

Del - Don Hamerquist

DISCUSSION PAPER ON STRATEGY

Revolutionary movements throughout the world are in a state of confusion and crisis at a time of unprecedentedly rapid growth in the numbers of their adherents and participants. The source of this paradox is the absence of a unifying ideological framework---the world revolutionary strategy that can provide the consciousness and cohesiveness the movement must have if it is to attain the victories that are possible.

Some vulgar interpretations of Marxism leave us with the sense that the movement will necessarily muddle through since, "History is with us.", but in reality the situation contains a dual potential. If we succeed in the development of a strategy adequate to the contemporary world, there will be a convergence of the forces for revolution leading to major victories in the immediate future. If we do not succeed, there will be further fragmentation and frustration and a period of Metternichian reaction of indeterminate length in the non-socialist world.

Three outstanding problems face the movement. Major questions exist about the socialist states. These concern their role as "revolutionary centre" for the world movement; and they concern the relationship of the individual to socialist society in terms of individual autonomy and creativity, and in terms of standards of consumption and material security. In the third world the issues revolve around the form and content of the struggle against imperialism; and around different approaches to the attitudes and potentials of the ruling circles in the metropolitan states, to the relationship between the movement for genuine independence and for socialism, and to the relationship between armed and non-armed forms of struggle. The outstanding issue in the "advanced" capitalist states is to build a mass revolutionary social bloc that can contest for hegemony now, not in the indefinite future, on the basis of the needs and demands that develop under neo-capitalism. In the major ideological centers of the revolutionary movement all of these issues are combined in a complex fashion, but, nevertheless, they are there at the core of the discussion and polemics.

If it has done nothing else, the ideological ferment has made one point clear---a point that has often been overlooked. That is that the understanding of the need and possibility for a revolution does not come spontaneously from the conditions of existence and it does not come from an abstract acceptance of a revolutionary theory, no matter how well it is understood. On the contrary, the revolutionary must make the revolution through his practical implementation of a program of action and education-through-action that can make the possibility and necessity of revolution apparent to the powerless and oppressed majority of the people.

In this country it is also true that the more people who come to see themselves as revolutionaries, the more confusion that there is over the content of a revolution and over the definition of the role of a revolutionary.

Actually, of the three outstanding problems, the one that receives the least organized attention from the left in the U.S. is the one that is the most relevant, the strategy for an advanced capitalist country. In part, this paradox stems from the pessimism in the movement in this country, from the feeling that here capitalism is so entrenched that only the success of the movement elsewhere will make a revolution possible. The relative leisure accorded by this posture allows one to give a lot of gratuitous advice to other sections of world movement.

A more important reason for the lack of sufficient attention to the development of a strategic perspective for the U.S. is that the people who think theoretically in this country are often not those who are the most active. There is a tradition on the left of mindless activism, of a-theoretical and a-critical approaches that let "experience" be the guide to activity. The fact remains, however, that capitalism is so rooted in the U.S., and acceptance of its legitimacy is so embedded among the social groups whose interests are opposed to it, that a precondition for the growth of a revolutionary movement is the projection of an alternative to capitalist hegemony---an alternative that embodies new social priorities, new institutions and new values. Development of such a rival hegemony is preeminently a question of improvement of the quality of analysis and theory, of the development of ideology, and this will never develop directly out of activity.

In this country, the real issue for the left is to clarify the role of a revolutionary in a situation where the understanding of the need for a revolution is continually aborted by the capacity of neo-capitalism to absorb and incorporate reform movements and ideologies, even when they are very militant. In other words, we must develop a revolutionary approach to a non-crisis situation.

This approach must begin from the real demands and grievances of people in the specific, historically determined, context. And, although we may be convinced from our understanding of this context that most people have been coerced into defining their demands and grievances in terms of a false consciousness, in terms of the values and norms of capitalism; we must still begin from the point where people perceive a gap between what exists and what could, and should, exist. This means that the revolutionary must concern himself with a variety of popular movements for reforms. But if this is where to begin, what should the direction be?

There are a number of questions about reform movements and about their relationship to the role of a revolutionary that I would like to consider. In the first place, it is a truism that except in a situation of total desperation people will not enter into political activity when they see no possibility of winning their demands. But for the revolutionary, the basic importance lies in the struggle for the demand and its proper implementation, not in its attainment. It is the content of the struggle that determines whether the participants gain an understanding of who they are struggling with, and who against, of what the next steps should be, and, eventually, of the need and the possibility for a revolution. This does not mean that it is unimportant whether or not the reform demand is successful, but that its importance lies in the intrinsic value in improving the conditions of life even under capitalism, since there is no revolutionary potential in poverty and degradation as such. The revolutionary position is opposed to the traditional reformist argument that activity must be channeled into "realistic" programs, programs where "victory" is possible.

This raises the further question of just how the revolutionary functions within the reform movement to insure that its full potential is realized. One line of argument holds that in the struggle for the attainment of one partial demand is contained the necessary and sufficient conditions for the consciousness of the subsequent demand. The struggle is a gradual piling of reform victories on top of each other until the people step off the top over into socialism. The role seen for the revolutionary is to attend to the mass character and the unity of the struggle so that the chances of "victories" are maximized and the largest possible number of people learn what is to be done next through their participation.

This position is an evolutionary variety of reformism. Primary emphasis is placed on winning the demands and the role of the revolutionary is primarily a technical one, that of mobilizer and unifier. In practice, the revolutionary goal is subordinated to the immediate struggle.

There is another approach to the problem which looks very different on the surface. In this scheme the argument is that people learn the necessity for revolution through unsuccessful reform struggles, through confrontations with the power structure where they get their heads cracked. The usual corollary is that reform victories should be avoided because they create illusions that are a positive danger to the revolutionary perspective. Actually this is essentially similar to the preceding approach in that it holds that people learn from the activity itself what should be done next. Here again the role of the revolutionary is put in a technical, not an ideological, framework. He becomes not just mobilizer and unifier, but also manipulator and provocateur---the promoter of confrontation and tactical defeat in the interests of the ultimate strategic victory.

Both of these approaches are based on a mechanical understanding of the machinery through which neo-capitalism maintains hegemony. This machinery is sufficiently flexible and resilient to survive mere confrontations and absorb mere reforms. Some people may learn what is to be done from their participation in victorious reform movements; they may also learn what is to be done through participation in movements that are smashed by the police power of the state; they may also learn that it is futile and dangerous to challenge the system. In short, there is no necessary and automatic relationship between reform movements, whatever their specific character, and revolutionary consciousness such that the latter will develop spontaneously among participants in the former.



Recently, an old concept of the revolutionary role has been revitalized among sections of the U.S. left. This is the narodnik conception of the "organizer". It contains an interesting projection of the relationship between the organizers---self-cast in the Mastroanni role in the film of the same name---and the constituencies in which they organize. The presence of the organizer becomes the precondition for meaningful activity. The people are seen as essentially passive potentiality which he makes human and active through his creative efforts. One does not have to be exceptionally subtle to discover an essential elitist bias in such a perspective. Despite all the rhetoric about participation, about the organizer as catalyst, and despite the humble and self-effacing, non-leadership, public style that is often adopted, people are viewed as more or less successfully domesticated animals who must be taught by the organizer. The fact remains that only through the mediation of the organizer can grace be attained.

The result is a priest-flock concept of organizing hidden behind a variety of folk mystiques, a concept which does not see the spontaneous self-organizing potential of the oppressed and the exploited. Thus the organizer is given responsibilities to generate activity that are unnecessary, and the real problems of transforming narrow spontaneous semi-conscious struggle into revolutionary struggle is not posed as the central issue.

In summary, radical-revolutionary organizing is not adequately confronted either when it is seen as a process of self-education through involvement in struggle per se; or when it is seen as a process of educating people as if they were an intellectual tabula rasa with inherent radical instincts.

For a number of different reasons, the old revolutionary parties in the capitalist countries have tended to resolve the problem of the role of the revolutionary in a non-revolutionary situation by postulating that objective processes were leading to a catastrophic crisis in the future. Usually this crisis is seen in primarily economic terms---mass unemployment and general impoverishment. The function of the revolutionary thus is to work in reform movements to maintain contact with the people while doing what is possible to combat reformist ideology, but recognizing all the time that the impending crisis will certainly smash all illusions about making it within the system with complete finality and will create a revolutionary consciousness at the same time.

In fact, revolutionaries cannot afford to wait for a future crisis. While the business cycle still exists, and while capitalism has not developed the ability to resolve permanently its internal contradictions, these will not, by themselves, lead to the destruction of capitalism or to the creation of an agency which seeks its destruction. Thus we need to be specific about the role of the revolutionary and cannot be satisfied with catch phrases about "raising revolutionary consciousness" which have no practical programmatic content.

It is possible to develop a strategic perspective for this country, based on a program of anti-capitalist structural reforms, that is much more concrete about how to get from reform demands to the demand for a revolution. In this perspective the proper choice of demands and their proper implementation can undermine the equilibrium of capitalism through the development of a base of autonomous working class power exercised through organizations and institutions which operate on principles hostile to capitalism---a base that, in essence, is a "dual power" within capitalist society.

In this context, all movements for reform demands have two aspects which, if they are inextricably inter-related in fact, must be kept conceptually distinct. There is usually an aspect which relates to material needs, to the standard of consumption, and there is always an aspect, usually ill-defined and unarticulated, which seeks a different quality of living, a maximization of freedom and autonomy. In a revolution this latter element becomes a demand for state power. To put this same dualism in a class framework, every reform demand by the working class contains a thrust for an "improvement" in life within the hegemony of capital, and a thrust projecting an alternative to that hegemony---an alternative based on the self-rule of the working class and the social groupings aligned with it.

The former aspect of the reform demand can be neutralized and absorbed by the integrative mechanisms of neo-capitalism, but the latter cannot in any meaningful way. The latter, however, in its nature is transient and unstable, present in the heat of the battle, in the flush of victory or in the anger of defeat. Present only, that is, in situations that are sharp breaks with

the "normal" conditions of working class life under capitalist hegemony. The role of the revolutionary is to focus on this element of the reform struggle in a way that can sustain and build the understanding of the participants that there is no necessity that things be as they are, that can give them the "awareness of being part of a determined hegemonic force" (Gramsci), that, hopefully, can institutionalize the self-rule as a base of autonomous working class power directed against the structure of capital.

By stressing such qualitative and continuing issues, a revolutionary leadership within reform movements can develop the popular understanding of the vast schism in this society between the way things are and the way that they should be---and could be, if there were a revolution. It is this schism which contains the potential for a revolutionary critique of the neo-capitalist system. The revolutionary must make it psychologically immediate to people that they exist in a state of essential unfreedom, and must demonstrate the possibility of becoming free through the sense of collective solidarity and power that is the concomitant of struggle, even unsuccessful struggle. It is a vital experience for people to find that they have brothers and sisters and comrades, and to see themselves and others develop the capacity for heroism and compassion out of degraded and mutilated lives.

The revolutionary and the revolutionary organization, must manifest in world view and life style the "qualitative" confrontation with the system and must project this confrontation still further by struggling for reforms where the beneficiaries of the reform control its implementation in a direction which maximizes their independence of bourgeois hegemony and which develops their own autonomous powers.

Later in this paper, I intend to consider the nature of the organization of revolutionaries in some detail, however, it is important to point out here that the relationship between the revolutionary organizer and his constituency is directly related to the theoretic conception of the relationship between theory and practice. If there is a distortion in the former, it will usually be reflected in a distortion in the latter, where either theory or practice artificially becomes the "most important." On the other hand, a confusion about the relationship of theory to practice will be manifested in a confusion about the role of the revolutionary that tends towards either reliance on spontaneity or manipulation and paternalism---or both.

To make a perspective of anti-capitalist structural reform more concrete and more particularly relevant to U.S. neo-capitalism, it is necessary to analyze in some detail two aspects of the social mechanisms which produce and maintain a state of essential unfreedom for the individual; the neo-capitalist work process, and the neo-capitalist parliamentary political process. In a traditional context this is a division between the economic and the political aspects of capitalist hegemony, but, as will become clear, I think that both aspects are political. The merger of the dominant sections of the "private" monopoly capitalist structure with the apparatus of the government, and the use of this semi-public machinery to maximize the profits of the corporate elite, makes any distinction between economic and political institution very tenuous.

Since the average adult spends the majority of his waking hours and the bulk of his creative energy on the job, within the capitalist work process, a revolutionary strategy that is not relevant to the work process is likely to wind up off to the side of the real issues. The work process forces the worker into dependence on and subordination to capital. He becomes an appendage of a machine, a competitor with machines, and is increasingly forced to function as if he were, himself, a machine. That is, he is lost to himself, essentially unfree and unhuman, when he is at work. The loss of freedom is the loss of power, and power and its application is the stuff out of which politics is composed. The economic struggle must be the struggle against the coercion of the work process, for a different power relationship at the point of production, and thus must go far beyond the traditional limits of economism, beyond a "fair days pay for a fair days work".

Through the sale of his labor power, through the labor contract, the worker's creativity becomes a standardized commodity and his individuality is nothing more than the wrapping on the package, a necessary problem to be handled as efficiently and impersonally as is possible. The power relationship in the work process turns the worker into a piece of property, another factor of production that is under the hegemony of the capitalist. There are some inherent limits on the uses of the worker, he cannot be treated in a completely arbitrary and capricious fashion, but then neither can any other



factor of production. Maintenance men are needed for the machinery, while toilets and human relations departments are needed for the men.

The basic degradation contained in the capitalist work process is that in it the worker's potential creativity is warped and confined, not developed and affirmed. This involves more than increasingly boring and repetitive jobs as an outgrowth of increasing division of labor. It involves the content and the direction of production. The worker can be building bombs, cars designed to fall to pieces, or hula hoops and, whether or not he thinks that it is important, that it makes sense, or that it is right, is monumentally irrelevant. He can be a social worker reproducing the culture of poverty; he can be a teacher turning out well-packaged thoughtless students; or he can be in the mass media, devising ways to persuade people to waste their leisure as totally as they now waste their creativity; and his only option is to withhold his labor, until he is forced to get another job where he will be just as powerless.

The basic truth to the idea that, under capitalism, the "worker has nothing to lose but his chains", is not that the worker's house, his TV set, and his car do not exist, or that they have no meaning or value. It is in the fact that the worker loses himself in the capitalist work process and that he can only find himself within the hegemony of the working class, a hegemony based on human needs and potentials, not on the logic of profit. It is in this sense as well that the, "emancipation of the worker contains the emancipation of all mankind."

(This is another reason---if one is needed---why those who argue that there is no hope for the working class to become revolutionary until, and unless, someone or something deprives them of their homes, cars and TV sets, their nominal security, are just irrelevant.)

The most obvious change that neo-capitalism induces in the work process is that it progressively forces a greater and greater number of the people into dependence and subordination to it. This is the outcome of the elimination of their independence; of the industrialization of agriculture; and of the dependence of more and more professionally and technically trained people on large industrial organizations. Neo-capitalism also brings more and more spheres of social life within the orbit of the work process; e.g., education becomes a process of job training, culture is subordinated to capitalist criteria of utility, that is efficiency in the creation of profit.

The essential irrationality of capitalism has always been manifested in the continuation of poverty within an expanding potential for affluence, particularly if poverty and affluence are not seen in purely material terms, but also in terms of the rounded development of human potentiality. Under neo-capitalism, this irrationality assumes a variety of forms, some becoming permanent and institutionalized aspects of the society, not temporary cyclical phenomena as, for example, the surpluses of unsaleable commodities in the midst of material deprivation was in earlier phases of capitalism. To see a prime example of this irrationality, one need look no further than the paradoxes of the automobile culture. As cars help make the cities increasingly unlivable, they become more and more necessary as a means of escaping the cities.

The progressive development of neo-capitalism has led to major changes in the function and character of trade union organization. In the first place, the wage struggle has been put in a new context. Their control over the fiscal and monetary policy of the state, over the direct economic role of the state (as in military production), and over the state attitudes towards collective bargaining (incomes policies, wage guidelines, etc.), has given the dominant sections of capital a number of levers with which to influence the collective bargaining process from without, and thus to turn apparent trade union gains into losses through combinations of controlled inflation, regressive taxation, and direct subsidization of business, processes against which traditional trade union practices are impotent.

Though there has always been a great deal of reluctance to accept the fact among some left circles, unions have a dual role in capitalist society. On one hand, they are the organized agency of the working class in obtaining "better terms in the sale of its labor power". On the other hand, they serve to integrate the class struggle within the framework of bourgeois hegemony. They provide a disciplined and stable work force and they enforce the labor contract on the workers. Thus, at best, the spontaneous trade union struggle leads to an area of autonomy for the organized section of the working class

that constitutes an unstable enclave subordinate to the hegemony of capital; subordinate, that is, to "the criteria of rationality and practicability compatible with the preservation of the (capitalist) system". (Gorz)

Neo-capitalism has not only changed the environment in which the trade union operates, it has changed the way in which it operates. Under the neo-capitalist phase of monopoly capitalism, opportunism and class collaboration in the working class take on a particular character. Some of this I will indicate later in a discussion of the mechanisms for maintaining the general legitimacy of capitalism, but now I would like to spend some time on the increasing trend towards industrial-corporativism in labor capital relationships.

There have been a whole variety of collective bargaining agreements in recent years which give the union the illusion of power in exchange for its organizational independence. These range from profit sharing to joint pension funds to "automation" agreements, and they have the common character of allowing the union to participate as a junior partner in the implementation of decisions in which they have had no real part. Not only is there tremendous possibility for overt corruption in this development, but, more important, what often happens is that the union assumes more and more responsibility for disciplining the workers and, instead of being the instrument of the workers in the struggle against the employers, it becomes a buffer between the workers and the employers, absorbing the sharpness of the class contradictions. More and more workers are coming to experience collective bargaining as a process of bargaining and negotiating with their union representatives, who undertake to present what the employer will accept, what is "realistic", not what the workers demand and need.

On a different level, the same corporative spirit and style is manifested in much trade union political action that works in harmony with the lobbying pressure of the firms in their industry and, quite often, against the interests of the working class and the majority of the people. It is commonplace to find, for example, the IBEW working against public power, the Pulpworkers arguing for a go-slow policy on pollution control legislation, the Building Trades arguing for a better "business climate" to stimulate new construction. Or one may find the Teamsters working for lower freight tariffs, and the NMU urging that U.S. ships and seamen would be more dependable supporters of our troops in Vietnam. The examples could be extended indefinitely.

The growing concentration of economic power and the growing size of the bargaining units, has been paralleled with a growth of a union bureaucracy where most of the vital decision-making is concentrated in the hands of a few officers at the top of the pyramid, and where these officers become progressively more isolated and estranged from their rank and file membership. Such traditional progressive goals within the trade union movement as industry-wide bargaining, when they are attained, bring a new set of problems. The issues of industrial democracy, as opposed to those of wages and fringe benefits, are necessarily local and particular. They cannot receive proper attention from people who have not worked in a shop for many years, and who are not under the direct influence of workers on the job.

Almost invariably, the bargaining pressure for long term contracts with no-strike clauses results in an emasculation of the grievance procedures at the local level. When the cumulative resentments of the workers leads to spontaneous actions, the union leadership finds itself in the position of representing the employers interests to their own membership. This is the story of much of the recent history of such unions as the UAW, the UMW, and the Teamsters. It must also be realized that the distance of the union leadership from the rank and file, when combined with the narrow and parochial opportunism and careerism of much of this leadership, results in them viewing with suspicion and hostility any development of on the job union participation and leadership. It becomes a threat both to the serenity of their job and to their continued possession of the job.

A number of practical ways in which the inherent contradictions between the creative potential of socialized production and the anti-social self-destructive content and direction of neo-capitalist production can be utilized in an anti-capitalist structural reform program will be considered later. First, I would like to deal with some other aspects of neo-capitalist hegemony.

Capitalist concentration and centralization, particularly as manifested in the merger of the government apparatus with the "private" economic structure, socializes the role of the private entrepreneur, the capitalist. This



This role is the historical justification for private property in the means of production, and it is the moral pillar for all rationales of capitalism. Not only does neo-capitalism render the capitalist superfluous, "The capitalist process pushes into the background all those institutions, the institutions of property and free contracting in particular that expressed the needs and ways of truly private economic activity." (Schumpeter)

But though the capitalist becomes objectively redundant to the process of production, private appropriation still exists, only now it is necessary to use public or semi-public political mechanisms to maintain the system and guarantee and enlarge capitalist profits.

At the same time, neo-capitalist concentration of economic power fragments the social groupings which, through their vested interest in private property, have constituted the mass base of political support for capitalism. The small farmer and small businessman, petty bourgeois strata generally, are subjected to tremendous pressures and changes by the development of monopoly. The general consequence has been an enlargement of the working class with categories of technical workers whose labor is also socialized and who are subject to the same alienating and oppressing processes as is the rest of the class. Thus, from the base of support, they are transformed into potential opponents of capitalism.

This dual process contains a threat to capitalist hegemony. The appropriation of the product of labor comes partially out from the mystifications of the market system and appears as a pattern of political issues where the resources of the entire society are used to maintain the corporate elite. That is, private appropriation becomes a potentially explosive political issue. To prevent this potential from materializing, the capitalists need a network of integrative mechanisms which can absorb popular political movements before these can develop a clear consciousness of the possibility of a society that is not determined by the priorities and values of the capitalists. That is, the capitalists must have a tacit consensus, a passive acceptance of their hegemony, to substitute for the mass political base which the development of capitalism has eroded away. In the words of Basso, "Neo-capitalism must find a basis for agreement (political support) on the very terrain from which class conflicts were supposed to emerge..."

Parliamentary structures have been an invaluable instrument for the maintenance of capitalism. As Lenin and Gramsci both observed, bourgeois parliamentary democracy is the ideal form of capitalist rule since it mediates class conflicts and hides the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie behind its domination of civil society. But the new problem for the capitalists is that they now have serious business that they must transact through the medium of the government apparatus. Serious decisions on military budgets, fiscal and monetary policies, and the organization of education and technology cannot be made privately, yet they must be made. Officials elected through universal suffrage can hardly be entrusted with these decisions---they might question the basic priorities of a system that sacrifices collective and qualitative needs to a mindless, but profitable, drive to increase production, even when this leads to self-destructive consumption. They might grasp the paradox of vast organized waste through socially unnecessary production amidst a vast organized scarcity of collective services and cultural possibilities.

As the "natural" support for capitalism disappears, parliamentarianism, based on universal suffrage, is increasingly necessary to maintain the false consciousness which leads the working class to accept subordination to capital; but benevolent, or non-benevolent if it becomes necessary, authoritarianism is needed to overcome the contradictions inherent in neo-capitalism in a "safe" fashion. The implication of the former is the form, at least, of democracy; the implication of the latter is content of fascism, the extension of the totalitarianism of the work process to the entirety of social life.

The need of the capitalists to rule legitimately---with the appearance of popular participation, is particularly acute in a period of inter-imperialist rivalries and anti-imperialist revolutions. Although some sections of the bourgeoisie may resist, these conditions create pressure to meet the demands of the working class with concessions to prevent internal divisions from undermining the stability of the metropolitan state's international position. At the same time, the profits derived from imperialism provide the potential to meet working class demands with concessions. In a sense we are talking about the redistribution of profits within the system, a redistribution that springs from the internal class struggle in a way that inhibits this struggle from posing a serious challenge to the logic of profit or to the private con-

trol of the entire economic structure. This process is causally related to the tendency which was mentioned earlier for the trade union movement to fall into corporative schemes.

It is obvious that both the general potential to make concessions and the general motivation to make them are subject to a wide range of diverse forces, both external and internal. If, for example, it appears that working class opposition has been effectively castrated, the tendency is to dispense with the frills and take advantage of the power relationships in the internal class conflict. It is also obvious that, to be effective, the concessions must lead to an acceptance of subordination and dependence by the working class. However, as will be detailed later, this acceptance is not an inevitable consequence of concessions, "...it is not inevitable that powers gained by the workers within the capitalist framework be reabsorbed by the system and subordinated to its functioning." (Basso)

It is a truism that capitalism rules with two tactics, the tactic of selective concession and the tactic of selective repression. We have been dealing with the former, now I would like to consider one aspect of the latter, the issue of coercion through the use of overt force, through police and military power.

In the U.S., the immensity of this power, apparently at the command of the state, immobilizes many radicals. Force does not have to be exercised for the power it signifies to be a potent political factor. But it is important to see that this power is more apparent than real. It is a hollow potential of the same character that provides an element of truth to the "paper tiger" concept of imperialism. When overt repression is utilized, it tends to create problems of a greater magnitude than those which entailed its use. Normal police functions gain much of their effect just because they are "normal"---because they can focus the overwhelming power and authority of the system on isolated individuals and groups, and can avoid the risk of creating the solidarity of a common experience of oppression.

When extraordinary force is employed, it does harm that may be irreparable to the future ability of capital to absorb opposition within the system. Extraordinary force tends to tear away the legitimacy of the entire structure, and to leave it resting on nothing but the threat of repression. At the same time, the repressive force takes on a human, thus vulnerable, character. As real democratic content in the political institutions becomes more and more threatening to the bourgeoisie, it becomes increasingly important that they not expose the facade of democracy, the consensus based on passivity and false consciousness, through the promiscuous use of police power. One must not lose perspective on this question and conclude that the use of extraordinary police power should be consciously provoked. This is the best way to give the use of force durable legitimacy. The inability of the capitalist to rule without massive overt repression is an index of a loss of flexibility in capitalist hegemony, which is an important thing, but, in itself, it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the development of a rival hegemonic force.

In summary, the contradictions in advanced capitalist countries require a partial resolution through the substitution of a state capitalist apparatus for the historically necessary social functions of the capitalist class, rendering it more obviously parasitical. This creates a broader social foundation for an alternative hegemony and entails the development of more flexible and more complex instruments to prevent such a challenge, while, at the same time, it undercuts the utility of the traditional instrument for this purpose, the parliamentary system.

This takes place in a period of increasing polarization and conflict within the system. Grievances and demands develop that make it more necessary to use overt police power to suppress popular movements, further undercutting the utility of the parliamentary system in particular, and the legitimacy of capitalist hegemony in general.

This process must be put in the context of the external relationships of this society; that is, of a capitalist country faced with an institutionalized alternative system in the socialist states; and of an imperialist country faced with a powerful challenge to its continued capacity to exercise political and social control over the third world and other sections of the capitalist world. There is a clear interaction between the internal and the external factors. The real external threat stimulates a general militarization of the society. An opposing pressure comes from competition with the socialist state system in social welfare programs, quality technology, etc.



This creates some tendency to grant a certain type of internal concession, nevertheless, the basic direction imposed by the world situation is anti-democratic and anti-popular, since it makes the priorities of neo-capitalism more demonstrably untenable and limits its options for maintaining power.

This leads into a more specific critique of U.S. parliamentary politics. It hardly needs to be said that, in this country, the important political decisions are not arrived at through the formal political institutions. They take place in various nooks of the neo-capitalist administrative-technical structure, far from public view and the electoral-legislative process. Local and regional parliamentary bodies operate in the same way as their federal counterpart, except for the smaller magnitudes and the more overtly crooked atmosphere. This reality, which many "realists" chronically forget, is why electing "good" people to the official roles in the political structure can never, in itself, lead to a real challenge of that structure and what it represents.

A critique of parliamentary politics must also note that such activity isn't relevant to the basic need of a radical movement to develop forms of creative individual participation in public life---forms where individuals can be themselves and not delegate their right to make political decisions to some "representative".

Nor is it the case that popular attitudes towards parliamentary politics require that a radical movement, initially, stay within that framework. Electoral participation in this country is less than in almost any other capitalist state. The vote is a passive semi-conscious ritualized act which few people feel is of real importance to their lives. Lenin's observation that the workers know intuitively that bourgeois parliaments are foreign instruments is strikingly apt in this country. The actual popular attitudes towards traditional politics are cynicism---"They're all crooks."; and resignation---"You can't fight City Hall!" When grievances become sharper, the cynicism and resignation turn to frustration and anger.

The present irrelevance of parliamentary politics is indicated by the rapidity with which non-parliamentary forms are adopted when major struggles develop. Thus the politicization of the northern Black movement has led from passivity and alienation to an implicit acceptance of urban guerrilla and self-defensive armed struggle, and to a major reliance on parallel and counter political institutions. Though some important electoral activities are taking place in the northern ghettos, the weight of the evidence indicates that traditional parliamentary politics; i.e., nationality pressure group politics, is never going to amount to much there.

People who attain radical consciousness in this country quickly see the magnificent confusion of the real decision-making apparatus with the public government; both with their various divisions and sections, their different levels, and their different parties, factions and personalities. Within such a purposeful confusion, how is it possible to clarify what is necessary and what is possible? Who should be pressured; how do you fix responsibility; who do you vote for; who do you believe? Furthermore, the individual must relate to all of these problems through the vote, which, as has been said, is a basically passive role, inadequate for people just becoming aware of their ability to play active, purposeful, conscious roles. It is almost inevitable that radicals in this country will be spontaneously anti-parliamentary.

The functional analysis of parliamentary politics sketched above can lead to a distorted strategic perspective, if it is not kept within the context of what is happening to capitalism. The essential fact about contemporary neo-capitalism is that centralization has eroded the social base it previously possessed. This has made a qualitative change in the requirements of continued capitalist hegemony. From the point of view of capital it is no longer true that, "that government which rules the least rules the best". In order to maintain power they must make concerted and massive use of the government apparatus. This has made bourgeois parliamentary politics fundamentally irrelevant. But if the hegemony of capital is fundamentally challenged, then the absence of real democratic content to the formally democratic parliamentary institutions can become an important part of the attack on the system, and in this attack creative forms of parliamentary politics can make this contradiction evident.

The basic point is that there are structural weaknesses, internal contradictions, in bourgeois hegemony under conditions of neo-capitalism, and

these create more favorable circumstances for the struggle for an alternative hegemony. Revolutionaries need to develop a strategy to capitalize on these weaknesses, a strategy that can convince people that the needs and grievances created by neo-capitalism can be satisfied under socialism, and that, in fact, they cannot be satisfied short of socialism. Furthermore, it must be shown that socialism is not a remote utopia, but is concrete and realistically attainable. Such an understanding will not come from either pure thought or pure action. It comes through purposeful collective actions, through a program aimed at reforms which are infused with an anti-capitalist logic and which are implemented in a framework that develops the autonomous powers of the people who have secured them.

This is much easier to say than to do, and it is the responsibility of those who advance the structural reform perspective as an alternative to the old radical strategies to be concrete. I want to deal with this problem in two general parts. First, I want to indicate some opportunities to disrupt capitalist hegemony within the work process and within the more traditional political arena. Second, I want to examine the character of the revolutionary organism, the party, needed to implement such a strategy.

If it is accepted that capitalism is in a phase which, "progressively destroys all forms of democratic life, all forms of collective responsibility, all forms of authentic social participation..." (Basso); and which imposes, "...an organized scarcity of time, air, of collective services and cultural possibilities..." (Gorz); then we must project an image of a society where people can attain a meaningful life through activities which project and embody human dignity, responsibility, and creativity. As struggle progresses and the realm of autonomous powers is extended, this image becomes progressively more real. This image rests on the possibility of a different allocation of material and human resources, a different set of attitudes towards priorities, a different distribution of power, and a different quality to human social existence than that which now prevails. Awareness of these possibilities must be injected into the day to day reform struggle, both in the manner in which the struggle is waged and in the manner in which the reform victories are implemented.

My treatment of the functional role of parliamentary democracy and of the forces affecting parliamentarianism in this country entails a certain approach towards electoral activity. Basically, as has been said, the point of beginning must be the understanding that the election of "good" people to office will not automatically be translated into good things for the people. Possession of office cannot be substituted for, nor equated with, possession of power. This does not entail abstinence from electoral activity. But it does mean that the goal of such activity cannot be solely the maximization of votes leading to the magic "51% of the seats in parliament".

Since the capitalist needs to maintain the facade of democracy to integrate conflicts within the system, there is an opportunity to use the parliamentary framework to project and organize a dual power that challenges the legitimacy of the system and openly disrupts the system from within its institutional and organizational structure. This is the meaning of having elected officials who function as "tribunes of the people", and, unless a revolutionary seizure of power is immediately possible, it is a valid and important role.

The function of "tribune" has even more potential when an organic relationship between the officeholder and his immediate constituency is built to channel the articulation and politicization of their needs and grievances to more clearly define the responsibilities of the officeholder. Even so, the constituency-officeholder bond must not obscure the fact that all demands must be won from the system and implemented against the system, even if they appear to have been dispensed through the system.

While it is important to replace bad representatives with ones that are more radical and responsive, it is essential to create the forms of activity through which people can represent themselves and can directly participate in the exercise of power. A revolutionary strategy must aim at immediately breaking through the bounds and limits of bourgeois parliamentarianism, which confines the "authoritarian majority" to a state of passivity and confines politics to the "orderly competition of elites for political office".

The alienation and frustration with the inadequacy of the channels open for political expression at a time of growing grievances, make it necessary to confront those who wield political power in a new way, not as supplicants, nor even as a more or less organized interest group---a bloc of voters---but



as the self-conscious symbol of and potential for a radically different way of wielding power. This approach must defend itself from its critics who claim that it has the same vagueness and basic implausibility of the counter-community concepts of a few years ago. However, it should also be realized from the outset that while traditional approaches to reform movements, and particularly to electoral activity, easily stimulate a mindless activism, it is only superficially that the goals, methods, and criteria of success applicable to them are simple and straightforward. Any serious venture into electoral politics, for example, quickly raises questions that go beyond the quantity of votes into the degree and durability of the involvement of the voters. However, I think that it is possible to be concrete about the content of an anti-capitalist structural reform para-politics. First, I would like to deal with a question of style, and then I would like to give some particular examples.

It is of great importance that people see the human content behind official institutions and bureaucratic formalities and niceties. Bureaucrats and politicians should be forced to function with people looking over their shoulder---critically---challenging at every point their right to make decisions that affect other people's lives, refusing to grant any "right to rule", refusing to abide by the rules of the game and always asserting, implicitly and explicitly, that an entirely different game is possible. The personnel of the official bureaucracies should be denied the prerogatives and privileges that are their due in "normal" times when bourgeois hegemony is uncontested.

After experience with such confrontations, people begin to feel their own capacity for self-rule through the projection of such alternatives as: if ADC mothers dominated the welfare commission, would there be so much trouble with investigators and caseworkers; if the neighborhood controlled its own schools, would kids learn how to think; if the Black community had their own police, would so many people be shot and beaten; if the workers had power over production, would so much junk be produced. Such confrontations make it psychologically evident that concessions are really concessions, and not gifts. They create a sense of solidarity and make people conscious of their collective responsibility and their individual worth---of their strategic strength.

Since the dilemma of the bourgeoisie is to rule legitimately, to maintain a situation of essential dominance without letting those dominated come to an understanding of this essence, it is possible, within the framework of an alternative hegemony, to attack the weak spots in the machinery of social control in a way that neutralizes some aspects of bourgeois hegemony, that frontally challenges other aspects, and that appropriates and exercises autonomously other aspects.

There is one arena of political struggle which pits individuals, families, or other small a-political groupings with no significant political influence, against an overwhelmingly more powerful entity---the finance company, the insurance company, the various utilities, the landlord, the tax assessor, the courts. Some of these entities are overtly political, some are not, but all of them have power that is institutionalized and legitimized within the legal-cultural framework of bourgeois hegemony. The system presently provides some tension management devices for the redress of the grievances that stem from these unequal conflicts to avoid a cumulative piling up of resentment. But these devices, be they private charity or public welfare, legal aid or ward heeling, are always oriented towards integrating the aggrieved within the system. This means that the concession (for they are essentially preemptive concessions) is given with all the trappings of charity---a captious charity that benefits only an arbitrarily chosen section of the aggrieved, only a section even of those among the aggrieved who keep their noses scrupulously clean. The aggrieved always remains a supplicant petitioning an omnipotent power, and is forced deeper into social dependency by the fashion in which his particular problem is resolved---assuming that it is resolved.

It is important to take the redress of grievance function from the official and semi-official bureaucracies and place it in some parallel or counter structure. Then, while the need for the system to provide concessions to prevent an accumulation of resentment still exists, these concessions ~~will not~~ necessarily buttress the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. At times the function can be appropriated by a trade union organization, at times by a community organization, and at times by a radical independent political organization---the specific form is not of great concern. The important fact is that the particular grievances are handled through a parallel structure, that the flavor of charity is eliminated, and that the degrading nature of the entire process is avoided. Not only will this guarantee more, and more substantial, victories, but these victories will come from the power structure,

not through it. Thus they provide tangible evidence of the power of collective action and will encourage more people to become conscious and creative participants in struggle. At the same time, a mass base for a movement against the root causes of the particularistic grievances would be developed.

The point was made earlier that selective repression is a necessary tactic for the maintenance of capitalism, but that its use is increasingly limited by the conditions and the consequences of its employment. A revolutionary strategy should further narrow the limits within which selective repression is effective by consciously undermining its legitimacy. In this vein, the promotion of mass civil disobedience is intrinsically desirable, but, of more general importance, a conscious approach to the neutralization of normal police power in selected instances and conditions must be cultivated. This is no call for anarchistic harassment of the police separate from any specific political context.

For example, consider the possibilities on the large college campus or in the Black or Spanish-speaking communities, where the legitimacy of the police power is already under serious challenge, and where at moments of crisis popular obedience to the authority of the police evaporates. In such contexts a combining of citizen's patrols, citizen's courts, para-police, and armed self-defense groups with concerted mass action can completely disrupt the normal use of police power. Often such actions will also call into question other vital aspects of bourgeois hegemony; e.g., the militarization of the campus or the institution of private property in the ghetto, and will constitute an important transitional form of struggle going beyond the bounds and limits of capitalism.

A conscious approach to the function of police power, and the development of a hegemonic alternative to it is the responsibility of the revolutionary in every activity; in strikes, boycotts, mass demonstrations, etc., if the potential of such activities is to be fully realized. For all sorts of people their relationship to the police and the courts symbolizes their powerlessness in this society and their involuntary subordination to priorities that are not their own. To turn this relationship upside down is of tremendous importance in giving them a proper appreciation of their own strength. To repeat a point made earlier, the consequences of the unlimited use of police power, of the military suppression of a movement, are so damaging to the ability of the capitalists to rule normally that the potential exists for a skillful revolutionary leadership to make substantial inroads on the police power without bloody massacres ensuing. Of course, the risk of such promiscuous violence always remains and it should never be allowed to lead to paralysis.

There is another, quite different, weak spot in the structure of capitalist hegemony. This grows from the importance of maintaining at least the formal consent of those who are ruled, their passive acquiescence in their own subordination. In this country there are both a number of mechanisms for democratic participation and a variety of bureaucratic structures that function with only tenuous legitimacy. The former should be incorporated into a rival hegemony before they atrophy---the latter should be challenged with counter structures before they get deeply rooted. Each of these possibilities must be taken advantage of in a revolutionary strategy. Consider some examples:

The initiative and referendum structures still retain a certain viability, particularly at the local level. Politicians and bureaucrats have a horror of a direct vote on a substantive issue, and, accordingly, they do their best to reserve the initiative and referendum to those issues where it would be politically unwise to get identified with any of the options which they will consider; e.g., higher taxes for workers versus less adequate schools for worker's children.

It is possible to put the initiative-referendum to much better use. It can become a way to expose the essential disenfranchisement of the masses of people beneath the facade of parliamentarianism---to bring the premises of the system into question and to win substantial concessions in a form where their implementation will promote and focus, not divert and dispel, class conflict and consciousness. The use of the advisory referendum on the war in Vietnam is an example of a more creative approach to the initiative and referendum, and the additional possibilities are infinite. The question of politician's salaries can be attacked; radical tax-the-rich schemes can be projected; all of the publicly regulated private monopolies can be frontally challenged; etc.

In a number of communities there are elective positions, often unpaid, that are the traditional preserve of the rich and the well-born, the "public-spirited and community-minded" elite. School boards are important examples.



Sometimes, there are possibilities for gaining control of school boards through traditional electoral tactics, but, unless the school district is exceptionally homogenous, a more promising approach is to use the community school in a way that disrupts the functional role of the educational system in the entire society. This might mean a counter school board based on an alliance between parents, teachers, taxpayers, and students focused against the educational administrative bureaucracy and at the job training educational philosophy. This can be the framework for a comprehensive challenge of the pressures to keep the teachers in line and insure that the children become "productive" members of bourgeois society. It can challenge the effort of the big corporations to shift the social cost of the education of their future work force to their present work force through a regressive tax structure.

There are similar possibilities in semi-public entities such as university, community and rural cooperatives. In these the tendency is for control to be in the hands of the administrative staff which, in turn, is usually dominated by pressures from big business. These bodies should be taken over in any way possible and built in an aggressive fashion, continually expanding their sphere of operation and permeating them with principles of organization incompatible with capitalism.

In a still different category are the community action programs of the war on poverty which are nominally under the direction of neighborhood boards elected through an informal neighborhood election procedure. The war on poverty is designed in large part to keep popular movements from breaking outside of the values and norms of the system. To do this adequately, particularly given the reluctance of the capitalists to make major material concessions to the unorganized poor who now perform the important function of holding down the general wage level, requires that the appearance of popular participation be maintained as long as possible. The war on poverty places certain "community people" in roles where they become apologists for the system; where they are forced to overestimate the "progress", to counsel patience, to tell people to go home during ghetto uprisings. To prevent such people from appearing as agents in the community, the popular sanction of the neighborhood election must be maintained even when it becomes a great embarrassment. This sort of dilemma of the power structure allows the election of boards that refuse to perform their appointed tasks and that refuse to accept the program as it is given to them. If this becomes too much for the power structure to take, the basis exists for militant independent organizations of the poor.

Another weak spot in bourgeois hegemony is the multitude of appointed advisory bodies, the "blue-ribbon" panels and commissions. These, also, are usually monopolized by the "community-spirited" types and often have a good deal of power. There are welfare commissions, wage and hours commissions, development commissions, human relations commissions, interim study committees, investigating panels, planning commissions, etc. In these areas, counter institutions, elected by some sort of freedom ballot, to give them more democratic legitimacy than the official bodies possess, should be built. Then, activities leading to confrontations with the official bodies should be developed to expose the latter and to frighten away the "community-spirited" time servers. This should always be done in a way that raises the demand that the people directly concerned with the particular issues are the people who should have operative control over their own programs, and that refuses to accept the legitimacy of the official body, no matter how benevolent and paternal it attempts to be.

I have been dealing with elements of a structural reform perspective applicable to issues and institutions that are traditionally regarded as "political". Now, I would like to give some similar examples that are applicable to the neo-capitalist work process.

While there is no encompassing political organization of the working class in this country---there is no labor party---there is the trade union economic organization. The limitations of current trade union structures and practices make it clear that a precondition for implementing a structural reform program in the factory situation is the development, both inside and outside of the existing trade unions, of a variety of new organizational forms that allow the full expression of the needs and grievances created at the point of production. The issues of the work process require rank and file organization with local autonomy to get around the prevalent passive and cynical attitudes towards regular union structures. One such form might be a national confederation of shop stewards organizations such as exists in Great Britain, to function as a dual power within the trade unions.

However, rank and file forms of organization, although extremely important, are not sufficient. Evidence for this lies in the inability of rank and file movements which develop around almost every significant trade union struggle to sustain themselves except as a caucus, usually an anti-leadership caucus, within the union structure. Very seldom do they maintain a program of shop action as opposed to a program of inner-union struggle---not that there is anything wrong with inner-union struggle.

The limitations of rank and file organization are only partly derived from the pressure on them to function within the legal framework of the labor contract. In the main, the limitations come from their inability to challenge the hegemony of the capitalists with a relevant alternative to the capitalist work process. Left and socialist organization is needed to expose the basic state of labor under capitalism and to build a program aimed at undermining the legitimacy of capitalist rule within the shop. It is even more true in the shop situation than it is in the society generally, that without a clear alternative to capitalist priorities and values, demands against the employers can be absorbed without shaking their essential control.

A major form of alienation in the capitalist work process consists in the separation of the act of setting the terms and the objectives of production from the act of producing itself. This separation grows greater as the production process becomes more complex and inter-related. The worker may be creative when he is implementing the decisions of the management, but he is excluded from any power over the making of those decisions, and often does not even realize that they have been made.

The counter program is to deny all management prerogatives to decide what should be produced, how the product should be marketed, what the character and rate of technological change should be. The workers must demand power over every aspect of production and must grant no sanctuary of management rights, all of which are ultimately based on the institution of private ownership of productive property. The potential issues in such a program extend all of the way from munitions workers demanding to build plowshares, not swords, to the printers putting their own corrections at the bottom of the newspaper stories as they did in revolutionary Cuba. Auto workers must concern themselves with the quality of their product, its cost, and its social consequences. Teachers must act collectively to guarantee that kids learn how to think, not just how to follow directions. The weapons of trade union organization, particularly strike action, must be applied in these arenas.

The Gorz book, STRATEGY FOR LABOR, has a number of specific examples of how this strategic perspective can be, and, in Italy and to a lesser degree in other common market countries, has been, implemented. Rather than constructing different examples, I would suggest that his be studied. I would like to develop a more general argument about how to develop an alternative to neo-capitalist society based on the gap between what its productive apparatus has made objectively possible and what is required for the maintenance of neo-capitalism.

One of the sources of capitalist hegemony is its ability to split the individual into a number of antinomies; worker-consumer, worker-taxpayer, worker-citizen, and to engender an acceptance of a basic conflict of interest within each of them. To transcend these antinomies, the working class must be able to project a different model of production, subordinated to human needs, not dominating them. To do this persuasively, the demand must be raised at the point of production for control over the nature and direction of production. Then it becomes possible to demonstrate that there is no necessity that dictates that things must be as they are, the cruelty and absurdity of present arrangements becomes evident, and the continued subordination of the needs of the people for "time and space, for collective services and cultural possibilities" to the logic of profit maximization becomes increasingly intolerable. So long as this is not done, and the work process remains a secure base of capitalist hegemony, it is difficult to see how the revolutionary movement can develop the moral impetus needed to make a revolution.

Within this framework it is possible to challenge the particular ways in which capitalism deforms various aspects of the society. Consider the educational system, for example.

The capitalist attitude towards education is as a part of the production process, as the social reproduction of the labor force---job-training to guarantee docile and adaptable workers. Though it is a favorite argument of



the apologists for the status quo that the nature of education in this country, its elitism, its narrow specialization, and its inculcation of "passivity and prejudice beyond the field of specialization" (Gorz), is a necessary concomitant of industrialization; in fact, the opposite is the truth. The development of technology vastly expands the potential for leisure and thus the possibility for a tremendous improvement in the quantity and quality of popular education. At the same time, rapid technological change renders specialized skills rapidly obsolete and a sane industrial society would return to the classic model of the liberal education, extended to all people, not just the elite. It is the priorities of capitalist industrialization, not of industrialization per se, that turn education into an appendage of production.

The structural reform perspective has two approaches to the gap between the potentiality and the actuality of neo-capitalist education. First, the general demand that capitalism pay for its "social cost of production" (Gorz) is particularly applicable to education. It is essential for neo-capitalist production that scientists and technicians be trained, and that workers able to read, write and figure be produced. Thus they should be forced to pay the education bill, all of it. This demand should be coupled with the demand for "the self-determination of education by the educators and the educated" (Gorz), to expose concretely the contradiction between what it is possible to do with education and what neo-capitalism is doing with it. That it is contradictory from the capitalist's viewpoint to demand that he pay the entire cost of education, and then to stipulate that he have nothing to say about what education looks like, is a problem the capitalists should be allowed to worry about.

I have attempted to illustrate that the demands for reforms and the movements around such demands can be organized and directed so that, in the struggle for their attainment and in the organizational and ideological framework into which they are incorporated and in which they are implemented, the struggle against capitalist hegemony is broadened and diversified from a stable base of autonomous working class power. What we have is a strategic approach based on revolutionary reforms that progressively erode and undermine the capitalist structure of rule by maintaining a constant mass mobilization against that structure. This strategy facilitates the articulation of the needs that develop from neo-capitalism; the need for the rounded development of the individual personality, for social services, for individual autonomy---human needs which capitalism creates but cannot fulfill. At the same time it creates the organization and will best be able to take advantage of the various crises inherent in capitalist development.

It would be a mistake to think that the structural reform strategy is a substitute for the forceful seizure of state power, or that it is dependent on the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism. The issue of the form of the revolution is completely independent. It would be rash to believe that capitalism will allow its power to be nibbled away indefinitely, or until it is too weak to respond, but exactly what will happen when the seizure of state power is relevant is beyond the scope of this paper. The strategy being considered is appropriate to a non-revolutionary situation. It presents a program for creating the subjective prerequisites for a revolutionary situation. When that is accomplished, the form of the revolution will not be an insuperable problem.

Anti-capitalist structural reforms place emphasis on decentralization, on the development of counter-power at the weak spots, the points of stress, of the centralized power structure. It promotes centrifugal processes which can break people out of the magnetic field of bourgeois hegemony.

This is in opposition to the strategy which sees centralized control over natural resources and political decision-making as the basic strategic consideration. This alternative approach tends to separate a period in which the working class movement struggles economically for reforms in wages and conditions and politically for the maintenance and extension of democratic forms and social welfare programs, from a later period in which "socialism is on the agenda", and the seizure of state power is the relevant problem. In both phases, the struggle is directed at the national level, at the federal government, the military-industrial complex, the giant financial empires. In practice, this approach becomes a combination of abstract revolutionary rhetoric and a mixture of social democratic parliamentary politics with a reliance on spontaneous economic struggle.

However, it is possible to emphasize decentralized approaches incorrectly and to focus on those issues and areas which are peripheral to the

survival of capitalism. The structural reform programs are developed specifically because of their concrete anti-capitalist character, and the entire perspective depends on the possibility of winning local centers of autonomous power to use to progressively undermine the centralized power.

Without this perspective, there is a real danger that the stress on decentralism will become reactionary---will become a kind of neighborhood reformism, creating little enclaves of corporativism that fail to challenge the logic and the priorities of capitalism and that, on the contrary, tend to buttress capitalism. This has happened before, and we should be aware of the recent efforts of the Ford Foundation, for example, to subsidize quite radical local organizing projects. There is nothing mysterious about why this is bound to happen more and more frequently. As the parliamentary mechanism for integrating conflicts within the system loses its utility, substitutes are going to be sought. A possible substitute is a kind of non-class communalism that peacefully coexists with capitalism and gives people the chance to participate in their own domination.

If local actions are to develop the autonomous powers of the working class, they must be under a leadership which understands the centralized character of neo-capitalism, and which can relate to it so that the growth of autonomy is conscious and directed. Without such leadership, the local movement will either become ingrown, with an encrusted shell preventing further growth and guaranteeing eventual death through attrition; or its radicalism will be leached out and relationships of accommodation with capitalism will develop.

Since, by themselves, the objective processes that shake the capitalist structure will not overturn the system, the outstanding need is for an organization of revolutionaries that acts as the conscious component of a potential ruling class, and develops the ideological and organizational terms without which the day to day struggle will be absorbed within the capitalist system. If there is no such nationally projected rival hegemony, the objective conflict of interests between social classes will not be translated into conscious revolutionary struggle. Without leadership, the "intellectual subordination and submission" the borrowed conception of the world" (Gramsci) accepted by the working class will not be effectively challenged. No ideological framework will exist to give the spontaneous activity of the class coherence and cohesiveness.

When we look at this society, at the social force of capitalist hegemony within the social grouping whose material needs and human potentials are thwarted and deformed by capitalism, particularly the organized working class, this truth is particularly compelling. And here we have had the material foundation for the transition to socialism for fifty years. What has been lacking, and is still lacking, are the subjective requirements for making a revolution; and, in the first place, an organization with the will to make a revolution.

The extreme diversity and differentiation within the society provide another reason for the importance of a conscious revolutionary group organized on a national basis. A cohesive organization is needed to relate and unify the different levels of activity and understanding present, for example, between the black and the white sections of the working class. In its absence, the likelihood is for a chaotic complex of activity cycles with a peak in one area cancelled by a pit in another. Since a constant mass mobilization is needed to challenge the dominance of capital maintained through habit and through bourgeois control of the institutions of political and civil society, a centralizing agency is of crucial importance. In short, to have a complete picture of the relationship of reform to revolution, we need a picture of the character of the organization of the revolutionaries---of the party.

There are a couple of aspects of the party which I want to consider in some detail. This is not because they are under any kind of formal challenge, but because, in my opinion, they are often misunderstood and distorted---mashed up---by both the opponents and the proponents of the party. These aspects concern the actual meaning of a "conscious", a "practical-critical", a "scientific" approach; and they concern the content of a "rival hegemony".

To understand the party, I think, one must grasp the full meaning of a collective. At first glance it appears to be a simple concept. Individual relationships in the party at every level must be based on mutual respect and affection, and on a certain basic trust, so that non-competitive discussions



of complicated and sticky details of practical work and theoretical analysis can take place with the maximum participation of each individual. Then, there must be an internal discipline, basically self-imposed, which guarantees that decisions, once made, will be implemented, even under the most adverse conditions.

There is another sense in which the party must be a collective. This is not relative to the proper relationship between higher and lower organizational levels in the party which can be easily derived from the characteristics of the party on any given level. The problem is the real organic relationship of functional components of the party to each other, to the development of a revolutionary program, and to the working class.

The great bulk of the working class implicitly accepts the premises of capitalist hegemony even though the logic of its actions, particularly in times of crisis, may express an embryonic alternative conception of the world. The party must be in direct contact with the class, not through merging with it, but through finding in the issues posed by the circumstances in which the class exists and develops the problems to which it must develop an approach which can lead to the class acting in a unified way, in its own name and in its own interests. A part of this process is, "...to raise the intellectual level of ever-widening strata of the people, by giving personality to the amorphous element of the masses, which means working to produce cadres of intellectuals of a new type who arise directly from the masses though remaining in contact with them..." (Gramsci) From these "intellectuals of a new type", through a process of division of labor, develops a core of revolutionary intellectuals, able to appropriate the best of historically developed intellectual production, to compete with and defeat on their own terms, the most imposing of the intellectual systems of the bourgeoisie, and able to elaborate an independent and original culture based on the needs and potentials of a society where the working class has hegemony.

Without the close sympathetic---organic---ties with the subordinated masses of the working class, the party will not be able to provide an ideological framework within which a social bloc able to contest for power with the bourgeoisie will coalesce. It is these ties that make possible to create a revolutionary ideology and shadow culture that is "practical and attainable", and to evade utopianism and abstract theorizing.

There are a number of conceptions of "working class culture" that are at odds with this approach, and that, I think, can never be the basis for a revolutionary culture competitive with the culture of the educated stratum of the bourgeoisie. In essence, these discover in some distillation of the current attitudes and concepts of workers the basic content of a working class ideology. This leads to a glorification of pragmatic and a-critical materialism and realism, of narrow and anti-humanist moral, ethical, and aesthetic norms, which working people have not developed independently, but have appropriated eclectically from the ideological superstructure of capitalism. If it is true that the working class will never spontaneously develop a consciousness of the need for a revolution, it is all the more true that it will never spontaneously develop an alternative culture.

The collective nature of the party is vital, not just because it is a precondition for the development of a rival culture, but also because it is a condition without which the party cannot function in a conscious, practical-critical "scientific" fashion.

Marxist parties often claim to be scientific in terms that imply that they have "history in their pocket"---that they can "foresee the future". Critics leap on this point gleefully, claiming to find a basic contradiction in claiming to know what the future will look like and, at the same time, constantly urging people to work like hell to guarantee that the future comes out in the way that we "scientifically" predict that it will. It would be less than honest to deny that this sort of historical determinism is an absurdity of which Communists have often been guilty and are still guilty in embarrassing degree.

It is true that there is a basic structure of a society that develops according to understandable and predictable patterns. The clarification of this structure is akin to the clarification of natural phenomena. It can be scientific in the same sense that the natural sciences are scientific, although the variables are much more complex and the danger of the investigator becoming an influence on what he is investigating is much greater.

But such an analysis does not allow us to predict the future. At best, it tells us something about what can and what cannot happen---not what will

or what will not happen. It provides a basis on which we can, "...predict whether there exist in the society the necessary and sufficient conditions for its (society's) transformation...(for) the reality and attainability of the different ideologies which have come into existence on the basis of the contradictions which it has generated in the course of its development." (Gramsci) What we can see, more or less clearly, is the quantity and the quality of the raw materials with which we must work to make history.

The difficulty is to develop the program to create the subjective conditions---the people and the organizations---through which an ideology, which is already objectively possible, can be materialized as the philosophy, the world view and life style of a coherent and cohesive social bloc. The essence of this program consists in transforming the quantity---masses of passive externally determined people---into quality---conscious autonomous individuals determining their own actions as part of a revolutionary collective. It is on this venture that the shape of the future depends, and it would be extremely rash to "predict" the degree to which success will be attained in it. Yet, this is what one claims to be able to do when he professes the ability to foresee the future. The thing to do is to create, not foresee, the future.

Through the actions of the party the "practicability and attainability", the historic validity, of the ideology, of the theoretic analysis, and of the program of action are checked. The essence of the party's scientific character is its function, in Gramsci's phrase, as an "historic experimenter". The party, as a body, is able to function scientifically in the same sense as does the experimental scientist. Its problems are posed by exploitation, oppression, and alienation as they are experienced in the practical daily life of the working people. Its hypotheses constitute alternative programs of action and are developed in a rational analytical, non-dogmatic, intellectual framework. These programs are implemented in a conscious fashion, and are constantly evaluated in terms of their ability to lead more people to challenge the hegemony of the bourgeoisie and, through this, to see the need and the potential for a revolution.

The organic collective essence of the party constitutes the social basis for developing a synthesis of theory and practice, a revolutionary praxis. Without the organic connection with the daily life of the working people, the character of the problems and issues to which the party must address itself cannot be judged. If the cadre of "intellectuals of a new type" does not exist, there is no bond between the articulation of the revolutionary program and its implementation. Without this cadre, the ideological leadership of the party is isolated and cannot be renewed continually with new blood and new ideas. Implementation of the program becomes a question of social engineering, not a process of lifting people out of dependence on the borrowed values of the bourgeoisie into creative participation in making a revolution. Finally, the ideological leadership must exist and must function in the proper fashion as a "highly cohesive, centralising and disciplinary power" (Gramsci) within the party (disciplinary is not used by Gramsci in the administrative sense). The maximum individual autonomy within this leadership to examine and re-examine basic premises of the ideology on which the alternative hegemony is based, is the key element in the entire scheme. Without it, the total functioning of the party cannot be scientific.

Though this has been a brief and schematic treatment of the party, it has relevance to some practical problems in this country. Here the hegemony of the bourgeoisie is so deeply ingrained that, if even the bare beginnings of a revolutionary consciousness is to develop within the working class, it must be challenged categorically within that class. Thus it becomes crucial that the party have a genuine collective character and that it be close to the needs and grievances of the working people, not to some abstract concept of what these grievances should be. But, at the same time, the party cannot stop at the understanding that the workers have of their situation, but must build to transform this understanding into a force which cannot be contained within the framework of capitalism.