of any substantial gains through this avenue underscores the need for organizing and exercising genuinely independent black political power. Here are some of the reasons why this kind of political action can bring considerable benefits to the black masses, give maximum leverage to their united power, and prepare them for the tasks of revolutionizing this oppressive racist capitalist society.

Why an Independent Black Party is Needed

The black people's lack of political power is so serious because politics is the key to breaking out of the vicious circle of social, economic and cultural deprivation and discrimination imposed on them by this system. It is not something far away from their everyday lives or

divorced from their basic needs. Political power means the capacity to assert the needs and aspirations of a group and to see that they are fulfilled. Full political power means that a group runs its own affairs and determines its own destiny. Even the possession of some measure of political power means that the group has a voice in deciding the terms of its existence.

In the United States today black people are effectively excluded from all the crucial decisions affecting their fate. The policies that determine how they will live are made by others and imposed upon them. Every aspect of Afro-American life is governed by the decisions of the Democratic and Republican agents of the capitalist rulers of this country. Their actions (or inactions) perpetuate inequality, poverty, degradation, police brutality, insecurity, unemployment, low-paying jobs, bad schools, inadequate housing and medical facilities, a shorter life-span and all the other evils suffered by black Americans.

These intolerable conditions cannot be fundamentally changed except through a massive, united, all-out fight that hits the Big Business rulers at the center of their grip. This is their control of legal authority and state power. But in order to carry out an effective fight for black political power, Afro-Americans must have their own organization under their own control.

The masters of this country understand the need for political action that benefits them and for political organizations that serve them. That is why they have political parties—not just one, but two—which they control and through which they exercise a political monopoly.

Of course, it is not only through such parties that they maintain their rule. They have the ownership of industry, the power of money and credit, control of the mass media and schools, and ultimately the police and armed forces. But their power does not come out of the barrel of the gun alone. If they relied solely on naked force, the resources of their rulership would soon be exhausted by an incessant battle between the oppressors and the oppressed. Like other master classes throughout history, our own rulers practice deception to make their power and misrule seem legitimate and induce the subjugated and exploited classes to accept it without resistance.

The two-party shell game, and especially the portrayal of the Democratic Party as a party of the people, is an important part of this deception. While the role of this party in upholding and enforcing racism is clear in the South, it wears the mask of liberalism in the North. But in practice it is no less racist than the Republican Party there. Under duress it throws black people a few concessions, a few posts, a few tokens to placate them though it has no intention of ending racism. The two-party setup fosters the illusion that black people will get freedom through gradual reform of capitalism and its institutions. The history of the past hundred years testifies that this is a lie. Black people will never be liberated by supporting political parties that are controlled by their oppressors and that are so constructed and operated that they will always be controlled by their oppressors.

Big Business and the racist system it preserves for its own profit cannot be challenged for control of legitimate authority so long as voters are restricted to choosing between the candidates and programs of the two parties under their thumb. However, the tradition of electoral democracy which the rich manipulate for their own ends is potentially a gun which can be loaded against them. It claims to permit people the right to establish their own political parties which can take over and run local, state or national government. Thus a black party independent of capitalist control could take advantage of this right to gain control of some areas of government. If the capitalists tried to prevent this, that would expose the farce of their electoral democracy and create conditions where the masses could legitimately fight "by any means necessary" for freedom against the tyranny of the very rich white minority—a far smaller minority than the millions of black people.

If it is to move ahead, the black liberation movement must be able to counter the enormous facilities for political deception used by its enemy. The 1964 campaign provided convincing evidence of the hold the treacherous two-party system has over black voters. No group in the country supported the presidential ticket of the Democratic Party in greater proportion than the black voters (almost 95 per cent). What did they get in return? A civil rights law in 1965 that is largely unenforced, a civil rights bill in 1966 that was filibustered to death, a penny-ante "war on poverty" that leaves 90 per cent of the black people as poor as they ever were, housing and schooling that are more segregated then they were in 1964.

The ouster of Adam Clayton Powell from his congressional seat is one more proof of the tricksterism of the Democratic Party. Many black people looked upon Powell as a representative spokesman who had acquired a position of considerable influence on the summits of power in Washington. But he was only a lieutenant, a tool of the Democratic machine which neither he nor his black supporters controlled in any respect. So the real powers could easily get rid of him once they felt he no longer served a useful purpose.

The same is true about the others who work in the two capitalist parties and occupy decorative posts in them or at their mercy. While they get personal advantages and honors from these positions, that does not change the conditions of the black masses. How much good does the appointment of a black Supreme Court Justice do if the entire local, state and federal legal system is stacked against justice for the Afro-American?

The real face, and not the hypocritical mask, of the Democratic Party can be seen in its "white backlash" aspect which has come more into the open since 1964. Ex-governor Wallace of Alabama is preparing a nationwide bid for the presidency while still a ranking Democrat. And Johnson's vice president, Hubert Humphrey, publicly embraces the notorious Georgia racist, Democratic Governor Lester Maddox.

The notion that the Democratic Party (or its Republican duplicate)

can be reformed from a party of racism into a party of liberation is wishful thinking to the point of fantasy. As Malcolm X said, a chicken is not constructed to produce a duck egg; similarly, a capitalist party is not constructed to produce freedom for Afro-Americans. The Democratic Party is capable of giving concessions, especially to certain middleclass elements whom the capitalists expect to use to contain and police the black masses. But it is incapable of promoting and making the profound economic and political changes needed to solve the problems of millions of oppressed. Black people who think they are going to "take over" part of the Democratic organization and "use" it in the interests of the black masses are fooling themselves or the masses; they themselves are the ones who get taken over and used.

Equally futile is the concept of a "third force" advanced by some black power advocates and by Adam Clayton Powell. According to this proposal, black Democrats, black Republicans and black independents should get together politically, bargain as a united bloc with the two capitalist parties, and deliver or withhold the votes they influence depending on which one offered the best bargain. Although this is called "independent political action," it is nothing of the kind. It is a spurious substitute because it would leave black voters dependent on the promises of two racist parties, rather than of one.

At most, it could bring a few more concessions rather than any fundamental changes. And it cannot even bring many concessions because it overlooks the fact that the two capitalist parties are controlled by the same forces, to whom it does not much matter whether black people vote Democratic or Republican. Just so long as that is their only choice, just so long as there is no alternative to the two parties they control, the ruling powers have the black voters at their mercy.

The only way that black people can get out of the Democratic fire without falling into the Republican frying pan is to establish their own party. They must do this because neither major party is free of capitalist control. In most large industrial countries there are labor and other non-capitalist parties based on the working people and their organizations. If such a party existed here, black people might find a real alternative in joining and supporting it.

But organized labor in the United States missed its chances in the 1930s and again in the late 1940s to cut loose from the Democratic Party and create its own party with the perspective of taking political power away from the capitalists and establishing a government of the workers and their allies. Just as Uncle Toms have failed to lead black people onto an independent road, so too at critical junctures in the past, union bureaucrats have prevented the American workers from forming their own party. An independent mass party of the workers will eventually be formed here as elsewhere. But it will not arise until the workers become radicalized and able to defeat and replace their present capitalist-minded misleaders.

Black people cannot wait until that happens—they need political weapons now. Whatever allies they may get in the future, they have

no alternative now but to build a political party of their own.

Some ultra-lefts who are deeply disillusioned with the two major parties (or even certain radical parties) reject all political action as useless or diversionary. They mistakenly identify politics with narrow electoral activity or vote-catching. They fail to understand what politics really is or can be and what a powerful impetus an independent black party could give to the revolutionary movement.

There are different, and even opposite, kinds of politics. What Americans see all around them, and what usually passes for politics, is the phony, status quo politics of the racists and shysters, the horse-trading and hypocrisy of the Democrats and Republicans in which a few get rich at the expense of the many.

But there can be another type of politics. When black people get together and fight for control of the schools in their community, that is political action. When black people come out into the streets, pushed beyond endurance by racist cops, gouging merchants and landlords and all the other miseries of ghetto life, that too is a kind of politics.

The trouble with these attempts to change the policies that affect ghetto life is that they are limited, sporadic, unorganized, semi-conscious and unsustained. If such mass actions and direct struggles were combined with a consistently organized struggle to gain political power, if they were initiated and led by a political party that rightly claimed to speak and act for the struggling masses, this would be much more than a vote-catching device or an electoral doublecross.

Electoral activity need not be the opposite of revolutionary struggle; it has been and can be an essential spur to it. It can be a valuable part of the arsenal of struggle techniques in a war where every means necessary must be employed.

History has known political parties that combined running candidates for office with mass struggles under their leadership to abolish oppressive social systems. Lenin's Bolsheviks are the best-known example.

A political party based on the ghetto could carry out many worthwhile activities in addition to running for or holding political offices. It could conduct education about black history and revolutionary struggles elsewhere; take measures to form cooperatives and credit systems to ease the economic squeeze; defend black victims of government persecution; initiate literary campaigns among adults; organize Afro-American cultural affairs and community recreation. Its contests for or control of legitimate authority would give it much more leverage in fights against landlords, brutal cops, and job discrimination. It could organize neighborhood patrols against crime and rackets and demand an end to the alien and repressive police powers of racist rulers. It could provide a broad framework for unifying various black groups in common struggle.

It will take more than spontaneous eruptions to win black liberation; it will require an organized, sustained, long-term fight. If a black party starts organizing and using its leverage effectively, the masses

will learn from it, follow it, develop their consciousness in and through it. Such a party can become the best means for breaking out of the trap of capitalist misery and harnessing the enormous revolutionary potential of the ghetto masses.

The Nature of an Independent Black Party

The Newark, Detroit and other uprisings that rocked the country during the summer of 1967 have raised some basic questions in the minds of many militants. They ask: Hasn't the black liberation movement already gone beyond the stage of electoral politics? Isn't it too late to be talking about assembling the forces to build a party, about independent campaigns, candidates and programs? Aren't we close to the final showdown with the white capitalist power structure? Hasn't the time of the bullet superseded the casting of the ballot? Isn't resort to armed struggle in the form of guerrilla warfare the only effective mode of action on the agenda? Don't we need an army, or at least dedicated bands of guerrilla fighters, rather than a political party?

Such questions are not out of place; they have been imperatively posed by the fierce conflicts which have occurred in many cities and will flare up again. They have to be squarely faced and answered by all those concerned with the progress and prospects of the liberation struggle. Here is our view.

The explosions of 1967 testify to the revolutionary temper and potential of the black freedom struggle and mark its highest point. They demonstrate that the Afro-American minority is destined to play a vanguard role in the social changes leading up to the American revolution. Although the uprisings ran out of steam in a few days or were put down with heavy casualties and suffering, they are an inspiration to all genuine revolutionists, black or white.

With few exceptions the inhabitants of the ghetto did not feel that they met with defeat. On the contrary, their self-confidence and combativeness have been enhanced. By shattering the image of their alleged docility, they taught an important lesson to the ruling class. They also dealt a stiff blow to the myth that mass action by workers is no longer effective in modern, sophisticated, urbanized America. Finally they showed that the demand for black control of the black community is not a fringe notion in the ghettos but expresses the will of its residents.

While these determined demonstrations go far to refute the concept that the ghetto is "powerless," it would be unwise to overlook or keep quiet about the shortcomings of these historic actions. The uprisings were spontaneous—nobody planned or instigated them, despite the lies of the witch-hunters who are looking for scapegoats and excuses for devising new repressive measures. They were uncontrolled eruptions against unbearable conditions.

Although in size and scope they were the most impressive upheavals the United States has ever seen, they did not go beyond the stage of protest. After they had subsided, the relation of forces had changed but the lives of the ghetto dwellers were not any better. For example, the social and economic conditions in Watts remain essentially the same two years after the explosion there. The black freedom fighters still face the task of organizing the forces required to abolish the root causes of their degradation.

Malcolm X stated that the revolutionary movement must resolve to achieve "freedom by any means necessary." The specific question at hand now is: What means are now necessary to best advance the struggle at this point? That is, what tactics are in order under the given conditions?

Some advanced elements in the black communities insist that only armed struggle is warranted and any one who advises different tactics is cowardly or worse. They believe that any sort of political organization and action is incompatible with direct action. Their militancy is undeniable. But small bands of men, however courageous and self-sacrificing, cannot serve as a substitute for the organized urban masses.

The main task at the present rudimentary stage of the struggle for power is not to hurl unorganized, unprepared masses against the most highly organized, centralized and formidable power in the entire world, and even less to pit small and scattered groups of armed men against it. The basic problem is how most effectively to organize and educate these masses and equip them with the proper understanding, leadership, program and perspectives.

The time for armed struggle does not come merely because a few daring rebels are ready for it, talk about it or want it. It ripens as the culmination of a prolonged process of mass mobilization after other available methods of action have been tried and found wanting.

So far as the black masses are concerned, the stage of electoral activity has not been exhausted; in fact, it has hardly been tried. The same black people who came out into the streets and tore up districts in Newark, Detroit and elsewhere have still not broken with the Democratic Party, the party of the white supremacists, exploiters and war-makers!

A year after the big uprising in Cleveland and only a few months after Newark and Detroit, almost 95 per cent of Cleveland's registered Afro-Americans turned out to nominate and elect the black man Stokes as mayor on the Democratic ticket. In some ghetto districts Stokes received every black vote. In the same way a black mayor was elected in the steel center of Gary, Indiana.

Some will say that these developments only go to show how backward black people are. What's actually bad is not their use of electoral action to get rid of hated city officials but the fact that this weapon was used along the old lines and is still wielded by the same old hands. The black voters in Cleveland, Gary and other places will

now have to go through more experiences of disillusionment with their black Democratic mayors. Black militants can hasten this process only by showing an alternative acceptable to the masses at their present level of consciousness—and nothing will meet this need better today than advocacy of a political party controlled by the masses and not their oppressors.

The ultra-left opponents of political action, or abstainers from it, are mistaken in four respects. 1. They hastily and uncritically transfer tactics and techniques which proved applicable at the advanced stage of the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnam revolutions to the far different, more complex and less matured conditions in the United States. 2. They one-sidedly believe that electoral action is incompatible with any form of direct action whereas the two can be combined or alternated to the advantage of both. 3. They proceed on the assumption that electoral action has been bypassed or outmoded when it is only entering a new phase. 4. Finally, in their exclusive preoccupation with armed struggle and associated forms of direct action, however legitimate these may be, they fail to come to grips with the most pressing problem of the present hour. That is the barely begun task of unifying into a cohesive force and educating the millions of ghetto dwellers who must shoulder the colossal assignment of overturning white supremacy and radically transforming capitalist America. This prolonged and difficult job cannot be impatiently waved aside or skipped over by those who aspire to lead the black revolution.

That first requires the organization of these masses into a formidable and independent political force. Blowing up the Democratic Party would be an explosion of greater magnitude and consequences than tearing down a hundred stores. Smashing the two-party system—which the strategically situated black minority can accomplish—would do a thousand times more damage to the structure of American capitalism than burning down a whole city. These political objectives can be achieved with a powerful and well-organized independent black party.

What Makes an Independent Black Political Party Possible

What makes it both possible and urgent for black people to build an independent party, which the ruling class does not want, is the system of racial segregation which the ruling class created and intends to maintain.

Segregation and urbanization have brought the black people together *physically*, especially in the politically decisive big cities where in many cases they will soon be a majority of the inhabitants. Segregation and discrimination are also bringing the black masses together *psychologically*. It is now necessary to unite them *politically* on local, state and national levels.

The rulers of this country do not care to have black people think of themselves as a distinctive group—with group consciousness, group

interests and group objectives. They go to considerable trouble to persuade blacks to accept the same myths about "individual progress" that they have used to brainwash white Americans. But in pursuing their own ends the dominant powers create the very thing they don't want. They not only force black people to live together; they also make them feel, think and react together and in similar ways to their oppression. The ghetto whose original function was to facilitate economic exploitation and to split the working class now plays an additional role unwelcome to the powers that be. It can serve as a base and force to unite black people politically.

If the capitalist class had abolished racism, an independent black party would not have been possible. If the labor movement had broken with capitalist politics and launched a revolutionary struggle along socialist lines that included the abolition of racism as one of its key demands, an independent black party would not have been likely. Such a party is now possible and likely because capitalist development has created the objective preconditions for it and closed off other avenues for effective political struggle, and because other anticapitalist forces, at least for the time being, have not opened up alternative roads for political opposition.

A base for an independent black party already exists and only awaits serious efforts to organize it. In mid-1966, according to a national poll made in *Newsweek*, 7 percent of the black people said they were in favor of operating as a "separate force" in politics, rather than through the Democrats or Republicans. That survey was made prior to the ouster of Adam Clayton Powell from Congress, which added greatly to resentment against the two major parties and disillusionment in working through them.

To be sure, 7 per cent is a small minority of the black population. But it is not an insignificant minority when an independent party has not yet been started or widely discussed, when it is only an idea, and before it has had any opportunity to show it can be established, work and produce favorable results. No political party *starts* with a majority of the people it hopes to enlist. The majority has to be won over, through struggle and education, by the more far-seeing minority that creates the party. Seven per cent of the black population amounts to a million or so adults and young people in their late teens. This is surely enough to launch a new party and sustain it long enough to carry out the tasks of educating, mobilizing and winning the adherence of a majority of Afro-Americans.

An independent black party can unite the Afro-American masses of this country, North and South, urban and rural. It can draw into activity millions who have felt that politics is futile and it can raise the political understanding of black people as a whole. It can take over the political life of the black community. In fact, this is the only way the slogan and concept of black power can be politically realized.

In all areas where black people are a majority, it can run and elect to office representatives who will not have obligations and allegiances

to the capitalist parties and who will be responsible to the black community. A well-organized continuing black party, democratically controlled by its ranks, can control its own candidates in office more strictly and thoroughly than any committee that is set up for a single election campaign can do.

A strong black party will not only isolate and destroy the Democratic and Republican party machinery in the ghetto, doing away with two-timing political Uncle Toms, but will bring about a vast increase in black representation at all levels of government. Instead of five or six members of Congress who are tied to the capitalist parties and subject to their pressures, there could be 50 or 60 who owed their election and allegiance to an independent black party. Instead of a relatively few state legislators and municipal councilmen, there could be a large bloc of hundreds and thousands of black men and women elected to office as genuine representatives and spokesmen for their people. They could take over the operation of big cities in the North as well as small counties in the South. For the first time black Americans would have a political voice that really spoke for them, a political weight that could not be ignored or swept aside, a political power that could make itself felt, both for defensive and offensive purposes.

Representatives of the black people will be able to govern in areas where they are a majority. In other areas, including Congress, they will be able to fight and or negotiate more effectively than in the past. Both in situations that call for political combat and situations that call for political negotiating, the representatives of an independent black party would compel respect from both their foes and their friends and would extract far more concessions than Negro Democrats and Republicans ever have done up to now because they would be bargaining from a position of strength.

If an independent black party accomplished only these things, its organization would be justified. But by its mere existence it will accomplish other things as well. The massive withdrawal of black voters from the Democratic Party—not to the Republicans, not into electoral abstention, but into a powerful party of their own—would shake the political structure of this country from top to bottom.

This comes from one of the basic facts of American life today. The black man can't stand up erect, can't even exercise his democratic rights (that's what independent political organization would signify), without repercussions spreading throughout the United States. White men, rich or poor, upper or middle or lower class, would have to move over or stand up to or alter their stance in some other ways. When large numbers of black people act on their own, a lot of other people, like it or not, will have to act and react too. When black people will move on their own account in the political field, others will also find themselves moving politically, or being moved.

The Democratic Party is usually predominant not because it is controlled by the capitalists (this fact is kept hidden or denied as much as possible). Its strength comes from the support received from a com-

bination of sizeable non-capitalist forces — the unions, segments of the middle class, the unemployed, the pensioners and retirees along with the great majority of black people. The defection of the black voters will create an immediate crisis for this Democratic coalition. Without the black vote, the Democrats will be unable to carry the big cities and thereby have great difficulties in winning national elections and control of the White House or Congress. Since the Democratic coalition is bound together not by any principles or identity of interests, but by the belief that it can win national and lesser elections, its growing incapacity to do so will undermine the coalition's reasons for existence and in the end break it up.

Inside the unions those elements that are discontented with the pro-Democratic policy of the bureaucracy (and they are more numerous than is now apparent) will be strengthened and find it easier to win support for a struggle to establish an independent labor party. Old alignments will disintegrate and new ones will be formed. An independent party will be the best means for black people to protect and promote their welfare. It will also be the best way for them to forge new alliances with other non-capitalist forces in the conditions that will ensue after the two-party system crumbles.

Back in Reconstruction days after the Civil War, political action by black freedmen in the South improved educational facilities, equalized taxes, cut down illiteracy, abolished imprisonment for debt and instituted many other reforms in city, county and state governments. Picture what unified political action by millions of Afro-Americans could accomplish today!

The Nature of an Independent Black Party

The character of an independent black party will, of course, be determined by its founders and members in accord with the needs and possibilities as they will see them at the time the party is organized. Without being able at this time to answer such questions concretely, it is nevertheless possible on the basis of past experience to discern certain problems that the builders of an independent black party will have to be concerned about both in the preparatory and initial phases of its organization.

How radical will such a party be? In terms of the political spectrum in the United States, a political party created to the left of the Democratic Party and in opposition to it will inescapably be labeled radical. How radical it will actually be, and what kind of radicalism it will actually express, will depend on the composition and outlook of the leaders and forces who launch the party and their evolution as they operate in the political arena. If, to them, independence of the capitalist parties means independence from capitalist politics, then it will surely be a radical party. The chances of this are strong because black militants and revolutionaries will probably be the chief advo-

cates and founders of an independent party. But in the final analysis the degree of its radicalism will depend on the relationship of forces inside the groups that form and compose the new party.

Will it be a purely electoral party, or a party seeking to intervene and involve the masses in every area of struggle—economic and social as well as political—that affects the interests of black people? Will it seek to only elect candidates to office or will it also seek to mobilize and educate the masses by participating in and leading rent strikes, boycotts, demonstrations for jobs and control of decent schools, against police brutality and military interventions against colonial freedom fighters like the war in Vietnam? It is hard to see how an independent black party could become a mass force without following the practice of total involvement.

Will it be an all-black party (like the Freedom Now Party of 1963-4) or a party controlled and led by blacks (like the Lowndes County Freedom Party)? This is a question of tactical expediency, not of principle. Both approaches have advantages and drawbacks which will have to be carefully weighed.

The founders of the Freedom Now Party believed that an all-black organization would be more attractive to the black masses. Some of them still thought this was the best approach after the Freedom Now Party collapsed, while others felt it had been a mistake, not because of what white people thought about it but because they concluded it had been a deterrent to the recruitment of black supporters.

The founders of the Lowndes County Freedom Party in Alabama, on the other hand, left membership open to anyone who accepted its program and worked loyally for it. Despite this, control and leadership of the party remain with black people. The feeling among young militants in the North today is decidedly in favor of all-black organizations and they are likely to demand an all-black party when one is formed.

Just as it is difficult to envisage an independent black party confining itself exclusively to electoral activity, so it is difficult to imagine that its program would be restricted to so-called "racial" issues alone. Of course an independent black party will proceed from the needs of the black community but this very concern will inevitably lead it to consider positions and take actions on the most vital and urgent national and international issues.

When it opposes the drafting of black youth to kill colored people in Vietnam, it will be impelled to take a position for or against the war itself; its representatives in Congress will have to vote for or against military appropriations. When it demands jobs for blacks, it will have to take a stand on the fight for a shorter work week, a minimum wage, adequate compensation for all the unemployed. When it demands funds to replace the slums with decent housing for black people, it will have to take a position on the national budget and how it is divided. When it demands the right to control the schools in the black community, it will also have to take a position on the source of taxes

and the way they are allocated.

Inevitably too, at some point, an independent black party will have to decide whether decent conditions of life, equality and freedom for the black people are really attainable under capitalism or whether a basically different, non-exploitative system is necessary — and whether a change of such magnitude can be effected through reform or requires revolutionary mass struggle. This will squarely pose the issue of capitalism versus socialism to the leaders, members and supporters of a party of black emancipation.

In the early stages many important and fundamental questions of program and perspective will very likely be left untouched, or even misjudged, as tends to happen at the beginning of every new party. These will have to be thought through and fought out in the course of the party's development as it grapples with the problems involved in creating a better life for all Afro-Americans.

Two Pioneer Experiences and Their Lessons

The two most significant recent experiments in independent black political organization have been the defunct Freedom Now Party and the apparently thriving Lowndes County Freedom Party of Alabama. What lessons do they teach?

Some opponents of independent black political action or downhearted former supporters of it contend that the attempt to build the Freedom Now Party turned out to be such a sad failure that all future efforts along that line are bound to be unsuccessful. From this negative judgment they conclude that the only realistic course now is to try and take over the Democratic Party in the ghetto and use it for the black community's purposes. They disregard the fact that this policy has been tried much longer and has given far poorer results.

Others propose some version of a "third force" that will be a pressure group but not a political party. Still others look for a third party like the Wallace Progressive Party of 1948 or talk about a "peace party" ticket.

In dismissing any future forms of independent black politics, they forget that all new and enduring political formations in American history or elsewhere have had short-lived predecessors. The Republican Party, launched in 1854, was preceded by the Liberty and Free Soil parties of the 1840s. John Brown's band failed to overturn the slave power or abolish chattel slavery—but it prepared the way for the Civil War that did. Jet travel is common today. Yet the first attempts to build airplanes either crashed or never got off the ground.

The truth is that the project of an independent black party did not get a fair and full trial from the founders of the Freedom Now Party and any subsequent attempt will have to understand the mistakes that were made to avoid repeating them.

The organization of the Freedom Now Party was not undertaken in

a sufficiently serious, systematic and sustained way. A new mass party cannot simply be proclaimed; it has to be created by passing through a series of stages. The skeleton and backbone of the coming party has to be constituted through an initial stage of education and propaganda devoted to developing and clarifying its basic ideas, testing out its program, and training its cadres. Only when this indispensable preliminary groundwork is completed can the founding forces reach out and win over large numbers.

The national founders of the Freedom Now Party mixed up these two main stages and tried to do everything all at once. They thought it possible to leap over the tough preliminary chores of gathering, consolidating and educating the initial core. Then when the required organizers, administrators, educators, writers and all the rest did not come around rather quickly in substantial numbers, they became discouraged and gave up.

In the state of Michigan the Freedom Now Party did enlist a few hundred activists and manage to get on the ballot and run an election campaign in 1964. But there too the leadership attempted to rush through or skip over inescapable stages. Instead of concentrating at the start in clarifying the nature and problems of the new party for themselves and their followers and instead of developing a realistic long-range as well as an immediate objective, they pinned all their hopes on securing a big vote and possibly electing a few candidates. They counted on so impressive a showing on the first try that it would bring large numbers into the party right away.

Most of the Michigan leaders became discouraged when the party received only five thousand votes. Instead of regarding this support for a new, untried, unpopularized, largely unexplained movement as the beginning basis for sustained education and organization, they saw the low vote as evidence of total failure.

If in place of exorbitant expectations, they had been guided by a more realistic approach, the party might have survived, grown and spread to other places. The quick collapse of the Freedom Now Party did not prove that the black masses would not support and join an independent party. It only showed that they won't go for it in a rush and all together at the first call. They will have to be convinced and won over, not by a one-shot crack at the ballot box, but by persevering education and organization.

The main point to be learned from the Freedom Now Party experience is that the founders of a new party will first have to organize themselves properly before they will be able to organize large numbers successfully.

Like the Freedom Now Party, the Lowndes County Freedom Party clearly opposes both the Democratic and Republican parties and seeks to create an alternative to them. But it is being built on a more realistic basis. It was not proclaimed as a full-fledged political party as soon as the idea struck a few pioneers. Instead, it was discussed at great length by its founders, soberly, in detail, and with careful atten-

tion to local needs, possibilities and peculiarities. This preliminary stage of discussion, when the movement was known as the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, unified and educated the founders and gave them a perspective, trusted leaders and the elements of an agreed-upon structure for going forward to the launching of the Freedom Party itself.

Some members and sympathizers of the Lowndes County Freedom Party expected it to win the very first election it contested in November 1966 because black people are a majority in the county. They underestimated the intimidation and pressure applied by the Democrats and the difficulties of conducting an election campaign for the first time. The new Freedom Party did not win; its highest vote was 42 per cent. But its leaders and most of its members were not crushed by the outcome. Armed with a long-range outlook, they took the result in their stride and have set about to do better on the next try.

Thanks to its foresighted and careful planning, the Lowndes County Freedom Party has a well-defined organizational structure which facilitates active participation by its members and democratic decision making. Its candidates and leaders are expected to respect these decisions. Through constant education and propaganda it has sought to unify the black community and has displayed considerable skill and flexibility in bringing along most sections of the black community without sacrificing any of its basic principles or purposes.

While bidding for power and office through the ballot, it functions the year around to improve the living conditions of the black population through such projects as building a library, providing milk for children, etc. It has taken measures to ensure the self-defense of its supporters against racist terror attacks. It tries to better the conditions of the black people in all respects.

It remains to be seen whether it will continue to grow and become so deep-rooted that it cannot be disoriented or destroyed. In any event, it sets an example and provides a model for other black communities, North and South. If an independent black political movement can survive and grow under such difficult and isolated circumstances, how much easier could this job be done in a Harlem or a Watts!

The Problem of Allies and Alliances

It is in the very nature and logic of political struggle to seek allies. Even majorities seek and make alliances. The question is not whether an independent black party would seek alliances but what kind and with whom.

The necessity of alliances is not altered by the fact that Afro-Americans are part of a nonwhite majority in the world and even less by the existence of differences with prospective allies. Alliances are made specifically with forces and movements with whom an organization is not in essential or complete agreement. If there was complete agree-

ment between the two, unity rather than alliance would be on the agenda. Practical agreements are made with forces which disagree on some or many matters. Alliances are concluded on actions and aims on which there is a coincidence of interests, even if only for a temporary period, while "agreeing to disagree" on other things.

This right to disagree on some points while working together on others is crucial. Without this right there is not an alliance of equals but a dependent relationship of a subordinate to a superior power. The existence of an independent black party would safeguard Afro-Americans against the wrong kinds of alliance. They would not be forced into unfavorable or unequal tieups because an independent organization always has the option of getting up and walking out. It is not necessary to agree to any move, tactic or strategy which will injure your cause so long as you are independent and able to withdraw and act on your own.

At this juncture the major alliances possible for an independent black party would be international. The American ruling class that oppresses and exploits black people at home has a large and growing list of enemies abroad. It is feasible and imperative for Afro-Americans to forge ties with the victims of U.S. imperialism who are still in shackles, with those who have broken them, and with those who are in the process of breaking them. Malcolm X was stressing and striving to effect such alliances at the time of his assassination because he knew what healthy effects they could have on the progress of the liberation struggle within the United States. Stokely Carmichael's speech at the OLAS Conference in Havana and other Third World capitals demonstrate that such alliances are in the making.

Once an independent black party has the power and acquires the skill to seek and make alliances on its own terms, then it will also be possible to create useful alliances with domestic forces. Among these will be the rebel youth, especially among the students; the antiwar movement; the Spanish-speaking people (Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans); the American Indians whose plight has been neglected by almost all the forces in the country; poor white workers; and radical opponents of both capitalism and the trade union bureaucracies. While none of these elements may approach problems in exactly the way black militants do, those who are enemies of the enemies of black people at home can become partners on certain issues and for certain stretches of the road, whatever their staying power in the long run.

Cooperation with allies is part and parcel of the strategy of splitting white America and driving wedges into its constituent elements with conflicting interests so that some whites will fight others to the benefit of the black people. An independent black party would best enable Afro-Americans to employ this tactic without surrendering their own interests, unity, autonomy or freedom of action. Successful maneuvering along these lines would set an example for other potential anti-capitalist forces by encouraging them to break with capitalist politics and showing them what independent political action can achieve.

Why the SWP Supports Independent Black Political Action

The Socialist Workers Party believes that only a revolution taking economic and political power away from the capitalist exploiters and abolishing the system of production for profit can cleanse this country of racism and enable Americans to live in harmony, prosperity and equality with one another and with the rest of the world.

The Socialist Workers Party opposes the capitalist system and its political agents who run the Democratic and Republican Parties. It exposes all attempts to hoodwink and lure the working people, black or white, into supporting the candidates of these basically white supremacist and anti-labor parties on such pretexts as "it's the man, and not the party, that counts." The Socialist Workers Party does not endorse "people's fronts," anti-monopoly coalitions, "lesser evil" choices, "third forces," so-called "peace candidates" or any other formations which have not clearly and cleanly cut their ties with the capitalist parties and asserted their independence of capitalist politics.

On the other hand, the Socialist Workers Party will support and defend those political forces and movements which represent a genuine breakaway from capitalist politics, whether or not they are socialist-minded or oriented. Thus it advocates the creation of an independent labor party by trade unions and would back such a progressive step, whatever criticisms it might have of a labor party's program and leadership.

Similarly, the Socialist Workers Party favors the formation of an independent party uniting Afro-Americans in political struggle for their just rights and freedom. It believes that black people have the democratic right to decide their own destiny and that, without such a political instrument, they cannot effectively advance their immediate well-being or attain their ultimate goals. That is why the Socialist Workers Party supported the Freedom Now Party and supports the Lowndes County Freedom Party.

There is no contradiction between adhering to the ideas of revolutionary socialism and championing an all-black party. To be sure, the one is consciously opposed to the capitalist order whereas the other may be only partially and potentially directed against its domination. But both will stand arrayed against a common enemy in the capitalist ruling class and should travel along the same road toward the same destination.

Because black people are the most exploited, oppressed and aroused part of the population, it is reasonable to expect that they will become the first mass force to cut loose from the Democratic Party coalition and blaze a trail for others to follow. If they should establish an influential party of their own which carried through the fight against oppression and exploitation to the end, black Americans can be the vanguard of radical change in this country and play a decisive role in revolutionizing its political life.

Lew Jones

REPORT on the AMERICAN ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

The antiwar movement in the United States has developed despite the absence of a mass anticapitalist political movement and despite the relative apathy of the labor movement. The American political climate, dominated by the two parties of the ruling class, has from the beginning exerted constant pressure on the antiwar movement to adapt to its norms. Yet this movement, since its first action, has consistently pursued a course of mass action against the imperialist war in Vietnam. And in doing so, it sets the example for and prods other forces nationally and internationally into action against the war administration and its supporters abroad.

The course of the antiwar movement has occasioned a continual political struggle within the movement over the fundamental question of how and for what purpose to mobilize the evermounting sentiment against the war. The alternative perspectives have been three: (1) the organization of periodic, mass, antiwar united front actions, (2) adventurist actions which aim to substitute a handful for mass actions, and (3) the use of the antiwar forces as raw material for various class-collaborationist electoral "peace" projects.

This fundamental conflict has been reflected in other debated questions within the antiwar movement. It has for instance, underlain debates over non-exclusion of any political tendency from antiwar actions. A war that is motivated by anti-communist, cold-war clichés, cannot be opposed by a movement that condones red-baiting. The rejection of the policy of exclusion testifies to the movement's militant temper. But establishment of the principle of non-exclusion did not come about by chance. It was established as the result of an initial political fight over non-exclusion and overall perspective that has recurred time and again.

Militant, non-exclusive, and continuously growing, the antiwar movement is a catalyst for the current radicalization that has swept beyond the student milieu. It constitutes an organizing center for vigorous dissent from and demonstrations against the foreign and domestic policies of American capitalism.

The basic political characteristics of the antiwar movement were evidenced as early as its first national action, the April 17, 1965, March on Washington, called by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). In their call SDS termed the conflict in Vietnam a civil war, called for an end to U.S. intervention, and supported the right of self-determination for the Vietnamese.

The old-line social-pacifists, dominated by cold war social democratic ideology, objected to the audacity of these young rebels who dared to resist the Vietnam war in this manner. The League for Industrial Democracy, then the formal parent organization of SDS, opposed the plans for the march, particularly the policy of non-exclusion and the political line of supporting self-determination for the Vietnamese. These social democratic reformists fully realized the implications of the SDS call and sought to tone down the demonstration's politics and make it more "reasonable." They went so far as to demand that SDS turn over the final planning of the demonstration to them.

But from the beginning SDS had involved the left-wing socialist youth tendencies in the planning and refused to buckle. The fight finally broke into the open on the eve of the march, when Bayard Rustin, Norman Thomas, and others issued a statement denouncing the action.

The rest is history. The march was large—some 20 to 30 thousand and the antiwar movement was solidified on the basis of non-exclusion, self-determination for Vietnam, and mass action; and it was launched by a section of the student movement breaking from the tutelage of reformism. The reformists had lost out.

From April 17, 1965, to March 26, 1966

At this initiating stage the SWP and YSA recognized that this peace demonstration was qualitatively different from previous ones. The YSA endorsed the march; organized speaking tours to help build it; distributed literature in sizable quantity; (our basic propaganda pamphlet on "The War in Vietnam" made its first appearance); and helped in organizing the various local ad hoc committees to build the march.

The SDS march served as a focal point around which to crystallize the radical antiwar sentiment which had been developing on the campuses. Like the call for the march itself, the ad hoc committees which arose to build the march usually supported self-determination, non-exclusion, and naturally enough, the mass actions. These Committees to End the War in Vietnam (CEWV's), most of them based on

the campus, soon became the basic unit of the antiwar movement and its most militant wing. Within a few months over 300 of these committees came into existence. They organized much of the wave of teach-ins and other campus antiwar activities in the spring of 1965, and continued to flourish even during the summer, when students are traditionally less active.

The organization of antiwar students into these militant committees placed two alternatives before such organizations of the "established" peace movement as Women Strike for Peace (WSP) and the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE). They could either cooperate with the antiwar committees to build a militant movement against the imperialist war, on the basis of non-exclusion, or they could separate themselves from the radical youth, continue to work for "peace in the abstract," and attempt to win over the activist youth along that unpromising line. The majority of the WSP leadership took the former course while the majority of the SANE leadership took the latter in that first period.

This militant antiwar movement produced a shake-up and realignment in the established pacifist organizations. In a series of articles in *Liberation* magazine in the spring and summer of 1965, a debate took place over what attitude pacifists should have toward the Vietnam war and the antiwar movement. The radical pacifists argued for immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam and against the negotiations stand of the social democrats and others. They aligned themselves with the militant, non-exclusive, antiwar sector. Bayard Rustin and his ilk could not tolerate such a position and a split occurred. The radical pacifists became a leading component of the antiwar movement and a bridge between the established organizations and the new student groupings.

Following the SDS March on Washington, the next national gathering of the antiwar movement was the August 1965 Assembly of Unrepresented People in Washington D.C., called and organized by the radical pacifists. There one of the workshops initiated the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam (NCC).

At its formation the NCC had several clearly delineated aims—to coordinate the various antiwar committees, to coordinate the upcoming October 15-16 1965, International Days of Protest, called by the Berkeley Vietnam Day Committee, and to hold a convention at Thanksgiving to establish a national organization of the independent committees to end the war in Vietnam. Most of its founders hoped it would fill the urgently needed function of a national coordinating body for the antiwar coalition. The SWP and YSA vigorously supported this perspective.

Unfortunately, while the NCC was initially looked to as a national coordinating center for the antiwar movement, it never developed into such a formation. The Communist Party supporters within the NCC oriented toward class collaborationist political action and the "community organizing" forces saw no need for national coordination. Thus,

over time, the leadership of the NCC sought to impose upon the entire antiwar movement a pro-Democratic Party perspective under the slogan of "negotiations," setting up a lobbying office in Washington to push for draft reforms, and attempted to become a general "progressive organizing center" around a number of diverse issues.

On the other hand, the broad perspective of the CEWV's favored organizing the antiwar movement around the single unifying issue of opposition in action to the war and attempting to involve the largest range of groups and individuals on that basis. Many of the activists in these committees were acutely aware of the objective need for a national formation that would include, in an action coalition, all the peace organizations and political groups opposed to the war.

These two conflicting perspectives for the antiwar movement clashed at the NCC convention in November, 1965. While the controversy involved basic political perspectives, it took the form of a struggle over the organizational structure required by the antiwar movement. The political debate revolved around the basic slogan of the antiwar movement—was it to be "negotiate" or "Bring the GIs Home Now"? Although the issues were not then clear to some participants, the end of the convention posed these alternative demands as the slogans of the opposing tendencies.

The 1,500 who attended made the convention the biggest gathering of the antiwar movement to that point. It was likewise the high point of the NCC. While forces grouped around the "withdrawal perspective" were outvoted, the debate was carried from the convention floor into the ranks of the antiwar activists and eventually the majority of the antiwar movement was won over to that viewpoint. A year later the Spring Mobilization Committee, a broad, non-exclusive action coalition, and the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, a militant national student organization, were formed. These conformed to the organizational structure the left wing had proposed at the NCC convention.

The *Bring the Troops Home Now Newsletter*, initially the organ of the militant caucus formed at the NCC convention, played an essential role in this process of education and debate within the movement. It campaigned for the program of periodic, inclusive, mass actions and the formation of CEWV's around the slogan, "Bring the GIs Home Now."

Organizationally, the *Newsletter* projected the formation of a national body comprising the independent CEWV's. But before such an organization could be realized, the movement had to argue out the question of self-determination for the Vietnamese. During the spring of 1966 the majority of forces in the antiwar movement began accepting the withdrawal demand. In this important step in the continuing development of the radicalism of the antiwar movement, the *Newsletter* carried out an effective and successful propaganda campaign for the withdrawal position. Eventually, the activists around the *Newsletter*

became one of the key ingredients in the formation of the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam.

Despite the differences at the NCC convention, there was near unanimous agreement to call for the next International Days of Protest, March 25-26, 1966. This action was to play an important role in the expansion of the antiwar movement.

From the NCC Convention to April 15, 1967

The next stage of the antiwar movement following the NCC convention was marked by the decline of the NCC and the rise of representative local, united-front type coalitions, based upon minimal agreement on actions against the war. The organization which proved most successful as an acting alternative national center during the decline of the NCC was the New York City, Fifth Avenue Vietnam Peace Parade Committee, (the "Parade Committee"). Originating around the October 15-16 Days of Protest and then organizing the massive March 25-26 New York protests, it quickly became a permanent organization in New York with growing national authority. It was initially composed of representatives of nearly one hundred organizations, ranging from local student and professional antiwar formations to political parties like the Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party. Today it has over 200 cooperating groups.

The N.Y. Parade Committee was an expression of the need for a national coalition leadership of mass actions, constituted by all organizations opposed to the war. The leaders of the Parade Committee were partisans of the withdrawal demand. The Parade Committee proved in practice the validity of the militants' perspective. It set a national model.

Demonstrations in August and November were followed by the Thanksgiving, 1966, Cleveland conference at which the massive April 15, 1967, mobilizations in New York and San Francisco were first planned. Antiwar sentiment had expanded considerably and combined with the efforts of the antiwar movement, the effect by Thanksgiving, 1966, was to convince more of the old line peace groups to participate in and mobilize for antiwar action.

Moreover, it had become clear to many that, as antiwar sentiment deepened further, it would begin to reach into the labor movement and other layers of the population. A mass action aimed at mobilizing antiwar sentiment and making it visible was necessary. Nevertheless, significant opposition to that perspective existed. A thorough debate over the role and value of mass action dominated the conference.

Counterposing multi-issue, reformist community organizing, leaders of the NCC, the DuBois Clubs, and SDS argued against periodic mass actions. But the rest of the participants led by the supporters of the *Newsletter* and student antiwar committees, the SWP, YSA the CP, and the radical pacifist leaders carried a large majority decision to go

forward with the plans for April 15. The Spring Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam was formed to organize the action.

The preparations and plans for the historic April 15 demonstration brought many new organizations and forces into action. The student wing of the antiwar movement took a decisive step forward in this period. In December 1966, following the decision to organize April 15, a conference of all the tendencies in the student movement to discuss a student strike was held at the University of Chicago. The Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (SMC) was formed at this conference.

The discussion there revolved around the need for students to organize themselves and link up with other sections of the antiwar movement and help draw new layers of the population and the American students into antiwar action. The SMC was formed on that basis and began to provide a long unfulfilled need in the antiwar movement—the national organization of the student antiwar militants. Its political objectives were to fight for immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam, to end university complicity with the war, and to end the draft.

The April 15 action had a tremendous impact on American opinion. Half a million Americans from all walks of life made dissent from the war and opposition to the government legitimate. The demonstration spurred the development of antiwar sentiment that has mushroomed in the last four or five months, including opposition in Congress itself. April 15 was a demonstration by the antiwar movement of the breadth of mass opposition to the war and the possibility of organizing it. More than any other single action, the April 15 demonstration convinced previously uninvolved groups, tendencies and individuals to participate in and build the antiwar movement.

The April 15 demonstration consolidated the Student Mobilization Committee. The success of the SMC's Vietnam Week actions which preceded April 15 and the role played by SMC in building the April 15 action itself turned the SMC into an authoritative national committee. It acquired the respect necessary to begin organizing the tens of thousands of student activists in a program of actions aimed at withdrawing the U.S. troops, abolishing the draft, and ending university complicity with the genocidal war of U.S. imperialism.

Tendencies opposed to this course for the antiwar movement attempted to utilize the April 15 demonstration to win the activist youth to a liberal reformist perspective. Within one week after April 15 two organizations, Vietnam Summer Committee and Negotiations Now, appeared in a blaze of publicity boasting large budgets and glorified, ambitious plans.

Vietnam Summer Committee conducted "community organizing" projects with the aim of eventually supporting liberal "peace" candidates. Negotiations Now was a glorified campaign to obtain signatures for a petition begging Johnson to kindly negotiate. Although

both gained some support, neither was able to provide a permanent organizing center or perspective. Since then they have either disbanded or been discredited in the eyes of the most energetic antiwar elements.

Towards October 21

Since April 15 sentiment against the war has erupted explosively on the campus. This has asserted itself in a wave of radical and militant demonstrations. The demonstrations in Berkeley, Madison, Brooklyn, and then Washington in October, 1967, indicate a deep alienation from, and active opposition to, the evils of capitalist society. They also express healthy disregard and disrespect for its institutions and norms.

Many of these actions revolved around opposition to the draft. Protest against the draft has been an element of the antiwar movement's activities from the beginning. However, protest against the capitalist draft has been used in the past as an attempt to divert activists from mass antiwar protest. In fact, when antidraft protest began in the antiwar movement, around October 15-16, 1965, it was expressly designed by some SDS, pacifist and Dubois Club leaders, as an alternative to the development of a mass antiwar movement. At that time the isolated protest action of individuals was counterposed to the mass demonstrations, and "antidraft organizing" became an excuse for not participating in the wider antiwar actions.

As opposition to the war has deepened, so has sentiment against the draft. Moreover, this widespread sentiment has had an effect on the antidraft activists themselves. The recent demonstrations did not stress isolated individual acts of defiance against the draft. The actions were totally identified with the general antiwar fight to withdraw the U.S. troops. These were progressive changes in the antidraft protests and protestors.

As draft protest reaches larger proportions, reflecting mass sentiment against the war, such protests will more and more come in conflict with the state apparatus. Military conscription is basic to the war-making ability of the American rulers—especially in fighting colonial uprisings. They are not likely to give it up. Faced with mass opposition, the state is obliged to resort to repressive measures against the protestors, such as police brutality, prison terms, or punitive draft calls. But these repressions only serve to intensify the mass protest of the activists and win wider public support for them.

The direct confrontation that ensues is another expression of the heightened struggle against the imperialist war. The job of antiwar militants is to organize this confrontation by organizing and integrating mass protests against the draft with the general program of antiwar actions.

The preparations for the October 21 demonstration in Washington took place in the context of a profound deepening of antiwar sentiment,

particularly on the campuses. The Student Mobilization Committee did the major building of October 21. The SMC originally planned the march at a conference of its own and proposed it to the National Mobilization Committee (NMC), formerly the Spring Mobilization Committee. It put out the initial publicity, and then did the bulk of the organizing. The youth component of the October 21 Washington Action was close to 80 per cent of the total turnout, which confirmed the SMC's estimate of the scope of antiwar sentiment on the campus.

The Washington demonstration was an overwhelming success—a big advance over April 15. It was a challenge that embarrassed the Johnson administration. No matter how much Johnson would have liked to prevent the demonstration or dampen its impact, he was unable to do so because of the divisions over the war at all levels in this country. Despite the urging of some of his advisers he did not dare stop the demonstration.

The outstanding characteristic of the march was its militant mood of mass confrontation. When 50,000 people stood outside the Pentagon and cheered youth who broke through police lines it indicated more than deep-going militancy and defiance. One surprising development was the spontaneous attempt by quite a few activists to try to speak to the GIs surrounding the Pentagon about the war and the antiwar movement. A new cheer addressed to these troops went up; one that is going to be heard more often from now on. It was "Join us, join us." The authorities would have liked to arrest many more of those youth but were prevented from doing so by the size and militancy of the demonstrators.

Another most significant aspect of the October 21 action was its international ramifications. Coordinated with the Washington action, demonstrations occurred in most European countries, Chile, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Hungary and elsewhere. In some countries the demonstrations were the largest and most militant since the end of World War II. This was the greatest international demonstration in opposition to the Vietnam war that has yet been held. It is now accurate to speak of an organized international antiwar movement.

The demonstration was a preview of what the antiwar movement is capable of. The militant antiwar sentiment in this country is reaching massive proportions. Another action, or set of actions, planned in a manner which challenges the war policy of the government, could turn out masses of people in every major city.

The evolution of the antiwar movement is basically the history of the outcome of the internal struggles over the political perspectives of the movement. Attempts to find ways of turning this movement from mass actions to class collaborationist pressure politics within and on the fringes of the Democratic Party are continually brought into the movement. But at every critical point in its development the movement has manifested its objectively anti-imperialist character by engaging in united mass demonstrations in the streets.

Because the movement has maintained its independence from the two

capitalist parties and mounted a series of larger and larger protest actions throughout its history, it has, during the few short years of its existence, brought about a change in the political climate of this country.

While, apart from Vietnam, the colonial revolution has suffered some setbacks in the past period, a movement within the heartland of the imperialist oppressor itself has staged continually larger and more massive protests directly challenging the right of the oppressor to oppress. Revolutionary fighters abroad see hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens coming into the streets and saying, "No! We will not countenance this genocidal war!" The myth that American politics rests on permanent multi-class conformity has begun to crumble and revolutionaries around the world draw inspiration and encouragement from this resurgent radicalism to continue the fight in their own countries.

Movements in support of the Vietnamese revolution have sprung up throughout the world — many under the direct impetus and encouragement of the movement in the United States. Thus a shakeup and realignment of forces on an international scale similar to the one which began in this country is beginning to occur. In the process, the best of the antiwar fighters, especially the youth, are learning new lessons about the reformist character of the established Social-Democratic and Stalinist parties and are open to a revolutionary alternative.

Within this country the antiwar movement has helped to make dissent legitimate. Public confidence in the government has been shaken. The precedent for aggressively disagreeing with and challenging the government has been established.

The antiwar movement has checked the emergence of a war-time hysteria and witch-hunt in this country, by capitalizing on the deep split which prevents the ruling class itself from uniting behind the war. It has helped promote a spirit of domestic struggle during imperialist war; a spirit that has affected other sections of the mass movement. By maintaining its non-exclusion policy it has undercut one of the basic weapons of cold war propaganda — anti-communism.

The fact that there exists in this country a large movement, encouraging, even demanding, that people speak out and act in a radical manner, is having a profound effect on the political consciousness of the American people. This international antiwar movement is forcing a shake-up and realignment of forces on a world scale and has the potential of preparing and promoting a mass radicalization in the United States itself.

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