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THE MINORITY POSITION ON CHINA
AND RELATED QUESTIONS

By Arne Swaback

Since the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Revolution the world has been divided into two mutually antagonistic systems -- the socialist and the capitalist. Further revolutionary developments intensified the hostility between the conflicting forces. This process entered a new stage and attained greater dimensions as the victorious Chinese revolution catalyzed a number of upheavals that led to political independence of colonial peoples and to the establishment of workers states in North Korea, North Vietnam and Cuba.

The Chinese revolution is a continuation and extension of the Russian revolution. It marks the second major advance of the world revolution which has put an end to the series of defeats ushered in by the triumph of Stalinism. For colonial movements aspiring to enter the path of socialist construction, the Peoples Republic of China is a powerful pole of attraction. Peking has taken the place once occupied by Moscow as the world's revolutionary center in which the Communist Party leaders are hosts to representatives of workers and peasants from all parts of the globe, who come to seek inspiration, advice and support.

From the exploiters of labor and the exploiters of colonial peoples this has unleashed fierce hatred and violent attacks against the CCP. In fact, the struggle today between revolutionary China and American imperialism -- the most ruthless of the exploiters -- has become the epicentre in all major developments of international class conflicts. Increasingly it tends to overshadow all other aspects of the present world situation.

The recognition of Peking as a world revolutionary center has not escaped Washington imperialist circles. Their ambitions in the Pacific and access to exploitation of the material riches of the Orient are blocked by this center. Both in theory and practice the Chinese leaders seek to defend their revolution by means of its extension. Consequently, they emphasize the paramount importance of carrying the proletarian struggle to victory in the capitalist world, and they link this up in intimate connection with the struggle of colonial peoples. Their call for international working class solidarity sounds loud and clear. In Asia, Africa and Latin America,

the Chinese, motivated by their concept of uninterrupted revolution, remain critical of ruling native colonial puppets and support the movements of popular revolt.

History has already illuminated the dialectics of the interrelation between revolutionary China and imperialist America. For some time it has been most sharply focused by the barbaric intervention of U. S. military forces in the Vietnam civil war. In various forms it pervades other parts of the globe, including the gunboat diplomacy in Santo Domingo. The power of American capitalism, both monetary and military, sustain the rule of fascist dictators, colonial puppets and other reactionary elements, while the Chinese Communists have taken the lead in ideological, political and material support to world-wide revolutionary developments. In this interrelationship the Kremlin bureaucracy was caught in the middle. Its particular brand of peaceful coexistence failed at the crucial point; straddling the issues of conflict between revolutionary China and American imperialism became increasingly difficult.

In the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute the Kremlin suffered serious reverses. The CPSU lost influence and prestige to such an extent that this threatened disintegration of its authority among other Communist parties. These were the basic reasons for the downfall of Khrushchev. Ideologically and politically the Kremlin was outflanked from the left by the Chinese, who reasserted the principles of socialist internationalism.

More important yet, the resolute stand for Marxist-Leninist concepts by the Chinese leaders has provided a stimulus to the revolutionary reorientation of Communist-minded workers in the capitalist world as they regroup to seek anew the path to the socialist revolution. This is a development of great historic significance; it offers immense possibilities, for it restores a living movement that is once again polarized around the principle of socialist internationalism, and the problems of the socialist revolution; it is world wide in scope and its forces are to be found either as splitoffs from the Communist parties or as young, viable currents within them in many countries. In the United States, our party forfeited a unique opportunity to act as the independent ally of the Chinese revolution. Progressive Labor has become the most prominent organizational expression of this new movement in America.

What is our party leadership's attitude to these developments? How well has this attitude been able to stand up? The majority resolution, "The SWP Position on China", adopted at the last convention, has never been published, and is not likely to be published. That is precluded by the false conclusions drawn, for these can neither stand the light of day nor be defended in public.

"The SWP Position on China" grants that it is a workers state, and it grants that "the progress of the Third Chinese Revolution has supplied massive positive confirmation of the laws of the permanent revolution."

But the Chinese workers state, according to the SWP position, "is not, as its leaders claim, a People's Democracy, but a bureaucratic autocracy elevated above the worker-peasant masses in whose name it rules...it is bureaucratic in its inner life as in its method of ruling the country." To these charges are added complaints about "the CP's commandism...reckless haste and disregard for the welfare of the peasant population," without a shred of substantiating evidence submitted.

Obviously the Chinese workers and peasants think otherwise. That much is attested by all objective observers who, without exception, point to the support of the regime by the overwhelming majority of the population.

The actual situation, according to these observers, shows the Chinese revolution still retaining the basic characteristics of a mass movement without rigid divisions between rulers and ruled. Leading cadres of the state institutions, the party and cultural organizations participate in physical labor alongside the rank and file in fields and factories. Conversely, productive workers take part in planning and administrative functions. In the army differences in military rank are abolished and all eat out of the same rice bowl.

In the People's Communes, governmental power is combined with production. The communes form both the upper levels of the combined farming co-operatives and also the lowest level of state power at the township base. These self-governing entities plan and carry out their many-sided activities in agriculture, local industry and public works. They survey the resources of their township and have the state power to use them.

Productive labor is integrated with military training in the people's militia which counts many millions in its ranks, including both men and women. Reports out of China show intensified military training caused by the heightened tension of the constantly escalated American imperialist intervention in Vietnam. The people's militia expresses the reality of a people in arms ready to defend the revolution and, incidentally, contemptuously refute the charge of "a bureaucratic autocracy elevated above the worker-peasant masses."

Nevertheless, the notion about a bureaucratic autocracy in Peking led the authors of "The SWP Position on China" further away from basic Trotskyist principles. That is made amply clear by the following declaration:

"For these reasons the political line of the revolutionary Marxists remains one of political revolution aiming at a thoroughgoing democratization. This requires intransigent opposition to the holders of power, not reconciliation with them or adaptation to their regime. A new party will have to be formed to conduct that struggle."

At another point it is stated: "There are no legal means, no institutional channels through which the direction and policies of the one party state can be changed or corrected in a peaceful way."

These are the false conclusions contained in the "SWP Position on China" that cannot be defended in public. They proceed from a definition of the Peking regime that is contrary to its origin and development. The result is an attempt to subordinate the facts of history to the preconceived notions and deep-seated prejudices of the majority party leaders.

Following Trotsky's leadership, we accepted the idea of political revolution as the logical outcome of the Stalin regime in the Soviet Union. We attributed the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and its crystallization into a privileged caste, to the conditions of a particular historical juncture. Most outstanding were the economic backwardness of the country, its isolation in a hostile capitalist world, heavy working class losses in the civil war, and the unavoidable internal retreat to the New Economic Policy.

International developments pushed with mighty force in the same direction, through a series of working class defeats. But, as Trotsky pointed out, there was in these events not only a chronological, but also a causal connection which worked in two directions: "The leaders of the bureaucracy promoted the defeats; the defeats promoted the rise of the bureaucracy." Still, for the Stalinist bureaucracy to triumph in the Soviet Union, it had to strangle the Leninist party and destroy physically the whole generation that led the revolution to victory under Lenin and Trotsky.

In this manner we interpreted the Stalinist degeneration on historical materialist grounds. For us the rise of Stalinism signified a parasitic growth, a usurpation of powers by a police regime, leading to the logical necessity of a political revolution.

However, an interpretation of the conditions and development of the Chinese revolution on historical materialist grounds points inevitably in the opposite direction -- it points to the necessity of political solidarity with the Peking regime, and assignment of criticism to an educational role, especially concerning that area in which Trotskyist critique for Soviet history is decisive.

The Peking regime does not represent a usurpation of powers; in fact, those who make up this regime are the very same people who led the revolution to victory, who established nationalized economy, state planning, industrialization and the transformation of agricultural relations. They set policies in which China became a powerhouse extending the revolution through the colonial areas of Asia, Africa, and all the way to Cuba.

Moreover, these are the same leaders who in the Sino-Soviet dispute advanced the Marxist-Leninist position against the Kremlin brand of peaceful coexistence with imperialism; they effectively defended the revolutionary road to workers power against the revisionist parliamentary illusions emanating from Moscow. Today the Peking regime has mobilized the mighty powers unleashed by the revolution to stand up to American imperialism and challenge its aggression in every field, including the internal aggression against the Negro people in this country.

The course of developments in China shows a revolution in gestation, unfolding, maturing -- not the degeneration of a victorious proletarian power. It is the opposite of what brought the brutal Stalinist regime into being. On the world arena Stalin began his climb toward power by opposition to the German revolution in 1923; Mao's first international action was to aid materially and militarily the revolutionary forces in the Korean civil war. And for all the differences with the Bolshevik triumph prior to the Stalin era, the course of the Chinese revolution remains still in the October stage. There is no Thermidor.

Considering these developments of the Chinese revolution, it is preposterous for the SWP to propose a program of political revolution and the formation of a new party to conduct a struggle to overthrow the Peking regime.

A policy of political revolution arising out of the need to combat the monstrous Thermidorian regime that usurped power in the Soviet Union by the physical annihilation of Lenin's co-workers is arbitrarily and schematically applied by the party majority leaders against a fundamentally revolutionary regime. Thus a method entirely foreign to our tradition is introduced into the party. It should be repudiated, for it marks a complete departure from basic Trotskyist principles, and basic Marxist principles.

The whole world knows that the Chinese government is committed to the defense of Vietnam, with whatever means required, against American imperialist aggression. Yet our party promotes the idea of overthrowing this government, for that is what political revolution means. How will the majority leaders justify this idea before the Vietnamese liberation fighters? How will they defend it before the American radical public?

This question is directly related also to the Negro movement in the United States. The leaders of revolutionary China, acting on behalf of a great power, have pledged their unequivocal support for the Freedom Now struggle. They have inspired and given political and material assistance to colonial revolutionary forces -- the friends and allies of the Negro people. With equal consistency they oppose and expose the oppressive nature of American

imperialism -- the bitter enemy of the Negro people.

These facts are well known to the vanguard elements in the struggle for Freedom Now. Among them such representatives as Robert F. Williams and William Worthy identify with the Chinese revolution. Malcolm X, before he died declared: "Chinese will be the future leading political tongue of the world." Black people in increasing numbers follow their example. This lends further emphasis to the need for a change in the same direction of the party position on China.

The party's false position on the role and the character of the Peking regime has produced its logical extension into other aspects of our attitude to the Chinese revolution. Once we depart from one basic principle the road is open to violate more of them; and that is what has happened.

An article in the Militant of Dec. 28, 1964, attempted to picture what is called Mao's "assurances of the correctness of Stalin's war on Trotskyism" as a means of angling for a deal with American imperialism. This scurrilous charge was repeated and spelled out more completely in the Militant of Feb. 1, 1965. Referring to the withdrawal of Cuban students from Rumania because the government, while seeking a rapprochement with the United States, banned their projected rally in celebration of the Cuban revolution, the author adds this interpretation:

"Will Peking, which has been talking magnificently about Leninism, now remind the Rumanians of the need to adhere to basic principles? Will Mao and his team choose to draw the attention of the Rumanians to the dangers of Titoism? Or will they choose to remain silent, thereby implying their own readiness to bargain with American imperialism at the expense of others?"

At first glance, these crude insinuations may seem like mere sniping; but there is much more involved. The abusive taunts were hurled at Peking at the very moment when the Chinese leaders were preoccupied with problems far more serious than the presence of Cuban students in Rumania. They faced the armed might of American imperialism arrayed in full scale war posture along the shores of their country, and conducting actual bomb attacks on North Vietnam.

Our party is committed to the fundamental Trotskyist principle of unconditional defense of workers states against imperialist attacks. It forms a keystone in our programmatic structure. Yet we failed in the real test of this commitment. Instead of rallying to China's defense the Militant did the exact opposite. Instead of extending our hands in international class solidarity, the Militant hurled scurrilous insinuations against China. This also was a sorry departure from basic Trotskyist principles.

If we accept the characterization of the Chinese Peoples Republic as a workers state, there can be no doubt about the need to defend it against imperialist attacks; we must state so in terms sufficiently clear for all to understand. For proletarian internationalists, this is an elementary duty. Between this duty and the problem of building an effective revolutionary party, there is a clear and unmistakable connection. For surely, to conquer new positions of working class power, we must have the will and the capacity to defend existing conquests.

The departure from basic Trotskyist principles began a few years ago.

When the Soviet Union, in 1961, resumed nuclear bomb testing, the Militant of Sept. 4 and 11, carried a pacifist editorial; it placed equal blame for atomic weapons testing on the Soviets and on imperialism. Although "Kennedy's stepped-up preparation for war" was noted, the editorial went on to declare it a "criminal action for Moscow to resume testing, still more so since it helped Washington to resume testing."

We are now, and we were then, well aware that the danger of unleashing a nuclear holocaust emanates not from the Soviet Union, but from American imperialism. We recognize, or we should recognize that the Soviet Union has a right and a duty to defend itself against imperialist war threats with the most effective weapons that scientific efforts can provide.

When Trotsky was Commissar for War, in the young Soviet Republic, poison gas was the most terrible type of military weapon. About it, Trotsky had this to say:

"Let Soviet science give us gases and counter-gases such as will deprive the civilized beasts of prey of all desire to make attempts on our independence and our labor."

Today that declaration needs to be reformulated and repeated. Let Soviet science and Chinese science develop and test nuclear weapons in order to hold at bay the civilized beasts of prey. Nevertheless, in reply to our protests, the majority party leadership justified the editorial and insisted that the issue was not "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union," but the fact that Kremlin policy "makes military defense paramount and subverts political defense into an adjunct of Soviet diplomacy."

But this was Kremlin policy under Stalin's rule, and Trotsky consistently maintained that there must be no equivocation in our stand for unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attacks -- unconditional, that is, regardless of the policy of the Kremlin.

In its departure from fundamental principles the party faces a clear danger of total disorientation, for one unacknowledged and uncorrected error inevitably leads to others. This was indicated most sharply in the treatment of the Kennedy assassination. The reaction was one of panic, not the sober response of confident leaders. So great was the disarray that class lines were obliterated, to the detriment of the education of young comrades in the politics of class struggle.

It was not proper for the party, through its public organ or otherwise, to "extend our deepest sympathy" to Mrs. Kennedy and her children. Such expressions, on an individual basis, where they reflect real sympathy, are acceptable. When the party does it, that is a political act implying political solidarity. The class line is obliterated.

Said the party statement: "Political differences within our society must be settled in an orderly manner." That staid and respectable admonition is worthy of a liberal or a social democrat, not of revolutionary Marxists who know that basic political antagonisms are never settled in any such manner. While it is not necessary or advisable at all times and under all circumstances to proclaim or underline the violence of social change, it is impermissible to preach the opposite, for that is to deceive.

The party statement went on, "Before all others, it is the federal government's duty to block the attempt to use the Dallas tragedy for the staging of an ever more devastating witch-hunt." There spoke the voice of panic -- and absurdity. For earlier in the same declaration it was correctly said: "The cornerstone of the hate edifice was laid 20 years ago by government figures and Congressmen with the commencement of the great witch-hunt." So the party adopted the strange position of appealing to the professional witch-hunters not to stage a new witch-hunt. Again the class line was obliterated.

"Before all others," the party statement insisted, "it is the duty of the federal government to furnish the people with a thoroughgoing analysis of the atmosphere of hate and violence which fostered that tragedy." No, it was the duty of the revolutionary party, before all others, to furnish such an analysis. The federal government and the capitalist state function to uphold and defend the interests of the capitalist class. Instead of reminding the ruling class of what we mistakenly imagine to be its "duty", it would be better to remind ourselves once again of the basic Marxist concept of the nature of the state.

But as the party majority leaders grew soft politically, they tended to harden their internal administrative attitude. Expulsions of young members on charges of disloyalty, based merely on hyperbolic remarks about the party in private group documents, have taken the place of our formerly honored method of attempting to educate the youth and permit minority opinions. Members of the Milwaukee branch were charged with irresponsibility and accused of hostility toward the party youth when they took normal measures against a dishonest interloper who had absconded with money belonging to a defense fund and money borrowed from the comrades. No other motivation can possibly be ascribed to such censures than that of unrestrained factional retaliation against minorities. In fact, the mere expression of a dissenting minority opinion immediately encounters hostile factional attacks from majority leaders. This tends to prevent the objective discussion that is essential to internal party life.

A proposal to formalize this type of administrative regime, and incorporate it into the party organizational structure, is presented to the convention under the title "Draft Resolution on the Organizational Character of the SWP."

It represents a rationalization of the above mentioned organizational measures. Among the several correct concepts propounded in this document, there are also calls for organizational tightening up and warnings against any attempt to subvert the principle of majority rule -- a principle that does not seem at all endangered.

Considerable emphasis is placed on party loyalty. For disciplined members party loyalty grows out of conviction; it cannot be legislated by organizational provisions or rules of conduct. Party loyalty becomes a reality whenever it is founded on clear comprehension of the historical necessity and the historical role of the revolutionary party and its response to the needs of the working class.

Implicitly if not explicitly, this document conveys a certain fear of internal discussion. The stress is on limitations of discussion -- which truly reflects the practice established by the majority party leaders.

When Trotsky was still with us, the party went through frequent and intense internal discussions from which the party gained in understanding and firmness of principle. Lenin's party, so often referred to as our model, was not at all chary about internal discussions, or eager to set rigid limitations. Quite the contrary. In debates on practically all of the great actions undertaken by the Bolsheviks different tactical or strategic lines clashed; there was frankness of expression. Many of the important deliberations, with opinions pro and con, were fully recorded in the public press.

A revolutionary party develops through internal struggle. Contradictory views and opinions constantly arise as a result of pressure from conflicting class forces. Without discussion and ideological struggle to resolve these differences, internal party life will come to an end.

At present this aspect of party development needs especial emphasis because of the various and divergent currents of thought and action that have now become so pronounced in the world Trotskyist movement.

The logical opposite arising out of the disorientation in the SWP on fundamental principles showed up in abstention from important anti-imperialist actions. Most outstanding

was the failure to support and participate in the student trips in mass defiance of the Cuba travel ban. Twice available, the ways and means to take advantage of this opportunity were turned down by the majority party leaders.

Since its early stages of development we have established a record of genuine defense of the Cuban revolution. What could be more natural than to follow-up as supporters and participants in the travel ban defiance? Its exceptional significance was demonstrated most graphically by the spirited welcome accorded the students in Cuba; there they were greeted as comrades in arms, and at home in the U.S., upon their return, they faced the hostile reception by the imperialist agencies, the HUAC, the Grand Jury, etc. A correct policy of collaboration in the travel ban defiance would have provided an excellent chance for young Trotskyists to study a revolution at first hand, in actual life, and take part in an effective anti-imperialist action.

Nevertheless, prior to the first student trip to Cuba, the Political Committee meeting of June 3, 1963, decided otherwise.

Motion was made: "That we support the attempt to organize a mass student defiance of the Cuba travel ban. That individual participation be determined through consultation with the N.O." The motion was lost.

Motion was made: "The P.C. inform all party branches that no member of the party is to become involved in any project aimed at defying the travel ban to Cuba without prior consultation and approval of the P.C." -- The motion was carried.

This decision was a serious mistake; the effect was to tell party members to lay off. And strange as it may seem, no reason for this abstentionism could be valid; not even that of the travel ban defiance being initiated by Progressive Labor.

Yet, this is but one example of the generally wrong attitude shown by the majority party leaders to Progressive Labor. At the present time, its members are being subjected to especially vicious persecution by the New York City authorities. Our reaction, up to now, has been mere perfunctory information in the Militant as if involved was merely some discomfort to a disagreeable rival. This is a dangerous

deception. What is involved is a sanguinary attack by capitalist reaction intended to silence and if possible smash any attempt to champion revolutionary ideas and actions. The least we can do is to adopt a policy of working class solidarity toward Progressive Labor and join in a united front of genuine and active support for defense measures.

We have become accustomed over a period of years to being the only party in the United States capable of attracting workers who learn to accept revolutionary ideas. This is no longer the case. Ever changing reality is once again asserted. Out of the revolutionary regeneration initiated by the Chinese Communist Party in its ideological struggle with the Kremlin, Progressive Labor has emerged as a part of the world-wide left regroupment around problems of the socialist revolution.

This is the new reality, and it is manifested concretely in the existence of a competing revolutionary organization. The program of Progressive Labor, its stated aims and objectives in the class struggle parallel our own. Since this is the case, our thinking must reflect the needs of this reality, and the corresponding political conclusions must be drawn to the full. For Marxists, this is axiomatic.

More than two years ago Progressive Labor called for the formation of "a vanguard Leninist party that can lead millions in mass movements against imperialism." It invited all who share this goal to join in common discussions and common efforts. Though Progressive Labor made criticism of the Trotskyists it presented an open, frank and non-factional attitude. But instead of greeting the extended invitation as a progressive development and engage in fraternal discussion of the proposed objective, the majority party leaders have remained bitterly hostile and factional toward Progressive Labor.

Though belated, the party can still accept the invitation. We do not propose this be done uncritically. We have disagreements with Progressive Labor in certain areas of political concepts, but these should be subject to mutual discussion. And joint efforts toward the formation of a larger and more effective revolutionary party should be viewed as a challenge; it is intimately related to our often stated conviction that, "the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership."

Our conclusion from this development should be expressed in a policy of friendly collaboration with Progressive Labor in pursuance of concrete class objectives, wherever feasible, while exploring, at the same time, the possibilities of fusion. This could become the first step toward the formation of such a vanguard Leninist party; and this first step should be undertaken regardless of present mutual recriminations.

A fusion of proletarian internationalists on the basis of solidarity with the Chinese revolution, with the Cuban revolution, and with the Algerian revolution should be considered not only as feasible, but as a necessary point of departure for our participation in the world-wide revolutionary reorientation and regroupment. It should be viewed as our contribution toward the solution of the historical crisis of mankind.

Since the beginning of American Trotskyism we have looked forward to the day when in this country left currents would crystallize out of the broader movement and present an opportunity for fruitful collaboration and then fusion in a larger and more effective American party. We prepared ourselves to take advantage of such a development. Our fusion with the Muste group and our period of entry into the Socialist Party were examples of the practical realization of this outlook.

Trotsky's thinking about the formation of the Fourth International went along similar lines. He visualized it as being composed not only of Trotskyists; and as a practical demonstration of his views, he suggested that Chen Tu-hsiu be invited to the founding conference, even though we then had serious differences with the latter.

Today the United Secretariat of the Fourth International has voiced its desire for an alliance "with all the young, viable forces, the Communist tendencies of the pro-Chinese left."

But this basic idea found more distinct expression in the statement our party adopted on March 1, 1963, entitled, "For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement." The statement declared:

"New currents developed under the influence of the victory in Cuba, are groping their way to revolutionary socialism, and seeking to apply the main lessons of the colonial revolution to their own situation. The Algerian revolution has had a similar effect on the vanguard of the African revolutionary nationalist movement. To meet these leftward moving currents, to work with them, even to combine with them without giving up any principles, has become an imperious necessity."

A correction must be made here. While these leftward moving currents are influenced by both the Cuban and the Algerian revolutions, the more exact term, and the one that is more in line with world reality, is "the Communist tendencies of the pro-Chinese left." But the idea expressed in the party statement should be applied as it stands, namely: To meet these leftward moving currents, to work with them, even to combine with them without giving up any principles, still remains an imperious necessity.

To sum up, our tendency is submitting to the party convention a motion calling for a definite turn of party policy in two important areas as follows:

1. The program of political revolution for China, which flowed from a false conception of the character of the regime, must be discarded in favor of critical support to the regime and backing for its basic policies, both domestic and international. Criticism of Chinese views and practices with which we disagree (such as, for example, the defense of Stalin as a person), should be assigned to an educational role and expressed with the general framework of political solidarity within the regime.

2. Toward Progressive Labor we must adopt a policy of friendly united front type collaboration on issues in the class struggle wherever feasible, definitely oriented, however, to exploration of the possibilities of fusion with Progressive Labor in a larger and more effective revolutionary party.

Submitted on behalf of the Pro-Chinese Tendency

June 1, 1965

THE NEGRO REVOLUTION, THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, AND THE

SWP

by

Dave Miller and A. Phillips

No Marxist today questions the fact that the U. S. is in the midst of a social crisis, a crisis which is measured by its most dominant but not sole representative - the Negro movement.

The party's response to this developing crisis has been characterized by five related positions:

1. An inability to recognize, let alone anticipate, the rapidly emerging class character of the Negro movement as it struggles to realize and express itself in class terms and goals; in just the last two years, witness the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, the Deacons, the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union, the whole direction of the theoretical evolution of Negro nationalism.
2. Its inability to recognize its errors and learn from them (the Michigan Freedom Now Party, the Muslims).
3. A lack of a concrete revolutionary program to meet the needs of the day in all the chief areas of struggle.
4. A tendency to adapt (actively or passively) to the program of other classes and forces.
5. An abstentionist, sectarian and adaptationist policy in the press and in the public activity of the party - refusing even to implement the party's own self-assigned tasks in the mass movement as listed at the close of the Freedom Now resolution adopted two years ago.

THE PRESENT STAGE OF CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE USA

Two years ago in the document "The Decline of American Imperialism and the Tasks of the SWP" we outlined the nature and course of the currently emerging economic crisis in the US. That analysis remains valid today. We did not then, and do not today, set any time-tables for these developments. Thus it is also true that while there has been abundant evidence of significant change in the level of class combativity in the last two years, the economic and social tensions have not yet created a qualitative change, and the struggle to create a left-wing in the unions is still in its earliest stages, from a subjective point of view.

But the party today has such a one-sided view of the white workers' quiescence that it has not, cannot see the revolutionary mobilization already emerging in another section of that class -- the unorganized Negro workers.

It is only at rare peak moments in history that all elements of a class are united in action or thought to one goal. Within the unions, the white, highest seniority workers are still more or less bound by their unions' acceptance of the status quo. This is less true of the younger workers. It is least true of the Negro workers, who, by their dual position as members of organized labor and as participants (even if in most cases indirectly) in the Negro revolution, are the most logical carriers of the necessary linkage of the two struggles.

But if the status quo, in every form, has been rejected by the black section of the class within and outside the union movement, it is above all, today, the newly mobilizing Negro workers, particularly in the south, who are transcending the entire class in their political struggle for civil, and class, rights. This struggle -- unlike that of the petty bourgeoisie -- cannot be really won today precisely because to win it, the movement must transcend its national character and assume proletarian form and consciousness. It is precisely this expression of combined development (i. e., of permanent revolution in the U. S.) which we see emerging in the south, in the Bogalusa fight for jobs, in the Deacons, in the Freedom Labor Union, in the evolution of Malcolm X toward class positions, and in distorted form in the Freedom Democratic Party.

It is this movement, a development of our class, to which the party must respond in a politically Bolshevik manner. However significantly refracted by the prism of the national question, this is our class on the march. TO SPEAK OF PROLETARIAN QUIESCENCE IN THIS SITUATION IS TO MAKE THE SERIOUS ERROR OF IDENTIFYING THE WORKING CLASS SOLELY WITH ITS PRESENTLY ORGANIZED SECTOR, AND TO IGNORE THE INEVITABLE REPERCUSSIONS OF THE NEWLY AWAKENING NEGRO WORKERS MOVEMENT UPON ALL SEGMENTS OF THE CLASS.

How can one account for the party's failure in action, propaganda, political resolution to reorient itself toward these revolutionary class developments?

The failure of the party today to see the Negro struggle, concretely, as part of the proletarian revolution, as a class phenomenon with subsidiary (though tactically decisive) national dimensions, represents a failure to see the American revolution in the flesh. A sound dialectical conception of the role of the Negro movement is contained, in embryo, in the party's 1948 resolution; the Negro movement through its independent dynamism is capable of shattering

the status quo and forcing intensified struggle on the part of the whole class, including its organized segment. Instead of giving this crucial relationship the careful study and development for which it cries out, the party has turned its back on it, both in theory and in life. What we must have is a Transitional Program in a dual sense -- transitional from the Negro struggle to the struggle of the whole class, and transitional for the whole class in the struggle for power. We must say in concrete terms to the Negro masses -- to the conquest of power through the previous conquest of a link with the whole class. This is the only real meaning of the conception of the Negro as vanguard of the American revolution.

But how can one retain this revolutionary perspective, this role of the Negro struggle, this perspective of class unity, if one no longer believes, in reality, that this program, this perspective of our 1948 resolution can be achieved -- if one believes that the American workers cannot respond to the revolutionary developments of the Negro movement?

This, then, is the basic explanation of the party's failure, to develop a class line toward the Negro movement -- a strategy of black proletarian leadership of the Negro movement, a strategy aiming towards Negro-white unity. One is forced to conclude that the party lacks confidence in the capacity of the white working class to respond to the Negro working class in action. This is the essential difference between the line of the party in 1948 and today. At that time, the resolution on the Negro question was permeated with confidence in the organized working class and secure and strong in the belief that action on the part of the independently organized Negro movement, if properly oriented, would help to galvanize the whole class in a strategically immediate sense.

Lacking this confidence today, the party naturally can have nothing distinctive to say to the Negro movement, and consequently must either abstain from a political role, or inadvertently advocate essentially reformist policies, or seek for some "revolutionary" force other than the black worker. In fact, the party has done all three of these. Everything that is, except pose a working class revolutionary program before the Negro masses.

WITH NOTHING OF OUR OWN TO SAY IT IS BUT A SHORT STEP TO TOTAL ABSTENTION. THIS TENDENCY HAS NOW REACHED THE POINT WHERE THE PARTY IS PREPARING TO ABANDON ALL BUT NOMINAL NEGRO WORK FOR CONCENTRATED STUDENT WORK. THAT IS, THE PARTY, HAVING FIRST LEFT THE ORGANIZED WORKERS ON THE GROUND THAT NO RECRUITMENT IS POSSIBLE THERE, IS NOW LOGICALLY, AND ACTUALLY SURRENDERING ITS CLAIM UPON THE BLACK WORKING CLASS AS WELL, ON SIMILAR GROUNDS -- "NOT RECRUITABLE AT THIS TIME". THE IRONY IS THAT THIS PROCESS IS TAKING PLACE PRECISELY AT A TIME WHEN THE NEGRO WORKER IS GIVING EVERY EVIDENCE OF INCREASING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

AND MATURITY.

The question -- are the party's tasks today propagandistic or agitational in character, whether one or the other is the best way of building the party, is essentially a false posing of the issue. This is not an organizational, technical problem, but a political one. The essential question is what kind of propaganda, directed towards which sections of American society. If this is answered correctly, the question of when, where, and how the party turns directly to agitation will develop in a semi-automatic fashion. (The supreme irony of it all is that with a "propaganda orientation" the party actually has no propaganda to propagate. Socialism is not a program. We are not the SLP.)

THE NEGRO MOVEMENT TODAY --- IN THE SOUTH

The Negro working class movement in the south today is on the verge of a decisive breakthrough.

In a desperate effort to housebreak the civil rights movement, the bourgeoisie is passing a new voting bill. None of us can have any illusions. The bill will remain a dead letter except to the extent that the Negro movement seizes this bill, utilizing it as a lever by which it can help to seize the vote from the hands of the ruling class. (One has only to recall the use made by the unions, and the impact upon the working class of Section 7a of the NRA - codes in the thirties. Totally fraudulent as the section was in intent and enforceability, it was nevertheless a powerful stimulant to struggle utilized by the workers in the organization of the CIO. Marxists understand well the dialectical role of the law in the class struggle. Neither 7a nor the Wagner Act created the labor movement. They were rather the reflexes of the class struggle. But at the same time we cannot ignore the significance of the law in accelerating or blocking mass movements, sometimes even qualitatively.) The passage of the law can only accelerate a movement which is now entering its mass phase in the deep south.

But the Negro struggle for the vote cannot limit itself to that struggle, as events in Bogalusa, in MFLU, and elsewhere plainly indicate. It is already on a higher stage, generating a parallel rise in economic demands which, in turn, with only the slightest success, can only involve still greater masses -- this time on a qualitatively new, more powerful level, on a basis of class demands.

Paralleling this development, we are already witnessing the genesis of a tendency, a class tendency, to convert SNCC, CORE, etc. into class organizations which can proceed to organize unions -- organizing whites as well as blacks.

Once on this new level, with the fusion of class demands and democratic demands, the situation in the north and south begin to assume more identical appearances, and the problems and tactics of the movement, disparate today, will begin to move together to the infinite gain of the entire movement. The problems which have frozen, stymied the movement in the north (due to the fact that it faces more immediately class demands, not just bourgeois democratic ones) will now face the south as well, raising the movement to a new level and posing more sharply than ever the key question of leadership, or reform or revolution.

REFORM OR REVOLUTION?

The crisis of Negro leadership has been so intense that it is a cliché in the civil rights movement. In the south this crisis is now reaching a new and decisive stage.

For under the conditions emerging in the period immediately ahead, the Negro movement of the south will be faced with two contradictory directions: First, to channelize the movement from its mass action stage, in the streets, its dangerous incipient class character, into the safer channels of "politics", that is into the formation of a political bloc with southern "moderates", i. e. into the Democratic party (as in the 1880s and 1890s). Short of a completely reactionary, i. e. in today's world, a fascist solution, this course of seduction into the Democratic party is the optimum solution for the bourgeoisie. It is equally the goal of Judas King and at least a wing of SNCC (which today is unquestionably still a reformist organization, in the full and best sense of that word.) It is the policy proposed most crudely by Bayard Rustin. If taken, this direction could at least temporarily deflect the movement from its mass action and incipient class character, though no doubt some forces will honestly fail to see the contradiction between entry into bourgeois politics, the Democratic party, and continued mass and class action.

Alternatively, there is the road of continued and intensified mass action about transitional demands not permitting these actions to be swamped by the bourgeois line of parliamentary substitutes. Our line of Independent Political Action is inseparable from and really constitutes just one part of a broader line of independent mass action. Independent Political Action divorced from a program of transitional demands will quickly prove itself to be meaningless, ineffective, and politically demoralizing, as the Michigan Freedom Now Party experience demonstrated. Without transitional demands, the attraction of the Democratic party upon the Freedom Democratic Party will be irresistible.

There is every reason to believe that developments in the Negro struggle with the inevitable intensification of its class character will generate powerful forces for this alternative path. Such a development, even by a strong minor-

ity, would be enough to change the very shape of American politics and of its left.

MALCOLM X AND THE NORTHERN MOVEMENT

If these are the prospects of the Negro movement in the south, what of the north, the most socially advanced sector of the Negro working class?

The Negro movement of the north, despite its advanced organizational and ideological character (the center of Negro nationalism, one million Negro unionists, the ballot) has not kept pace with the south, and has, in fact, been relatively stagnant, experiencing a prolonged crisis of ideology and leadership.

The essential reasons for this are not hard to find. Lacking a basis, in the same degree as the south, for struggle in the basic bourgeois demands, the movement must start from a higher level, with class demands - in this period, transitional demands. This can be further illustrated by differences which exist even within the north. To the extent that massive street actions have taken place in New York, Chicago, and Cleveland, they have been of a qualitatively more intense character than Detroit. The dialectical relationship which exists between the UAW, the organized Negro workers, and the Negro community is such that the struggle from the beginning, in order to be even as successful as in the other northern communities, must take on the character of a struggle against the stranglehold of Reuther. It must, therefore, take on an immediately combined character - a struggle for a class struggle left wing within the union, and the struggle of the Negro community, led by its working class segment, without.

On an ideological level, nothing was more instructive in the logic, in the nature of the crisis of the northern Negro movement than the evolution of Malcolm X. Malcolm, in his search for a program, personified the Negro movement. Political intuition and experience told him that a real program meant revolution. It meant (although he hadn't learned the terminology and meaning of class, certainly not from us) a break with the petty-bourgeois leadership of the Muslims. And though Malcolm had gone a long way, and could well have gone all the way, he had not yet done so for good reason. Independent political action? naturally. Self-defense? obviously. But neither, together or separately, was sufficient (in fact, neither is the true center of politics) and Malcolm knew this more clearly each day.

He was, at the time of his murder, an abstract socialist, but not yet a Marxist. That is, he had not yet articulated the programmatic link between his revolutionary nationalist aspirations and the conscious role of the working class, as a class - black and white. It was this concept toward which he was groping, which he would have to reach to produce a program. It was precisely

on this same rock that the Freedom Now Party of Michigan (mistaking political action, however independent, for a program) foundered. History will not ignore the fact that our movement and our press not only failed to make this clear to the Michigan FNP, but fought against an indigenous group within the FNP which was groping for just such a course. It did this in favor of an undisturbed liaison with the Reverend Cleague.

On the other side of this same coin - class analysis - for which Malcolm was groping, lies our awareness of other elements contained within Negro nationalism. That is to say, while its characteristic is predominantly proletarian, even if not yet consciously so, it also contains within it semi-proletarian, lumpen, and petty-bourgeois elements. On the eve of his death, Malcolm could identify Muhammed by name, but not by class. We could do no better because of our false political line. Yet, Trotsky, long ago, because of a class analysis, was aware of the two-sided potential of Negro nationalism. He could see the danger of the use of Negro nationalism as an instrument of Fascism. He would not have been shocked by the accounts of the relationship between the Black Muslims and the Klan, or the Lincoln Rockwells. This the party can not touch to this day because it illustrates so well our departure from class analysis. In this same area of class danger, which again the party is incapable of handling, lie Hill's demands for decertification of unions, or the demand of the Cleagues for crossing a picket line which was attempting organization in an unorganized area.

Such people are incapable of seeing and projecting a common struggle against the labor bureaucracy. They can see Congress or Federal troops as allies, but not the organized working class. They reject the concept that Black-White unity is the key to victory. (Strategically, that is, since we always keep in mind that its value as a slogan will vary with the circumstances -- it is a strategy, not a slogan for all seasons).

On the other hand, even the abstractly correct line of black-white unity can be used in a counter-revolutionary way by such as Bayard Rustin and King. Divorced from a class struggle program, the social-democratic Negro leadership conceives of the strategy not in terms of a common struggle against the bureaucracy, but as an alliance with it. The party reacts negatively to the approach of the Rustins, but it does not really know what to put in its place; that is, it has an equally abstract alternative which we shall discuss below.

DOES THE SWP HAVE A PROGRAM?

To the extent that the party does have a program for the Negro working class, it can be summed up in two slogans: Independent Black Political Action
Federal troops.
Beyond this, the major function of our press has been to report events in the struggle, sympathetically, to be sure, but uncritically. Our primary appeal

to those Negroes whom we have approached with our newspaper has been one of curiosity, that a white organization should be for Malcolm X, report his speeches, and so on. But beyond the two slogans above, they can have learned nothing from us.

Independent Political Action: Abstractly, independent Black political action is a sound proposal. But a failure to recognize the working class direction and future of revolutionary black nationalism has led the party to suppose that political action, by itself, unconnected with program, is an organically proletarian, revolutionary concept. Not so. In fact, it must be our contribution to this desirable development to show how utterly ineffective and ultimately politically demoralizing such an action can be if it is not intimately linked to a program of transitional demands.

The history of the Michigan FNP speaks loudly to this point.

In Michigan, the experience of the party in the first real application of its analysis was humiliating. Not only did the Michigan FNP suffer a disaster at the polls (and subsequent disintegration), not only did we fail to recruit to the SWP, but we lost 3 precious and capable Negro comrades to boot. One of the comrades consciously left the party because she disagreed with what we were doing in the FNP and wanted to confront the group there with the necessity for a social and economic program, as well as the conception of a party dedicated to daily struggle, not only to yearly elections. Some of the candidates of the Michigan FNP openly, some covertly, supported the Democratic party. The sum total of the contribution of our party, under the direction of the leading party expert on the Negro question, was to express doubt to the FNP people that they would be able to get sufficient signatures to get on the ballot. This, however, they were able to do. What they could not do was to develop a program to educate and appeal for the votes of the Negro community. Instead of encouraging this need, the SWP's line was to oppose the development of a program and a total social goal.

The fiasco of the Michigan FNP demands an explanation if we are to learn anything from it. Three explanations are offered: (a) that the Negro masses are still too backward to break from the two party system, or too backward to be concerned about political action; (b) the anti-Goldwater sweep can, by itself, entirely account for the defeat; (c) the slogan of independent black political action is too abstract and meaningless to receive any kind of response.

If, as we believe, the debacle was due to a combination of the last two reasons, then it follows that there is something wrong with the party's analysis of Negro nationalism, which ignores the role of program by assuming that it will be generated spontaneously one day by the Negro movement. If the Negro workers will do this, then why not white workers too? And if so, then what is the role of the revolutionary vanguard? Have we not always maintained the

dialectical relationship between party and class -- that the class spontaneously reaches for, has the potential for the revolutionary program, but that the program itself is concretely expressed and formulated by the vanguard party of the class?

It is for all the above reasons that the party today is incapable of responding correctly to the momentous Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. We find ourselves instead lagging behind Malcolm X who independently transcended the position of Reverend Cleague, recognized its inadequacy, recognized that no program means no effective sustenance for independent political action, and, therefore, in the end, no independence at all.

Federal Troops to the South: Under the circumstances prevalent in the American south, the slogan of troops is not one which can be favored or opposed as a matter of principle. It nevertheless approaches so closely to a rupture of a long standing Marxist conception of the nature of the state, and above all of its armed forces, that a careful and sensitively tuned evaluation of the particular stage of the struggle is an absolute necessity, otherwise we stand in danger of a fundamental and tragic error.

It is our considered opinion that for the SWP to raise the Troops slogan today would do grave harm to our party & to the struggle in the south.

When the Negro struggle in the south was in its earlier phases, when the conception of armed self-defense was as remote from the mind of the mass of the southern Negro as the idea of marrying into a rich white southern family, then the slogan had some value. In essence, it said: if the U. S. government fails in its duty to protect us in the exercise of our constitutional rights, then we must protect ourselves. Ten years ago this idea of self-protection was still the music of the future, although as events have proved, not the too distant future.

But, today, a qualitative change in this area, compounded from experience, has taken place, a change which the party majority, with its line on Troops, has been unable to either anticipate or respond to. Throughout the south, there is springing up an open network of defense guards, the Deacons, to which important sections of southern CORE are reacting positively. This marks the decisive point of change. It is no longer an accident that the Troops slogan is the property of the entire "radical" but still essentially reformist Negro leadership. Rejecting the class character of the state, (and in some cases dreading the alternative working class forms of struggle, of violence) they favor, accept and expect state intervention on their behalf (even welcoming, as in King's case, the limitations which this action imposes on them.)

We are well past the point where we can argue that this slogan will help dispel illusions on the part of the masses about the character of the state. If nothing else, the Liuzzo murder dispelled all illusions on this score. Here an FBI agent sat quietly in the murder car while the assassination took place. The line which the paper should have taken, but didn't, is that Mrs. Liuzzo's death could have been prevented only by armed self defense, not reliance on the FBI or troops.

Something else must be said. The use, by the majority, of the Troops slogan, has, in the last analysis, a deep and vital connection with its entire perspective for the American revolution, or, more accurately, its lack of one. As an isolated section of American society in the south, the Negro movement would invite a veritable bloodletting, a mass slaughter, if it should, without outside help, venture to challenge the armed forces of the state apparatus in the south. Our party, refusing to recognize the emerging class character of the struggle, has completely missed the boat on the organizational efforts of SNCC and others among the farm-laborers and elsewhere. It is true that to call upon the northern labor movement to intervene with financial and physical help for a struggle for civil rights is, unfortunately, somewhat abstract at the present stage of development. But we should have seized upon the union organizing efforts of the civil rights movement as a means for introducing the idea, propagandistically, of physical help for the new southern unions from the unions in the north. The experience of a white trade union, (experimenting with the enlistment of Negro members in the south), which had to take an ad in the papers informing the Klan that henceforth its officers would go armed, should have been utilized by us for the purpose of popularizing, in an introductory fashion, the idea of defense guards from the rest of the southern labor movement, and if need be, even from the north.

But precisely because the party is not clear on the class perspective immediately ahead, we are left with this slogan, the slogan of Troops. We must counterpose our perspectives to those of the reformist-pacifists: Negro defense guards in purely civil rights struggles; workers defense guards in the union organizational and protective campaigns, with the real perspective of a merger of the two, in self-defense, if nothing more.

We must warn the militants, as our press does not (how could it and still raise the slogan?) that: Intervention can come, and when it does, it will be used (as in Cambridge, Md.) equally to crush the new Negro left of workers and their existing defense guards, as well as, for the time being, here and there, the most rabid of the racists; that in the new phase of Negro class - struggles on the horizon, this is precisely what the state will do with or without invitation. We must warn that calling for state intervention is a substitute for and an obstacle to the awareness of the need for the extension of defense guards. We must proclaim that this slogan makes the movement dependent upon the bourgeoisie, and strikes at its class potential and program.

The party must face the painful fact that in fact it has no program for the present conjuncture in American politics, for the stage and character of the class struggle as it exists today. (Socialism is a goal, not a program).

It is this failing, recognized by Comrade Cannon, which has led the party into its adaptation to the program of other classes and tendencies. To Pacifism -- as witness the June 7 issue of the paper which devoted most of a page to printing the text of a speech by Staughton Lynd projecting a militant pacifist line for the American Left. Not a word of criticism or disclaimer. What conclusions are our readers to draw from this article?

Or witness our long standing uncritical approach to Rev. King. Even today, no one can say that our press has carried on a campaign against the pacifist doctrine (and bourgeois perspectives) of King and Farmer -- a doctrine which reveals its truly hypocritical character and class roots in King's acceptance of the idea of Federal troops.

There are excellent comrades in the party who have been uneasy, disquieted by what appears to many to be the persistent abstentionism from the mass movement and a tendency to tail-end it. But, they maintain, "We have no POLITICAL differences." Abstentionism, however, is rooted in a political, not an organizational failure -- the root of the abstentionism lies in the fact that the party has no concrete conjunctural revolutionary perspective today, has no real program for the day and, therefore, properly lacks the confidence for a meaningful intervention. The logic of abstentionism is either adaptation to the program of others or SLP-like degeneration.

It is precisely the lack of a political program which gives the party the appearance, the coloration, of an electoral machine, filling in the time between elections with newspaper sub drives.

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM

The task of program remains the historic task of the Marxist vanguard in the USA, the SWP. Fortunately, in principle, this task has already been done, in the movement's elaboration of the concept of the transitional program.

But if the task has been done in principle, the real concrete task of formulating such a program for our period lies before us still as our gravest responsibility.

(1) To begin with, we must translate black demands into transitional forms that unite the fundamental self-interest of all proletarians and their allies. This is especially decisive for the south where the white worker already has the bourgeois democratic rights the Negro worker lacks and needs.

The first step is to translate black demands for housing, education, full and equal employment, etc. into demands upon the existing means of production: the unemployed workers and plants (including the transformation of military plant capacity into means of meeting these human demands). This transforms the black revolution from a seeming special interest revolutionary struggle of a minority into a true revolutionary vanguard of the entire proletariat. But at the same time, the program is one which can be pursued in collaboration with the white worker, or, when this is not feasible, even independently.

An essential dimension of such demands must be their link to the principle of workers' control. For example, the slogan of committees of tenants, construction workers and other affected workers to administer the program makes the form as well as the content of this demand transitional in character.

Such black transitional demands transform the black militant from an isolated special interest dividing the class into a true socialist vanguard of the whole working class.

(2) We must reconsider the manner and time of raising the slogan of defense guards, and critically analyze in our press the dangers of government military intervention.

(3) The slogan of independent political action must be retained but at the same time become an integral part of our Transitional Demands.

(4) We need a careful analysis of the method and time of raising the demand for unemployed organizations, particularly in the ghettos.

(5) We need transitional demands which serve the democratic demands of the Negroes and link them to revolutionary politics.

In the course of the following section, as we discuss the various areas of party activity, we concretize somewhat more our conception of the transitional program for today. We ask the comrades to give special attention to the area of the link between the Negro movement and the organized segment of the working class.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

We are not a revolutionary Fabian society; the tasks of the party do not stop with the need to create a Transitional Program relevant for the revolutionary resolution of the workers' and Negroes' task in our period.

Our chief task is to utilize the two unique contributions of the Marxist movement -- the class character of the state, and the proletarian orientation as expressed in the Transitional Program -- to bring them into the mass movement. We must intervene with this program into the mass movement as a party, not a literary propaganda group. (That we "are" neither a propaganda group nor a party has always been clear to us; we are a group in the process of transforming itself into a party. Our propaganda activity has always been understood in this light.)

There are then three arenas in which the party's program on the Negro revolution, which is but a concrete way of speaking of the proletarian revolution, demands our active intervention,

THE YOUTH

A new and flourishing youth movement has arisen in the recent period of American history as a result of the social crisis in which we find ourselves. (How else explain this phenomenon?) And, just as the Negro movement is largely responsible for the radicalization of the youth, so this youth, in turn, has begun to play a role in moving the adult population to the left -- witness the teach-ins, the first public debate on foreign policy since 1948.

And it is not the quantity, but the quality of this youth, which is so striking (in our movement and elsewhere). For, whereas, in the recent past, these movements arose about issues such as Cuba, Peace and Civil Rights, today we see the newly-radicalized youth beginning to mobilize not just for these issues, but around the direct source of all these problems -- the capitalist system.

We have now emerging a youth which, for the first time in a generation, is groping to find its way toward the proletariat. Whether in SNCC, COFO, SDS, PLP, they are mostly raw uneducated youth inclined toward every shade of political error in the spectrum. At the same time, we have much to learn from the ingenuity, daring and imagination they have displayed. In their own generally confused way, a current is developing which is bent on organizing that still mass section of the proletariat missed by the CIO movement -- a current which recognizes the relation between civil rights and class rights.

Our task is to transform the best elements of these many organizations into revolutionary cadres without which we cannot be prepared for the coming sharper class confrontations. But, (1) this will not be done with quotations from Marxist classics, but with the products of Marxist theory -- concrete transitional demands and forms of struggle. And, (2) it cannot be done without a deep penetration and constant principled programmatic collaboration, i. e.,

united fronts (our movement's absence from SNCC and the Freedom Schools is a disgrace we will not easily live down). But this policy can succeed in building the SWP only if (3) we can demonstrate that our party has roots in the working class movement, and has a program for it. Youth work is no substitute for party work, mass work.

THE NEGRO MOVEMENT

Enough has been said earlier of the potential and direction we believe the Negro movement to be taking in the period immediately ahead in the south; particularly of the fact that the movement will and must, in a telescoping action, shortly begin to come face-to-face with the clear class character of the Negro's situation.

Precisely because of its more advanced situation, the northern Negro movement, having failed to date to accept the realities of the class situation, is more bankrupt and corrupt. Nevertheless, in many of the existing Negro and civil rights groups, elements do exist which in their groping can accept the concept of the transitional demands as the keystone of a program for Negro emancipation (in NALC, OAAU, CORE, Tenants' Leagues, NAACP Labor Committees, etc.)

Having begun to develop a Transitional Program (we shall not succeed in this alone and without more experience in the contemporary mass movement), the party's task is to bring that program into the most advanced Negro movements and cadre by participating in their struggles. (Without a program, intervention would indeed be futile and time-wasting.) It is these organizations and some yet unborn which will find the resources to begin the process of moving the Negro workers of the ghetto -- through rent strikes, organization of the unemployed, unionization of the unorganized, etc.

It must be clear today that a class-oriented Negro movement, north and south, can initiate a new wave of trade union organization (black and white) -- in the period ahead. Indeed in the south the most likely form of union organization may well occur under the aegis of movements such as SNCC. For the key to organizing the unorganized, and the runaway shop, may be precisely in the alliance of SNCC and white workers -- a task which SNCC has already begun to explore!

The advantages of such a development must be clear to all of us. All the more reason for recognizing and assuming our rightful place in the movement.

THE UNIONS, THE WHITE WORKERS, AND THE NEGRO MOVEMENT

If the movement of the Negroes is ultimately a working class movement, socially and politically (even if it is organizationally distinct and independent), then the nature of the party's intervention through the unions by means of those cadres still there is quite clear.

It is (1) to bring the most advanced workers, those layers already discontented with the union bureaucracy, the younger workers, the Negro workers, etc., the concepts of the Transitional Program. (2) In the context of the white workers' organizations (and those with a minority of Negro workers) it is necessary that our tactic, as well as strategy, be openly, overtly, "black-white unity". For we work constantly in the awareness that the direction and speed of the Negro movement will depend in part upon the nature of the unions' response to their struggle.

In some situations it should be already possible to project alliances of white militants with their Negro counterparts in the unions about transitional demands. Where the situation does not yet permit this development, it is possible for individual comrades to collaborate with Negro unionists who would serve as the incipient left-wing spearhead raising transitional demands in the union. But we cannot expect or wish that under all circumstances these struggles be limited by the confines of the union itself. Where the white workers are not prepared to move (and this is no longer universally the case by any means) a method for finding this unity with the Negro workers may be found outside the unions.

For example, it should not be too difficult, at least for us, to visualize the potential impact of an organization of Negro unemployed demanding that the union fight for 30 for 40, for massive public works, low cost housing, an end to overtime and speed-up (which does away with jobs), unemployment compensation for the duration, or a truly guaranteed annual wage for every member of society whether at work, at school, or unemployed.

All these demands are readily recognizable by the workers. The point is that today only the Negro movement may have the immediate vitality to fight for these demands by independent mass organizations in front of plants—working overtime, at union meetings, at union conventions. The build-up to a mass March on Washington, initiated by the Negroes, which can be supported and joined by unions, also develops almost immediately a political confrontation in which the Labor Party slogan, as an integral part of our transitional demands, would have the most immediate significance.

The "Quiescent" American Worker: the developing class aspects of the Negro movement, if anything, fortify our conception that the industrial working class, black and white, must in a classic industrial society, as our own,

ultimately provide the backbone of the revolution. Even if today the Negro movement is its vanguard, we recognize that without the united front of black and white workers the revolution is doomed to defeat.

The defeatism so widespread in the SWP about the role of the industrial proletariat is based upon an undialectical appreciation of: (1) the present state of the U. S. economy, and (2) the nature of the white workers' quiescence.

In principle, we all recognize the dialectical character of the "quiescence" of the American working class. But we do not all mean quite the same thing by it. To many comrades, this phrase is limited to an awareness of the dichotomy of "is" and "becoming", that the worker of today is not the revolutionary worker of tomorrow. But this is only the beginning of such an understanding.

What must be understood, concretely, is that the dialectical process is constantly at work in the ideology of the masses, even today. There already exist fundamental contradictions, the clash of opposites, which are deeply embedded within the daily experience of the workers even in this period.

At one pole they accept and even fight for overtime; at the other, they want to know why the union doesn't stop it.

At one pole they are reluctant to sign grievances; at the other, they say that the unions won't back them up.

At one pole, they are less than eager for strike action; at the other, they say that the union leadership will sell them short anyway.

At one pole they say that American workers are better off than any in the world; at the other, they say that what is needed is empty bellies so that the working class will start moving forward again.

At one pole they vote for the Democratic party; at the other, a very great number agree on the need for a Labor party; they will say "but what can we do, there are too many against us", or "it wouldn't have a chance, it'll be labeled communist", or "Reuther is no good, he has too much power over us as it is", etc.

At one pole, they are patriots; at the other, they agree that wars are fought by the workers in the interests of the capitalists.

At one pole they call the boss a communist; at the other, they will agree that socialism, when it is spelled out concretely in the course of discussion, is good, necessary, and furthermore inevitable.

These contradictions have a deep base: a fundamental insecurity, despite certain advances by the unions in pensions and unemployment compensation, compounded by a deep-going alienation from the dehumanizing job and its constantly worsening conditions. The insecurity is also double-edged. It is no longer just a question of economics. The threat of nuclear annihilation—brought home sharply by the Cuban events, poses the ultimate insecurity -- an insecurity which is masked by the feeling of impotence, lack of alternatives, and, therefore, defensive indifference.

Thus the elements for revolutionary conclusions are present in the minds of the workers; more than present, they are so deeply imbedded in experience that they may with some justification be called instincts. It is this side, becoming predominant through an interplay of objective circumstances and conscious leadership which will result in the revolutionary explosion which seems to arise suddenly from nowhere.

WHAT FOLLOWS?

What does all this mean to young revolutionists in the unions ?

In the first place, they can test the validity of our revolutionary conclusions at the point of greatest significance, beneath the conservative surface of the working class.

Secondly, they participate in the process of bringing out and developing the revolutionary side of the contradictory ideological process which is in constant motion in the factories if one understands what to look for. This means the development of contacts, sympathizers, and readers of the press, if not a great many new members at this juncture.

Thirdly, let no one underestimate the objective importance of the presence of revolutionists at the right time and place, even in small numbers. Take, for example, the 1961 elections at Ford Local 600. The newspaper justifiably covered the developments in this election very fully and carefully. The victory of the Philo slate, based on an alliance between Negro workers and white progressive workers, would have meant the establishment of the largest local union in the world as the political and physical base for the nascent class struggle opposition to Reuther. Equally important, it would have constituted a base for the organization of the unemployed. In this respect alone, its ultimate consequences for the direction of the Negro struggle could well have been portentous.

The margin by which the Philo slate lost was quite narrow. Five or six Trotskyists with a solidly established base could easily have meant the

difference. Time and place is most generally established by forces outside the control of the party. But to be at the right place at the right time involves both revolutionary theory and practice.

In the fourth place, even if we were to assume that the trade union movement is really a prison for revolutionaries in which nothing can be done until the moment of upsurge, there is something which must be noted. The workers' movement is different in two important respects from others like the students, peace, and civil rights movements. The workers have a stable, strongly established and powerful movement in which they retain a certain degree of confidence. They do not feel in such a great need of politicals who descend from the outside at moments of crisis and struggle, and thus do not accept revolutionists in the same manner as the other movements.

Furthermore, workers are not intellectuals. Ideas and programs are rarely, if ever, judged for the intrinsic merits alone. For better or worse, workers are suspicious of fine sounding phrases, and insist upon knowing the credentials of the speaker.

It thus follows that to be able to intervene effectively at moments of upsurge requires a previously established relationship.

It is, of course, not easy for young people to get into the mass industries today. But it is far from impossible, given political understanding of the importance of the task, along with constant help and encouragement from the entire party. Within the last two years, for example, several thousand young workers, Negro as well as white, were employed in the Ford Rouge plant alone, 6000 in the Chicago steel mills.

Nor is this perspective necessarily inconsistent in practice with the need of our youth to be involved in the student and youth groups of the country. Youth is not a permanent age. And a large part of our youth are really today, in practice, young workers. When, as in most cases today, the union climate does not demand the intensive day-by-day union involvement, the young worker can still participate in other areas of party activity.

SOME CONCRETE PROPOSALS FOR IMPLEMENTING OUR CONCEPTIONS

1. The party should propose a tactical united front among all radical forces prepared to fight for concrete transitional demands; we should attempt to enter into negotiations with leading black militant organizations and all other radicals supporting independent electoral activities for an electoral bloc on the basis of transitional demands.

2. The party should intervene, as participant, in existing civil rights organizations, with our program, but not as ultimatists.
3. The development of a transitional program for this period centering upon the Black Revolution and those oriented toward it, should become the focus of party propaganda work.
4. We should upgrade the magazine as a genuine theoretical organ dealing with questions of concrete transitional economic demands, capitalist economic crisis, and case studies of the struggles around transitional demands. We must make possible and actively solicit the contributions of non-members in these areas.
5. The party's internal bulletin should be opened for the particular purpose of circulating contributions toward the development of concrete transitional demands and reports of intervention under this program.
6. Supporting the campus orientation of the youth, the party must at the same time encourage those who are not involved in that work to find selective jobs in industry. Some criteria for the selection are: role of Negroes in the industry or shop; if unorganized, the possibilities of organizing the shop or industry.

In this way, the rank and file of "competing" organizations, to the extent that they accept such a program and understand the revolutionary perspective from which it flows, will be attracted towards us. Only the elaboration of such a transitional program would earn us the right to become the focus of the revolutionary developments in the United States.

The SWP has now passed through almost two decades dominated by prosperity and cold war, resulting in a political climate which has been characterized by a relative quiescence of the working class.

For most of this period the party, unlike the "New Left", has tried to maintain, in one fashion or another, the Marxist view of the vanguard role of the industrial working class and the non-parliamentary road to power.

But we must never forget that the founders of our movement, both Trotsky and Cannon, have warned that acceptance of these abstractly revolutionary positions is no guarantor of the revolutionary vitality of a party -- and no guarantor against political degeneration. The fate of the Ceylonese party bears ample witness to this warning.

Closer to home, Trotsky more than once warned of the danger of the degeneration of even our own party if we could not find our way to the most oppressed masses, the Negro masses, even when they, too, were relatively quiescent.

Cannon has analyzed for our movement the effect of a period in American history roughly similar to our own, the 1920's, upon the infant CP-USA. At that time, the CP had subjectively a revolutionary program, but lacked, in fact, the capacity, the base in the American working class, to analyze American society in revolutionary conjunctural terms -- lacked the capacity for a correct concrete response to the revolutionary potential of the working class at the time. It was this weakness which paved the road to the capitulation of the CP, under the prevailing circumstances, to Stalinism. The eruption of the American working class in the thirties came too late to prevent this capitulation.

In our judgment, the SWP is in a dangerously parallel position.

The history of the Marxist movement teaches us that a crisis in society is inevitably accompanied by a political crisis in the revolutionary party. This is inevitable in any party which retains some links, however remote and theoretical, with the contradictory forces at work in the living mass movements, and we see it in our movement today. It is, indeed, a political crisis of such magnitude that unless the party can find its way, and soon, to a concretely conjunctural revolutionary analysis, the danger of political degeneration will be acute and immediate.

July 8, 1965

A PROPOSED AMMENDMENT TO THE
ORGANIZATIONAL RESOLUTION

Submitted by Dave Miller

The organizational resolution now before the party lends itself unfortunatly to varying interpretations. It is charged that the resolution will in effect, if not in principle, effectively serve to discourage the expression of dissident opinion in the party by discouraging and placing an onus upon the organization of tendencies and factions in the party.

The majority denies that this interpretation is a valid one.

To eliminate any uncertainty or ambiguity on the subject, the following two ammendments to the resolution are proposed:

I. The Party recognizes and accepts as a norm the right of all tendencies and factions to representation on all national bodies of the party.

II. Nothing in the organizational resolution is to be construed as in any way denying:

a. the right of tendencies or even factions to exist in the party even between conventions,

b. the right of members of such tendencies or factions to communicate or exchange views with one another,

c. the right of comrades in a private individual capacity to express and defend dissident views in private discussion with any comrade,

d. the right of any comrade with a minority view to express critical views formally in the party on new issues and new events,

e. the right of any comrade or group to record by memorandum its views on any issue to all leading bodies of the party,

f. the right of any comrade to collaborate politically with cothinkers abroad.