

PERSPECTIVES AND LESSONS OF THE NEW RADICALIZATION
POLITICAL COMMITTEE DRAFT POLITICAL RESOLUTION
adopted March 5, 1971

Introduction

The purposes of this resolution are: 1) on the basis of the political resolution and report adopted by the 1969 Convention of the Socialist Workers Party and the political report adopted by the 1970 plenum of its National Committee, to evaluate the evolution of the radicalization and of the objective political and economic factors underlying it; 2) to evaluate the progress we had made vis a vis our opponents towards our objective of gaining hegemony in the socialist movement, and state the key differences we have at present with them on how to advance the radicalization and build a revolutionary socialist leadership and 3) to define how these factors affect the key task of constructing the Socialist Workers Party.

PART I

A. American imperialism's basic contradictions: the evolution of the war and the economy

The February 1971 invasion of Laos reconfirmed that the basic strategy of the Nixon administration in Indochina remains the same as that followed by Johnson: to attempt to win a military victory of such scope as to decisively crush the will of the Vietnamese revolutionary forces. No alternative, including a compromise with the Vietnamese, would avoid the deleterious effects to American imperialism of the victory of the Vietnamese revolutionary forces in South Vietnam. Nixon is driven in this direction because the basic relationship of forces in Indochina faced by the previous occupant of the White House remains unchanged.

The depth, extent, and independence of the mass upsurge in Vietnam are so great that neither Moscow, Peking nor even Hanoi (if it so desired) have been able to turn the Vietnamese revolution into a mere pawn to be bargained away in a broader diplomatic deal with imperialism, as in 1954. Because of its class character, no Saigon regime -- coalition or not -- acceptable to Washington, could grant the substantive and large-scale economic, social, and political concessions to the Vietnamese masses necessary to maintain itself in power in the face of this revolutionary upsurge. Only the presence of American military power prevents the triumph of the revolution.

The massive growth of antiwar sentiment in the United States forced Johnson to halt the bombing of North Vietnam and initiate the Paris talks. Johnson's objective was to temporize by making concessions to antiwar sentiment while continuing the fighting, in the hope that, given time, American military power could crush the revolutionary upsurge and force the Vietnamese to accept the kind of regime in South Vietnam desired by imperialism. Nixon inherited this situation. To gain support and buy more time he had to promise the American people that he had a plan to end the war. His plan turned out to be "Vietnamization," i.e., the stabilization of the Thieu-Ky regime and the establishment of the ARVN as a replacement

for U.S. troops.

In the period of massive buildup of American troops, Johnson promised that increasing American military power would quickly lead to "pacification" of the Vietnamese. This did not gain credence; but Nixon's professed perspective has led many Americans to believe that he is trying to bring the war to an end. Thus, Nixon's time-buying promises can finally prove more explosive than Johnson's as the American people demand fulfillment of his pledges.

"Vietnamization" has not worked. The time bought by Nixon's demagogic maneuvers has not enabled the U.S. military machine and its puppet ally to break the resistance of the Vietnamese. It was this failure that led Nixon to decide on the plunge into Cambodia in May 1970. The unparalleled outburst of antiwar sentiment in the U.S. forced Washington to pull back its troops from Cambodia; but the war, through increasing U.S. air bombardment and ARVN invasions had now been extended into Cambodia. This only broadened the scope of U.S. involvement in Indochina to include underwriting the Lon Nol regime. It did not succeed in compelling the Vietnamese to knuckle under in the least.

With his troop-withdrawal timetable pressing upon him, Nixon decided on a new plunge in February 1971, this time into Laos. But the military fiasco of the "crack" ARVN units drove home to millions of Americans what an illusion and fraud "Vietnamization" was. The reality that the war with all its dangers was being extended, not shortened, became clearer than ever. The logic of "Vietnamization" has not been withdrawal but the expansion of the war to Cambodia and Laos. This expansion in turn broadened the Indochinese revolution, and created in Cambodia and Laos the same problem for the U.S. that it has faced for years in Vietnam. Each expansion of the war and each new plunge heightens the possibility of increasing the military pressure to such a degree as to bring China into the conflict, as happened in Korea in 1951.

U.S. imperialism faces a harsh dilemma. Today, it is still no closer to forcing capitulation of the insurgent forces, let alone

establishing the ARVN as an instrument capable of doing this, than it was before "Vietnamization" began. Yet Washington has promised the American people the steady withdrawal of American forces. If this withdrawal were actually carried out in a large scale way with the Vietnamese revolution still unsubdued, it would constitute the biggest defeat for U.S. imperialism in its history, and would give the world revolution a most powerful additional impetus. Thus a dangerous mood is to be seen in Washington, with Nixon casting about in desperation for a fast military solution through some combination of U.S. and Saigon military forays while he stalls off any large scale withdrawals of U.S. forces. Whichever tactical course Washington follows in the next period can only increase antiwar sentiment among the GIs involved and spur a massive antiwar response at home.

For all of the above reasons, the Vietnamese revolution and the effort of U.S. imperialism to crush it remain the central issue in American and world politics.

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The evolution of the world capitalist economy over the last year demonstrates that U.S. imperialism cannot afford an extended, unending war in Southeast Asia without attempting to make the working class pay for it. The best variant from the capitalist point of view would be the acquiescence of a prowar labor movement in imposing "emergency" austerity measures and controls, allegedly justified by the needs of the war. But the attitude of the working class toward the war precludes any such direct attack on the living standards of the masses without precipitating gigantic social struggles that could extend the radicalization to broad layers of workers.

The main way in which imperialism has put the squeeze on the living standards of the working class has been through inflation. A characteristic of capitalism in its death agony, inflation in the U.S. has been exacerbated by the war expenditures. Two problems for the ruling class are built into this way of lowering the standard of living of the masses. One is the recognition by the workers of what inflation is doing to their pay checks and living conditions, and the consequent resistance evidenced in the 1970 wave of strikes in which a major issue was wage increases to catch up with the

rising cost of living. The second and longer term problem is the deterioration of the relative competitive advantage of U.S. imperialism in the world market and the increasing shakiness that spiraling inflation introduces into the stability of the capitalist world monetary system. Thus there are both internal and external pressures to bring inflation under control.

From an immediate, solely economic point of view, the fastest way to slow down the rate of inflation would be to end the war in Vietnam. Since this is precluded by the Nixon administration for the reasons outlined above, only two basic options are left: moving toward a national "incomes policy," that is, a national wage-control scheme that would give authority to the government to hold down wages; or precipitating a recession deep enough to result in a large enough increase in the industrial reserve army to drive down wage demands.

Both of these alternatives contain dangers for the ruling class. An attempt to impose an "incomes policy" could provoke a major reaction by the working class, one taking place in the framework of the general political radicalization that has been developing in the country. A policy of fostering a recession of sufficient scope to increase unemployment enough to put effective pressure on wages contains two dangers. First, it could precipitate or coincide with recessions in the other major capitalist countries. These could then snowball into an uncontrolled world recession. Secondly, it could provoke a sharp political reaction by the working class against the threat of massive unemployment.

The Nixon administration leaned toward the second course, adopting fiscal and monetary measures that facilitated the 1970 recession. This policy resulted in the highest unemployment rate in a decade, officially over 6 percent. The first recession in a decade featured both increasing unemployment and continued inflation.

But the strength of the unions and the combativity of the working class demonstrated that higher levels of unemployment than this are necessary to effectively dampen the workers' willingness to fight for wage increases to try to keep up with the rise in the cost

of living. In spite of the rise in unemployment, workers intensified their struggles to defend their standard of living, as was seen in the General Electric and auto strikes, in the Teamsters negotiations and wildcat strikes, in the combativity of the railroad workers, in the postal workers struggles and in the demands now being put forward by the Steelworkers. The UAW reasserted its demand for an escalator clause, which the bureaucrats had allowed to be gutted in past negotiations, and won back part of the escalator clause protections they had bargained away in 1967.

The anxiety about rising unemployment and the resistance to any wage-price controls indicate the political obstacles standing in the way of another move contemplated by the ruling class: that of opening a legislative and administrative attack on the power of the unions themselves. Although the ruling class knows this will be necessary at some point, it is deterred from resorting to it now because it could precipitate a political showdown with the union movement and touch off an explosion beyond the power of the bureaucracy to control.

The foundation of American capitalism's economic supremacy is being undermined by the growing capacity of European and Japanese imperialism to narrow the differential in labor productivity. It was this differential, established as a result of the large-scale destruction of German and Japanese capitalism, the exhaustion of British imperialism, and the extraordinary extension of the postwar boom, that made the wide wage gap between American and Euro-Japanese labor tolerable and helped to provide the resources the U.S. rulers could use for social reform. Under the new conditions, the threat of trade wars, international monetary crises, and concurrent recessions in the major capitalist countries has increased. Regardless of their timing or their scope, which are unpredictable, the intensification of inter-imperialist competition on the world market means that the American monopolists must find a way to narrow the wage differential. This can be done only by attacks on the wage gains, standard of living, organizations and rights of the American workers. In the current turbulent political atmosphere such attacks

can result in immense struggles and rapid radicalization of a decisive section of the American workers.

Substantial social reforms and concessions can be wrested from the ruling class in the struggles that lie ahead. But the intensification of competition on an international scale, coupled with the costs of maintaining Washington's role of world policeman for imperialism, closes the door to American capitalism granting any long-term series of social reforms large enough to decisively reverse the radicalization of increasing sections of the American people set in motion by the social struggles of the last decade.

B. The continuing development of the radicalization

Since the 1969 convention of the Socialist Workers Party, the process of radicalization has continued to deepen. Following the Moratorium and March on Washington the antiwar movement achieved its broadest mobilization to date and demonstrated its potential in the May 1970 antiwar upsurge. During the same year two powerful new contingents entered the radicalization in a massive way, the movement for Chicano self-determination and the women's liberation movement.

This period also saw the emergence of the gay liberation movement; organized revolts in the prisons from New York to California demanding prison and judicial reform, inspired by the nationalist radicalization; increased radicalization inside the Catholic Church led by a militant layer of nuns and priests; the continued formation of radical caucuses in all types of professional organizations; and intensified Black nationalist sentiment and organization and further radicalization within the army. Neither in the Debsian radicalization nor in the Thirties were there comparable upheavals in these sectors of American life.

These new developments, coming on top of the initial waves of the radicalization -- the rise of the Black liberation, the student and antiwar movements -- constitute further indications of the depth and scope of the radicalization, and its speed of development.

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The central feature of the May 1970 antiwar upsurge was the most massive nationwide mobilization of students in history. This response to the Cambodian invasion and murder of the Kent State

and Jackson students demonstrated in action the unprecedented social weight and power of the American student movement. It also reconfirmed the capacity of the student movement seen elsewhere in the world to act as a detonator of larger social forces, by sparking the mobilization of hundreds of thousands across the country in antiwar street demonstrations.

The May events provide striking confirmation of our strategy of the "red university" -- in this case in the form of the antiwar university. The red university strategy embraces the occupation and utilization of the resources of the university around a transitional program designed both to link student struggles to broader social struggles and to draw broader forces into mass actions around political issues.

Under the politicizing influence of the May events, the student strike was converted on thousands of campuses into mobilizations to occupy and utilize some component of the university facilities. On a number of key campuses this culminated in an almost total de facto unchallenged control of the university by the student antiwar movement, turning the university into an antiwar university, both as an organizing center for the antiwar movement and as a vehicle for reaching out to mobilize and draw other sectors of the population into the struggle. Even where we had no influence this tended to be the logic of the mass struggles.

Another gain of the May events was the organization of broad and democratic strike councils on the campuses that set an example of democratic executive bodies working around the clock as the authentic leadership of a mass upsurge. The May events created a new consciousness among students of their potential power and responsibilities and pointed to the most effective organizational forms for future struggles.

The May events were another confirmation of the central role the Vietnam war plays in American politics, and the extent to which this war has bred antiwar sentiment. Under the impact of the student strike and occupation, the first large demonstration against the war called and organized by a sector of the labor movement took place in New York City, indicating the potential of the war issue as a politicizing and radicalizing agent in the working class.

The May events brought home to the ruling class the fact

that the repercussions of the Vietnam war go well beyond the military, diplomatic and strategic problems of Asian and international politics. The evolution of the war has led not only to the growth of antiwar sentiment, the antiwar movement, and a deepening radicalization; it has also brought into deep question the credibility and moral authority of the ruling class itself. Millions of persons now doubt the capacity of the powers that be to solve the major social problems facing the American people.

The May events confirmed our line of building the antiwar movement as a single-issue, non-exclusionary united front type movement centered on mobilizing mass street demonstrations the central demand of which is the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Indochina. The effectiveness and potential power of independent mass mobilizations around a burning social issue was clearly demonstrated. The successes dealt a blow to the ultra-leftists who attempt to substitute themselves for mass action, to the sectarians who sit on the sidelines scolding the mass movement, and to the reformists who always seek to subordinate the mass movement to their class-collaborationist schemes.

The student actions of May 1970 provided an important objective test and confirmation in action of the red university strategy and the ability of the Young Socialist Alliance to apply it. It presented the biggest test thus far of the organizational capacities of the YSA as against our opponents in a key sector of the developing radicalization. The opposition of the ultraleftists to the development of the antiwar university was a most striking example of sterility in a mass upsurge.

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The year 1970 saw the beginning of the transformation of the new feminist movement into a mass movement with appeal to the broadest layers of American women. It has already had a deep impact on the political consciousness of the country, as reflected in the mass media and in the spread of the women's liberation movement to every nook and cranny of the country. Women in all kinds of situations -- in Black and Chicano organizations, unions, educational institutions, churches, professional organizations, in work places -- have raised and struggled for feminist demands. The potential power of this movement exists in virtually every organization and institution of our society.

The August 26 marches commemorating the right to vote victory achieved by the first mass mobilization of feminism in the U.S. were the first nationwide mass action of the new women's liberation movement. The publicity around these actions popularized the movement and its demands to millions of Americans. They demonstrated the power and potential of mobilizing women around democratic and transitional demands that attack both the pressing manifestations of the oppression millions of women suffer and that lead in the direction of the complete liberation of women. This mass approach, confirmed in action on August 26, points the way forward for the movement, as against tendencies to turn inward and stagnate in a small-circle existence, or to reject feminist demands under the guise of adopting an "anti-imperialist" or "workers" orientation, which have been evident in ultraleft currents of the women's movement; or to count on dependence on the liberals, as proposed by the reformists.

The three basic demands of the women's liberation movement form a starting point for the development of a transitional program for women's liberation.

The first of these, free abortion on demand, coupled with opposition to forced sterilization, is based upon the elementary and democratic right of women to control their own bodies. This right is of direct and immediate concern to most women, and a life-and-death question for hundreds of thousands of women every year. The thrust of this demand cuts deeply into basic cultural, social and religious prejudices against women and is aimed at the subordinate and dependent role women have been subjected to since the rise of class society. The part of this demand that calls for free abortion on demand goes beyond democratic demands and raises the concept of socialization of medical care.

Reactionary and religious forces, mobilizing against the women's movement in opposition to this demand, are attempting to reverse the partial victories the movement has already scored concerning abortion. The political struggles around abortion will be one of the important battles of the entire next stage of the women's liberation movement.

The second major demand of the movement, free community-controlled 24-hour child care centers available to all, answers a pressing need of millions of women, especially working women. At the same time it highlights the importance of the rearing of the young and the social character of this responsibility.

The third demand centers on pay, educational and job opportunities, and legal rights for women equal to those of men. These democratic demands challenge capitalism's economic and political institutionalization of the subordinate and dependent status of women which has its roots in the historic rise of the patriarchal family system. They put forward a concept indispensable for inspiring and mobilizing a powerful movement for women's liberation; that is, the full and complete worth and dignity of women.

The women's liberation movement has already had a profound impact on the current radicalization, not only through adding another sector of militants to the struggle, but also through the implications of its critical analysis of the historical role of the institution of the nuclear family. This institution, which has its origins in the rise of class society, and which in one form or another has been a necessary feature of all class societies, plays the central role in implanting in infants and children the ideology and character structure necessary to maintain the hierarchial, exploitative and alienated social relations intrinsic to capitalism.

The women's liberation movement thus brings to light and helps counter some of the deepest prejudices and attitudes among the ideological and moral props of class rule. It raises problems of the alienation of humanity whose solution lies in the establishment of a workers state and the building of socialism. It deepens the struggle to expose the moral bankruptcy of the ruling class and to heighten the moral authority of the fighting mass movements.

By participating in this movement, women are transforming their view of themselves, affirming the essential dignity and worth that has been denied them through the entire period of class society. An integral part of the fight against capitalism

is the fight against the racism and sexism built into the ideology of capitalism. This discovery and rethinking by women of their history and worth has paralleled the same phenomenon among the oppressed nationalities. It has spurred a reawakened demand for knowledge, and understanding of their oppression -- its history, causes and the road to its elimination. It previews a similar process that will take place in the workers radicalization.

The responsiveness of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance to the rise of the new feminism has been another important test of our movement. Our ability to embrace this movement as our own, to participate in it and learn from it, and to help lead it in the direction of the mass independent mobilization of women around democratic and transitional demands stands in sharp contrast to the default of all our opponents who claim to be socialist or communist.

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Nationalism continues to deepen not only among Afro-Americans but among Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans and Asian-Americans. This has been expressed in deepening opposition to the war among the oppressed nationalities, in the character of the prison revolts, and in the expansion of nationalist consciousness and organization inside the army and the high-school youth. The recession, which has hit the oppressed nationalities the hardest, has spurred on this process. The effects of the recession, the failure of the highly publicized token integration of the building trades, the continued fiasco of "Black capitalism," and the government's use of "desegregation" of schools, especially in the South, to fire Black teachers and administrators, have dealt further blows to the image of the ruling class's ability to meet the needs of the oppressed nationalities through reform.

The development of Black nationalist attitudes, solidarity, and organization in the army has brought the explosive national question to a new point of tension inside this key instrument of imperialist policy.

While antiwar sentiment in the Black community has been high from the beginning of the war, there are signs that for the first

time this antiwar sentiment is going to be expressed in an organized way. The Black Moratoriums held in some cities and campuses present new models for independent organization of antiwar sentiment among Black people. Increasing possibilities for involving Afro-Americans in antiwar actions are also indicated by the willingness of organizations like the NAACP to endorse such actions and the April 24 marches. In the May 1970 events, a number of all-Black universities were the scenes of large scale antiwar mobilizations, among them Jackson State, the scene of the murderous assault upon its students. The organization of Black participation in the April 24 mass marches is the most important opportunity and test of this potential.

On the college campuses struggles have centered around defense and maintenance of Black studies departments, won in the struggles of 1969, against the attempts by university administrations and the government to reverse them. Black high school explosions often centered on the refusal of administrations to allow even symbols of Black pride and nationalist consciousness. The militancy and consciousness of Black workers, highlighted in the Atlanta AFSCME strike and the postal workers strike, as well as the widespread adoption of the nationalist button and salute by Black workers, reflect the continued deepening of nationalist consciousness among the Black people. The authorities are having unexpected problems in their efforts to recruit Black cops -- potential candidates say they will be ostracized in the Black community if they become cops. The response to the arrest of Angela Davis showed the rise of nationalist consciousness has further limited the effect of anti-Communist propaganda among African-Americans.

Attempting to head off the development of any independent Black political organization, the two capitalist parties have nominated increasing numbers of Black candidates. While remaining within the confines of bourgeois politics, the election of Black mayors in a number of important cities and of the largest number of Black congresswomen and congressmen since Reconstruction results from the pressure of Black nationalist consciousness.

The crisis of leadership in the Black community has not lessened. There have been no significant initiatives toward the formation of an independent Black political party. No nationwide group has emerged on the campus with authority among Black student militants.

Under the hammer blows of victimizations and its own incorrect line of policy, the Black Panther Party continues to decline. At the same time, the feeling of solidarity of the mass of Black people for victimized Black Panthers, Angela Davis, and other militants persecuted by the government, emphasizes the potential that exists for a capable leadership armed with a transitional approach to begin to mobilize the Black community.

Our central task in relation to the Black movement remains that of educating and propagandizing for the need to organize around a transitional program centered on the fight to win Black control of the Black community. The struggles of the Cairo, Illinois, Black United Front have been the main positive experience in the Black movement since 1969. Its leadership in the course of struggle has advanced important aspects of such a transitional program.

This transitional approach to Black liberation was outlined by Malcolm X and expanded in the Socialist Workers Party resolution, "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation." This points out the realistic and realizable path to transform a small revolutionary nucleus into a mass organization, and to mobilize growing sectors of the Black people on key issues affecting their lives which at the same time lead them into struggle with the capitalist state over the fundamental question of Black control of the Black community. Such struggles will drive home the necessity of a political break by the Black community with the parties of the ruling class through the formation of an independent Black political party.

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Since the 1969 convention, the expanding struggles of the Chicano movement have constituted the most important political thrust forward of the oppressed nationalities. Organizing around opposition to the war and the special price the Chicano people are forced to pay for the war has been a central feature of and spur to the radicalization of the Chicano people. This reached its high point to date in the August 1970 Chicano Moratorium when a march of 20,000 Chicanos brought out additional tens of thousands in the

Los Angeles Chicano community in support.

The most important advance of the Chicano movement has been the organization and initial experiences of La Raza Unida parties in Texas, Colorado, and California. The first Raza Unida parties developed in Texas out of a series of mass struggles centering on Chicano control of the Chicano schools. Some of the key initiators and leaders gained their initial experience in the student movement, especially the Mexican American Youth Organization. The Raza Unida parties are still small and face all the problems of any new political party attempting to build a mass organization independent of the capitalist parties and based on the needs of an oppressed and exploited section of the population. Nevertheless, they are the most advanced expression of independent political action to develop among the oppressed nationalities or the labor movements since the radicalization began.

The spread of Raza Unida parties to Colorado, into California and elsewhere in Aztlan will pose -- as long as they remain clearly independent of the capitalist parties -- the question of attitude toward the Democratic Party more and more sharply in the Chicano community. A realistic perspective of expansion, the development of a clear program for Chicano liberation built around the fight for Chicano control of the Chicano community and the self-determination of Aztlan, and maintenance of an independent perspective is the next stage and test of this development of independent Chicano political action.

The experience of these efforts to build independent Chicano parties can be utilized to help explain the meaning of independent political action by oppressed nationalities and the labor movement. The Raza Unida parties participate in elections and utilize them to educate and propagandize for its ideas, and have even won certain elections in Texas, which was utilized to further build a base for Chicano control of the Chicano community. But they project themselves primarily as social movements, not merely electoral machines. They strive to be parties of a new type. They help organize the Chicano struggle concerning schools, and other social needs, the organization of Chicano workers into unions, and other aspects of the overall

Chicano liberation struggle.

While there are as yet no signs of incipient movements for independent political action in the Black community or labor movement, the extension and development of the Raza Unida parties can have a major impact on them, serving as examples in dealing a blow to the Democratic Party. Most important, they have the potential to lead the struggles for self-determination of the Chicano people to new levels of independent mass mobilization.

The nationalism of oppressed nationalities is basically a response to and struggle against their oppression as a people and includes an affirmation of the dignity and humanity denied them through national oppression and a discovery of their identity through a new understanding of their history and their unique contributions to human society. Independent organization is necessary to unify and mobilize them in a struggle against all aspects of their oppression. The rise of Chicano nationalism and the organizational forms it has taken, like the Chicano Moratorium and the Raza Unida Parties, reaffirm the validity of Malcolm X's insight that a prerequisite of genuine alliances with other forces, including other oppressed nationalities, is the prior independent organization and unification of each oppressed nationality.

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The specific major areas of struggle that have characterized the developing radicalization thus far -- 1) the Black liberation movement, 2) the youth radicalization, 3) the antiwar movement, 4) the Chicano liberation movement, and 5) the women's liberation movement -- have occurred, in the main, outside the framework of the union movement and in no case have been led by any section of organized labor. Nevertheless these movements have already had effects upon the consciousness of the working class. According to government statistics, of the total work force in the United States 22 percent are under 24 years old; 28 percent of those between 25 and 34 have received some college education, with higher percentage in the under 25 age bracket; 40 percent are women; 11 percent are non-white. Labor Department projections indicate that every one of these percentages will increase in the 1970's. These bare

statistics alone indicate the potential these movements have in attracting and influencing the body of American workers.

This has been most significantly shown to date in the deep-going penetration of nationalist consciousness among workers of the oppressed nationalities. This can be observed in many ways: the appeal of all Black caucuses to the mass of Black workers, with ups and downs and in some cases dissipation under ultraleft leadership; the wearing of nationalist symbols and buttons by Black workers; the expressions of nationalist sentiments by Black workers in militant struggles like the 1970 postal workers strike and the Mahwah, New Jersey Ford strike; the formation of the Polaroid Revolutionary Workers Movement and its campaign over Polaroid's South African investments; the large number of Black workers who stayed home on Martin Luther King's birthday; the nationalism exhibited by young Blacks, mostly from working-class families, in the army and high schools; the fact that the Chicano workers being organized into the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee insisted that the UFWOC was not just a union, but La Causa; the public threat by the Raza Unida Party in Texas that it would organize its own unions if the AFL-CIO didn't do the job; the participation by large numbers of workers in the extended mobilization of the Cairo Illinois Black community around Black control demands; the strike for recognition of the virtually all-Black AFSCME local in Jackson, Mississippi in which the workers combined economic demands with demands of the Black struggle. The continuing spread of national consciousness and struggle moods among Black workers has become a matter of grave concern to the bosses and bureaucrats.

The available evidence shows the depth of antiwar sentiment in the working class. The November 1970 referenda carried against the war in the industrial centers of Dearborn and Detroit, Michigan, in San Francisco and in Massachusetts, with significant working-class support. The union-organized mobilization of 25,000 in New York during the May events, the overwhelming support given the Los Angeles Chicano Moratorium by the largely proletarian Chicano community, the growing pressure on union officials to endorse anti-

war actions and antiwar positions in the city referenda on the war, are additional signs of the antiwar sentiment in the working class.

The rise of the new feminism, too, is already finding a reflection among women workers. Women's caucuses and committees have been formed in several unions. Women, Inc., a caucus in the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers, led a fight against "protective" laws used to discriminate against women workers on the job; a caucus of women teachers at the 1970 convention of the American Federation of Teachers demanded that the union adopt positions in favor of maternity leave with pay, the dissemination of birth control and abortion information in the high schools for both women teachers and students, and the provision of child care facilities as contract demands. In concessions to the new militancy among its women members, the UAW April 1970 convention passed resolutions calling on the government to establish child care centers and guarantee the right to abortion. Federally Employed Women has been formed to fight pay and job classification discrimination against women workers employed by the federal government. The American Newspaper Guild organized a conference of women members on women's rights. Another index to the growing militancy among women workers is the sharp increase in the number of individual women workers filing complaints against discriminatory practices with the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission.

The impact of the general youth radicalization on working-class youth can be seen in the army, not only in antiwar and Black nationalist sentiment, but also in the fact that the brass has been forced to relax and modify its regulations on discipline, dress, hair styles, etc., because these had become virtually unenforceable. The situation regarding the youth in the plants was summed up from the ruling-class point of view in an article in the July 1970 issue of Fortune magazine entitled "Blue Collar Blues on the Assembly Line:" "The central fact about the new workers is that they are young and bring into the plants with them the new perspectives of the American youth in 1970."

The character of the 1970 strike wave demonstrated that the working class is not willing to sacrifice its standard of living for the sake of Washington's war in Vietnam. This confirmed the decrease in effectiveness of direct or indirect ruling-class appeals to patriotism, anti-Communism and racism against colonial peoples as justification to deny and subordinate labor needs. The 1970 strike wave not only saw the largest number of workers out on strike since 1952, many in long strikes, but the continuation of the tendency to reject inadequate wage-increase settlements negotiated by the union bureaucrats, and to take unauthorized action against them.

One of the central hopes of Nixon in the recession was to weaken through rising unemployment, the will of the organized working class to defend their real wage rates against inflation. But while unemployment rose, so did prices, and so did the determination of the organized workers to fight to keep their wages abreast of the rising cost of living. The only positive result of the recession-induced increase in unemployment, from the ruling-class point of view, was the slowdown of the rate of wage increase of the unorganized workers. It was clear that a figure of 6 percent unemployed was too low to break the will of the organized workers to fight for wage increases.

A growing sector of the ruling-class believes that the next step must be a wage-control program under the cover of a broader "incomes policy." But this also contains the danger of triggering struggles by the working class.

Ruling-class timetables for legislative curtailment of union power have suffered a series of setbacks with the continued increase in the unionization of public employees and their strike struggles, often in direct defiance of local, state and federal antistrike laws. The most spectacular of these strikes was the illegal 1970 postal workers strike, which directly defied the federal government.

Either the attempted imposition of wage controls or further legislative and administrative attacks on the use of union power would provoke fresh defensive struggles and accelerate the process

of politicization and radicalization in the working class. The ruling class is aware of this. But the timing of a serious challenge to the unions is dependent on their evaluation of the international economic situation.

In this overall context, the fight for an escalator clause to counter inflation as a central demand by the UAW in the 1970 strike was important. The Steelworkers officials have projected initial demands for both an escalator clause and a shorter work-week as targets of the 1971 contract negotiations. At the same time, under the growing pressure of ruling-class propoganda on the need for controls, both Woodcock and Meany have made concessions to the idea of an "independent" wage-price-profits review board. This line of capitulation to the capitalists runs counter to the interests of the working class. The fight for a sliding scale of hours and wages must be counterposed to all attempts by the capitalist class to "solve" the problems of unemployment and inflation by moving toward wage controls.

The active intervention and threat of intervention by the government on the side of the employers, and against the unions, underscores the fact that key economic issues today are increasingly fought out on a political level.

Far from mobilizing union power behind the important political and social issues of the radicalization, issues that deeply affect their members, the labor officialdom does everything in its power to keep the workers tied to as narrow and reformist a social program as possible. The bureaucracy is a conservative petty-bourgeois social layer encrusted on the unions. It acts as the central transmission belt for bourgeois politics into the working class and remains the chief obstacle to transforming the unions into revolutionary instruments independently fighting around the key political and social issues facing the working class and its allies.

The impact of the developing radicalization on the union movement and the politicization of the workers arising from their economic struggles continue to be molecular processes. There has been no major challenge to the bureaucracy as a whole at this stage,

no tendency is as yet discernible toward the formation of a left wing in the union movement, the goal of which would be the overthrow of the conservative bureaucracy and its replacement by a leadership based on a class-struggle program.

* * *

As the radicalization has deepened, other issues have been raised and new movements have come forward: the revulsion against capitalism's destruction of our environment and the ecological system on which the life of humanity depends, the development of radicalism among the laymen and clergy of the Catholic Church, the prison revolts, the increasing radicalization inside the army, the gay liberation movement against the legal and extra-legal oppression of homosexuals. The radicalization has likewise had big repercussions in cultural and artistic circles.

The wave of prison revolts that erupted in 1970 had a different quality from the protests that historically are endemic to prison life. This was to be seen in the conduct of the Black and Puerto Rican leaderships of these revolts. The prisoners who have led and participated in these struggles consciously see themselves as victims of the class and racial bias of American justice. They are inspired by the revolutionary literature they read and the examples set by figures like Malcolm X and George Jackson. The essence of their demands for prison and judicial reforms has been an affirmation of their dignity and humanity. The recognition by most young radicals of the prison struggles as part of the movement and their sympathy and identification with their demands is a further gauge of the radicalization.

As with prisoners, bourgeois society views homosexuals as outcasts.

The gay liberation movement has raised a series of demands against the way homosexuals are treated by bourgeois society. These include insistence on equality before the law like other citizens, with full rights in all respects, that their private lives be their own, free from legal or police restraint, against police entrapment practices, for their acceptance as equals in all

spheres of social life.

The gay liberation movement was strongly influenced by the opposition of the women's liberation movement to the commercial exploitation of sex, the reduction of sex to something other than a free human relation, the reactionary and stifling sexual norms of bourgeois society, and the psychological distortions of sexuality in a class society based on the nuclear family system. The women's movement began to see that the antagonistic attitudes towards homosexuals are simply another facet of a sick social order.

One characteristic of the radicalization is the growing opposition among very broad layers of young people against sexual repression of any kind. This has been reinforced by the women's and the gay liberation movements.

The radicalization in the army is being fed by the youth radicalization, the nationalist upsurge, the antiwar movement, and, in the women's branches, the new feminism. Antiwar sentiment in the army appeared several years ago with the rise of the antiwar movement and has continued to deepen and broaden with each new wave of the radicalization. The wearing of peace symbols, love-beads, flouting of army appearance standards, giving Black power salutes and holding meetings, demanding equal rights and prerogatives in the WACS, are overt symbols not only of GI defiance but of the political radicalization affecting GIs. The fight for the rights of GIs as citizen soldiers, which we have supported and publicized as the mainstay of political work within the army, has been strengthened by the victories won by GIs and has been shown to be an effective and key component of the struggle waged for freedom to express their political views.

Another sign of the deepening radicalization is the growing rejection, first by the youth and then by wider circles, of the cultural values and authority of bourgeois society. This is reflected in all the arts, and in many other ways. It includes the proliferation of underground newspapers with a generally radical bent, and a new thirst for and interest in radical books and literature of all kinds. More revolutionary literature is now being published, read, and assigned in colleges and high schools than in any previous period in American history.

The ruling class was shaken by the May 1970 events. Its divisions and indecision over what to do extended right up into Nixon's cabinet.

The liberal wing of the bourgeoisie tried to project an orientation towards the fall elections last year as a way to demobilize the antiwar upsurge. During the May events, the administration, with the collusion of the reactionary bureaucrats of the building-trades union in New York, organized a "hard hat" patriotic demonstration to attempt to counter the massive antiwar actions and foster the myth that workers support the war. These unions were picked for that purpose because the reactionary policy of the bureaucrats to preserve these unions as white job-trusts helped inculcate prejudices against the radicalizing Blacks and youth among the white, skilled older members. Even so, the bureaucrats had to use a combination of threats and bribes to get their members to march; and slogans supporting the war were conspicuous by their absence.

The Nixon administration proceeded with a combination of promises on the issue representing the greatest threat, the war, and demagogy to turn people against the antiwar demonstrators by playing on the prejudices of the most backward layers of the population with the "law and order" question. At the same time, the Congress made the concession of granting the vote to 18-year olds.

Part of the "law and order" strategy was to single out certain radicals for selective repression, especially those the government felt it could pillory in court as "criminals."

The government's "law and order" campaign took advantage of ill-advised actions by ultraleftists to attempt to smear the radicalization as a whole. But one of the unexpected results of these frame-ups, especially against the Black Panther Party, has been to expose the role of police agents and provocateurs and the way in which the ultraleftists play into the hands of such paid representatives of "law and order." This lesson, combined with the power displayed by the mass mobilization in May, has helped weaken the appeal of ultraleftism in the radical movement. It is

one of the reasons for the continued decline of the Black Panther Party and the Weatherman type tendencies. When the new school year opened, the government pressured college administrators, through the IRS guidelines and Hoover's speeches and letters to college presidents, to take away some of the gains the students won in May.

In the summer and fall of 1970, there was a general pause in the antiwar and student movements, as people waited to see whether Nixon's promises of "winding down" the war were going to be carried out. The militants were also weighing the lessons of May, particularly the exposure of the sterility of ultraleftism, and seriously grappling with questions of strategy and perspective.

By the time of the 1970 elections, the short-term gains the ruling class had made were beginning to be reversed. Large-scale student participation in the campaigns of the "doves," which had been touted during the May events, failed to materialize. The combination of the continuation of the war, the rise in unemployment, ever mounting prices, and a backlash to the youth and Black-baiting forays of Nixon and Agnew resulted in a rebuff for Nixon in the elections.

The character of the capitalist two-party electoral system prevents the real attitudes of the voters from being clearly reflected at the ballot box. Even so, it was apparent that Nixon's red-baiting didn't work as planned.

Antiwar voters saw little choice between the supporters of Nixon's "withdrawal" plans and the "dove" capitalist politicians, who had virtually capitulated to Nixon. But the referenda on the war demonstrated that while there was a temporary dip in antiwar actions, the mass antiwar sentiment had continued to deepen.

While the renewed red-baiting and repressions against the Panthers, the Berrigans, Angela Davis, etc., had some dampening effect, these moves have not intimidated the mood of opposition to the Nixon administration. Even the hard-hat building trades workers whom the White House brought out to cheer the Vietnam war have been angered by Nixon's decision to try to lower wages in government construction.

Clearly, Nixon has big obstacles to overcome in seeking reelection in 1972.

PART II

A. General characteristics of the radicalization

The current radicalization began with a new rise in the Afro-American struggle for self-determination in the early 1960's. This developing independent movement, sparked by a new layer of Black youth, attracted sympathy and support, finally precipitating a nationwide student movement. The students then became the spearhead of the antiwar movement as Washington plunged into Vietnam.

The mass actions of this antiwar movement generalized the radicalization, spreading it both geographically and into other layers of the population. From a credibility gap on the war question, suspicions and doubts about the actions of the government widened into a willingness to challenge the authority of prevailing institutions and to reject the norms and ideology of capitalist society.

As the above movements continued to develop amidst ebbs and flows, new struggles caught on. The most massive of these have been the Chicano and women's liberation movements. New issues, such as pollution of our environment, have further fueled the radicalization. The ruling class has been unable to prevent the radicalization from making a deep impact on its armed forces. The gay liberation movement against the oppression of homosexuals, the prison revolts, the welfare struggles, the divisions in the Catholic Church demonstrate several key facts. 1) There is no layer too oppressed to struggle, no reactionary prejudice and oppression too sacrosanct and deep-rooted to be challenged. 2) The actions of each new layer of the diversified movement have raised greater doubts about the fundamental values of bourgeois society. 3) Each extends and deepens interest in radical ideas about the reconstruction of social life. 4) Each drives home the conclusion that new issues and struggles will continue to emerge as the radicalization deepens.

All of the movements mentioned have interacted and drawn inspiration and tactical lessons from one another. But each has an autonomy and an independent dynamic. They do not develop in unison but irregularly. As one radicalizing area goes through a period of relative quiescence, others can leap ahead; and from these new struggles new lessons are learned that can be absorbed and applied by the others. Throughout the uneven, sometimes explosive rhythm of

the radicalization, the general trend has been constant. It continues to deepen.

From our observation and participation in the different sectors of the unfolding radicalization, the following generalizations can be drawn about its character and meaning for the Socialist Workers Party.

1. Each of these movements has essentially an independent character and course. They are not wings of the Democratic or Republican parties. They are outside the stifling control of the labor bureaucracy. They are not under the leadership of the Communist Party.

While each has been willing to form action alliances with, and learn from, the experiences of other sectors, they have refused to subordinate their demands or wait for the struggles of others before embarking on their own. This independence has been a salient feature of the student, Black, Chicano and women's movements, and it will be the attitude of others still to come. This self-reliance is one of the best guarantees that the radicalization will continue and not be derailed through dependence on reformist leaders. The same attitude will tend to mark the radicalization of the working class when the struggle unfolds to break the political dependence of the union movement on its conservative misleaders and the capitalist two-party system.

2. Each of these movements has been, from the first, ready, able and willing to engage in direct action in the streets and schools, and to organize mass protest demonstrations against the authorities and administrations. The ghetto uprisings and the mass antiwar mobilizations, the August 26, 1970 New York women's march, and the August 1970 Los Angeles Chicano Moratorium have been the most dramatic expressions of this militancy. But it characterizes every one of these social struggles to one or another degree.

3. As was the case in the early 1930's, the process of radicalization began in other areas prior to an extensive upsurge and politicization of the working class. But the issues raised by the social struggles of the 1960's have begun affecting the

thinking of the entire country. And the radicalization already has certain characteristics -- the size and weight of the student movement; the extent of antiwar sentiment; the degree of nationalist consciousness and combativity; the depth of feminist consciousness; the challenges to the class, racist, and sexist assumptions that furnish the ideological glue of bourgeois domination -- which were not present to anywhere near the same degree during the radicalization of the 1930's.

Today's radicalization is bigger, deeper, and broader than any previous radicalization.

The existence and growth of this radicalization prior to the radicalization of major sections of the working class is of vital importance to the Marxist tendency. Our capacity to recruit and educate a Marxist cadre that is active and influential in the movements as they arise, that fights for leadership against the claims of our opponents is decisive in building a mass Leninist workers party capable of leading the coming struggle for power to a victorious conclusion.

4. A distinction must be made between radicalization and a revolutionary situation. The current radicalization, in which large numbers of people, under the impact of changes in international and national conditions, have begun altering their attitudes about important questions, beliefs, values, customs, relations, and institutions -- social, personal, philosophical, political, economic, cultural -- is not at the point of becoming a pre-revolutionary situation. It is a precondition and preparation for it. The borders of a revolutionary situation can be reached only when the politicization and radicalization has extended to decisive sectors of the working masses, and when a revolutionary upsurge and mobilization objectively poses the basic question of what class should wield power.

While a radicalization can develop and prevail over a period of many years and even decades, prerevolutionary or revolutionary situations, where the contending class forces directly confront each other, are of short duration. We can predict neither the tempo of a radicalization of the working class nor the appearance of a prerevolutionary situation. But it is clear that the prospects

for its favorable outcome will be improved, the deeper, broader and bigger the prior radicalization has been, the greater is the number of politicized and revolutionary-minded militants previously developed in the mass movement, and the more receptive the masses have become to radical solutions. The potential speed with which such a situation can appear was graphically illustrated by the May-June 1968 upsurge in France that suddenly placed the question of power squarely on the agenda. The key question at such a juncture is whether a revolutionary-socialist combat party has been created that is capable of taking the leadership of the upsurge away from the reformists and centrists and of mobilizing the masses in a revolutionary struggle for state power.

5. The characteristics of the radicalization so far have made it clear that the American revolution will have a combined character. It will be a revolution by the oppressed nationalities for self-determination together with a working-class revolution to take power and open the road to the destruction of capitalist exploitation, alienation, oppression, racism and sexism, and the construction of socialism -- the first truly human social order.

The coming American revolution will incorporate the democratic and transitional demands of the various independent movements that have arisen in the course of social struggle as well as those that will arise as the radicalization deepens. It will give an enormous impetus to the further development of these movements until their demands are met in full in the course of the construction of socialism.

6. The fundamental economic and political contradictions of American capitalism that underlie the radicalization have an international basis. The basic dilemma faced by America's rulers today is pointed up by the fact that the very measures required to halt the world revolutionary process and to meet the growing economic competition of their capitalist competitors come into increasing conflict with the maintenance of social stability, ideological authority and class peace at home. This gives deep international as well as national roots to the radicalization.

The current radicalization takes place in a period of ascending

world revolution. In spite of major defeats like that in Indonesia, and setbacks and temporary stalemates like those of the past decade in Latin America, the colonial revolution continues to press forward. The monolithic character of world Stalinism has been shattered. Not only has the political revolution made important advances in Eastern Europe, but its first offshoots are becoming visible in the Soviet Union. In the advanced capitalist countries, there is a new wave of struggles and radicalization.

The tendency is increasing for the example and lessons of the struggles in one country or area of the world to spread to others, as has been seen in the international scope of the student radicalization, the rise of the antiwar movement, the acute appearance of the national question in advanced capitalist countries, and as is now occurring with the struggles of the women's liberation movement.

The use of anti-Communism to stop the radicalization, of foreign adventures to inflame war patriotism, of war spending to generate prosperity, of government attacks to silence protestors, of racism to conservatize privileged sectors of the working class, and of sexism to support reactionary prejudices and ideology cannot be relied upon to reverse this radicalization. Quite the contrary, opposition to the material, social and psychological effects of war, inflation, repression, racism, sexism, and red-baiting are the central motive forces of the radicalization itself. These ruling-class weapons, combined with limited reforms and concessions, can and will bring about pauses and partial setbacks. Yet exacerbation of the fundamental underlying contradictions of American capitalism feeding the radicalization will propel it forward.

7. In all stages of building the mass revolutionary-socialist party its cadres must be alert to, recognize and embrace the new forms of struggle and the demands of oppressed groupings that appear as the radicalization develops. The Leninist party champions the fighting movements of all oppressed social layers and advances and develops their key democratic and transitional demands as part of its own. The revolutionary vanguard consciously uses its participation in these movements to draw the lessons necessary to bring revolutionary socialist consciousness to as broad a layer of

militants as possible.

In view of the decisiveness of the construction of the revolutionary party, our most important objective in involving ourselves deeply in these mass movements and absorbing their lessons is to recruit the best militants and help them to assimilate the program and traditions of Trotskyism, and gain the political experience necessary to become integrated in the expanding Trotskyist cadre.

8. The changing relationship of forces on the American left, which is turning in our favor, is of decisive importance in the further development of the radicalization. This could be seen most clearly in the initial stage by the incapacity of the CP to take the leadership of the ascending movements and derail or divert them into class-collaborationist schemes.

The May 1968 events in France did not lead to victory, not because of a lack of consciousness or incorrect tactics by the revolutionary Trotskyist forces, but because of the political domination of the workers movement by the mass Stalinist party, a domination which could not be reversed by revolutionary forces qualitatively smaller than the CP. The French CP was thus able to divert the revolutionary upsurge into reformist channels. That need not be the case when a comparable opportunity is presented here.

Unlike the beginning of the radicalization of the Thirties, the Communist Party does not have a large edge in forces and resources over ours. Our movement has its first opportunity to become the very center of the radical movement in this country.

Since the 1969 convention, the relation of forces among the socialist tendencies and within the larger radical movement has continued to shift in our favor.

The role the SWP has played in participation in, leadership of and recruitment from the women's liberation movement is far greater than that of the CP, SP or any of our ultraleft opponents. Given the small number of Chicano and Latino comrades, we have been able to play an important role in the Chicano movement, an arena where the CP has significant strength. In the antiwar movement, we continue to be the best builders and in the strongest position in

comparison to all our opponents.

In the student movement, the Young Socialist Alliance is the largest, most cohesive and influential of all the youth organizations claiming to be socialist, including the Communist Party's Young Workers Liberation League, the Socialist Party's Young People's Socialist League, and the various remnants of SDS. This is the single most important aspect of the current struggle between the SWP and YSA and our opponents because it is still among youth that the greatest immediate potential for recruitment to Trotskyism lies.

In key areas of party building we have made important gains. The party press is now distributed more widely geographically and has a larger distribution in the U.S. than the Daily World or the press of any other opponent. We have been able to expand the paper from 12 to 24 pages. The YSA had made big advances in spreading its units throughout the country. The SWP has been able to establish new branches and nuclei of branches in several new areas. Our national apparatus in all our departments has grown, in The Militant editorial and business offices, the ISR editorial staff, in the staff of the national office, and in our printing and publishing efforts. We are publishing many more pamphlets and books than ever before. Sales of Trotskyist literature have greatly expanded.

The struggle for hegemony is not yet settled, especially in relation to our most important opponent, the Communist Party and its Young Workers Liberation League. But while we are not yet the predominant force on the left, we can confidently expect to win this position if we do not make major mistakes in the next period.

B. Our opponents and the radicalization

The progress the SWP and YSA have made in the struggle for leadership of the left was symbolized by the December 1970 YSA convention. It was the largest youth convention since the founding of American Trotskyism. All of our major and minor opponents were present to present their disagreements with us through leaflets, corridor discussion and articles on the convention in their press. These included the Communist Party and its affiliated youth group, the Young Workers Liberation League; the Socialist Party and its Young People's Socialist League; Progressive Labor and its fraternal SDS; International Socialism; the Workers League; and Spartacist.

One striking fact about the essential argument circulated by all of these opponents was that each from its own political vantage point made the identical charge -- the politics of the SWP and YSA are petty bourgeois, not working class.

Each advanced its own arguments supporting this contention in criticism of positions the SWP and YSA have taken towards the radicalization. The SP-YPSL, for example, attacked our support of Black nationalism, the antiwar movement, the gay liberation movement, the women's liberation movement and our opposition to Israel, which is "led by a labor party," as being antiworking class. The Communist Party and the YWLL alleged that our support of Black nationalism amounted to racism, that in building the antiwar movement as an independent movement, we are racist and divisive, and thus are not concerned with "workers problems," that our petty-bourgeois nature is shown by our lack of a program for the "industrial concentration" of our members, and that the same thing is demonstrated by our call for the overthrow of the "only workers governments" in the world. Similar attacks were levelled by the smaller organizations and sects.

All these opponents charge that the SWP and YSA constitute a petty-bourgeois tendency. All adduce as proof our support to Black nationalism, feminism, and the other movements that have developed out of the current radicalization. All counterpose their organizations to our as truly working class, and their orientation as the path to reach the mass of workers.

All these opponents, reformists and ultraleft alike, make three basic errors in their approach to the current radicalization:

1. They cannot recognize the class struggle as it unfolds. They do not understand the nature of the radicalization itself, its chief characteristics and new forms of struggle. Instead of embracing the new forms and demands of these struggles, they tend to be repelled by them. Instead of seeking to extend the independent and revolutionary thrust of these movements, they seek to channel them into reformist directions or to oppose them in a sectarian manner.

2. Partly because of this and partly because of a dogmatic projection of their limited understanding of the radicalization of the 1930's onto the current struggles, they do not understand the dynamics and depth of the radicalization, how it can extend into the working class in the future, and how it can lead to a revolutionary upsurge. They misunderstand or reject all the key aspects of revolutionary strategy based on a transitional program for participation in and acceleration of the radicalization.

3. None of them understand the political and organizational character of the kind of party that must be built to lead the struggle for socialism to victory in the United States. Furthermore, they tend to approach the problem of building a mass party as if they already were that party whose central problem is the disposition of its mass forces. We see ourselves as a Leninist nucleus concentrating on those essential cadre-building steps necessary to lay the basis for the construction of a mass revolutionary-workers party.

* * *

1. None of our opponents adopt the central progressive demands of the largest components of the radicalization -- the Black nationalist, Chicano, student, antiwar and women's liberation movements -- as part of their own. All, to one degree or another, are repelled by, uncomfortable with, antagonistic toward, and fail to understand the logic and depth of every one of these movements.

One argument both the reformists and ultralefts use against full support to these new manifestations of the class struggle is that they either disrupt the unity of the working class or divide

it. The way our opponents recoil from the independent thrust of these struggles means in practice disregarding the interests of the more oppressed workers and pandering to the prevailing prejudices and narrow interests of privileged layers in the working class and of the trade-union bureaucracy.

Revolutionists call for unity in action of the working class against attacks by the class enemy. But we fight to break up the "unity" that is founded on subordination of the historical interests of the class as a whole to those of the more privileged workers, to the antiworking-class interests of the union bureaucracy, and to the capitalist class. Revolutionists do not call for unity of the working class based on the narrow parochial interests of the more privileged strata of workers, or on the current level of political consciousness, but for unity on a class-struggle program. This orientation requires full support to the struggles of all the less privileged workers and oppressed sectors of the population, against the special oppression they suffer as a result of the racial, sexual and generational division fostered by the ruling class. In reality, far from threatening the real unity needed by the working class against its class enemies, the struggles of the oppressed nationalities, the women, the youth are all helping to deal powerful blows to the ideological barriers that racism, sexism, and narrow job trust attitudes erect against the unity of the working class on a class-struggle program.

The reformists and ultralefts alike argue that the struggles that have so far emerged in the current radicalization are basically "petty-bourgeois." Thus the demands and driving forces of the radicalization at this "petty-bourgeois" stage are ephemeral and will be overcome at the next stage when the workers enter the struggle. As the CP defensively puts it, that is why Trotskyism is growing today and will die tomorrow.

They are wrong on all counts.

The demands and struggle of the students pointing toward the struggle for the red university, the demands of the antiwar movement for immediate withdrawal of the American imperialist army from Vietnam, the demand for control of their own communities by

by the oppressed nationalities in their struggles for self-determination, the social and political demands of women for their liberation, are all directed against the interests and authority of the ruling class and in the interests of the working class.

Far from diminishing the importance of these movements, the radicalization of deeper layers of the working class, which will occur in part around these political issues, will give them tremendous impetus. When this occurs, these movements will have the most powerful and decisive reinforcement of all, the entry of a great majority of the working class, into struggle against the common enemy, the ruling class. And each of them will gain powerful new proletarian forces.

Only a leadership applying a transitional program that includes the progressive demands of all the oppressed, and tested by previous struggles, will be capable of leading the working class and its allies in a victorious struggle for the establishment of a workers state.

Both the reformists and ultralefts exhibit a tendency towards economism in their ultimately pessimistic view of the role of the workers in the radicalization process. They see struggle over wage and job issues, in isolation from the political issues and motive forces of the radicalization, as the sole way the workers will be brought into struggle. This is tied to their misconception -- and hope -- that independent movements like Black nationalism and feminism will somehow fade away when the "real" struggle begins.

The decisive mass of workers will not be politicized until the underlying international economic crises of American imperialism forces it into a showdown with the labor movement. But the issues that have already been raised in the current radicalization are not peripheral to the process of social discontent; they are central to it, and, in combination with struggles by the workers over wage and job issues, will lead to the politization and radicalization of the working class. And the independent and uncompromising demands of the various movements will be an additional aid to the workers struggle against the efforts of the reformists to channel the burgeoning radicalization into the dead end of class collaborationism.

In the face of the radicalization, the reformists and ultra-lefts are basically conservative. They fear the struggles of the developing radicalization, the revolts of the least privileged, just as they fear the revolution itself. This is reflected in either their sectarian abstention from the living movements emerging in the process of the radicalization or their participation only to divert, blunt, and in essence oppose the demands of these movements, their uncontrolled initiatives and their independent political thrust.

At bottom, this conservatism betrays a deep lack of confidence in the revolutionary potential of the working class. They do not think that the young, militant workers who will revolt are capable of ever becoming antiwar, profeminist, pronationalist, and self-reliant. If that were true, the American workers would also be incapable of mobilizing the oppressed masses to overturn American capitalism and shouldering the task of building socialism. Thus at bottom our opponents are utopians. They really do not believe that the ranks of the American workers can do the job. And in practice they substitute reliance and dependence on other forces -- the sectarians mechanical political fantasies, and the reformists the liberals and progressive bureaucrats.

When the reformists or ultralefts proclaim that the forms and issues of the radicalization are detours, aberrations or obstacles to the working class taking power they mean in actuality that the radicalization threatens to become more and more of an obstacle to their desire to keep the class struggle in reformist channels or to control it according to a preconceived schema. All of the class-collaborationist opponents, including the ultra-left ones, like PL, recoil from the independent struggles of the current radicalization and rail against "single issueism" because they have difficulty imposing their line of class collaboration upon them. The sectarian grouplets like the Workers League do the same because these struggles do not fit into their preconception of what radicalization should be like.

Every one of our opponents without exception adopts opportunist attitudes and positions in practice. In the 1968 New York teachers union strike against steps taken toward Black control of

the Black schools in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville section, most either equivocated or supported the Shanker leadership's reactionary strike against the Black community. All of them opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. None of them understood the May events -- the reformists, ultralefts, and sectarians all feared the spontaneous mass mobilizations not under their control, opposed the development of democratic strike councils, opposed the struggle for the anti-war university and lectured those who went ahead. All are opposed to an independent development of La Raza Unida parties, either because it threatens an imaginary "peoples" wing of the Democratic Party, or a labor party that doesn't exist, or working class "unity." All have opposed focusing on the mobilization of masses in street actions for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam. They condemn support for these as "Trotskyist."

All the class collaborationists and reformists will recoil from the future spontaneous, audacious, and uncontrolled mobilizations of the working class because they will be frightened by their lack of ability to tightly dominate that movement. But far from abstaining they will do everything they can to keep the workers within reformist channels.

The sectarians (those who have not become the crassest opportunists) will scold the workers, recoiling from the new forms, language, and initiatives of the political radicalization of the working class just as they have done with regard to the current movements.

In the character of their political response and line in the face of the rise of Black nationalism, independent Chicano struggles, the student movement, the women's liberation movement, and the antiwar movement, we have been provided with a preview of how our opponents will react to the radicalization of the working class.

2. All of our opponents share in common what might be labelled a dogmatic view of how the working class will become radicalized and how the struggle for the transformation of the union movement will unfold. This dogmatism combines two errors -- 1) drawing the wrong lessons from the previous radicalization of the 1930's, and 2) generalizing the concrete forms, tactical steps and

dynamic of this previous radicalization and projecting these generalizations onto the present one.

They do not understand that both the successes (the consolidation of mighty industrial unions) and limitations (the CIO's failure to form an independent party of labor, and the deep incrustation over decades of a conservative privileged bureaucracy on the unions) of the previous radicalization determined that new forms and new tactics would be necessary in the next radicalization.

Our opponents tend to believe that if the unions have not been radicalized, or if the radicalization is not yet reflected in consciously radical union struggles, then there is no real radicalization. This view leaves out of account the fact that the radicalization in the 1930's did not begin with radicalization of the existing union movement, but outside of it. It did not begin with the radicalization of the industrial workers, but with the intellectuals, the students, the veterans, the unemployed and the farmers. When the industrial workers joined the struggle the radicalization gathered power, and it did so through a split in the AFL and the development of a new form on a mass scale, the industrial unionism of the CIO.

Neither the reformists nor the sectarians can grasp that today's radicalization is already the biggest, deepest, and broadest in American history -- and that it points toward the radicalization of the only social force that can wrest power from the hands of the rulers, a decisive sector of the working class. Neither can they grasp the optimistic conclusions concerning the American revolution that flow from this fact.

Our opponents view the radicalization of the workers in terms of the 1930's and as an extension, or repetition, of the 1930's -- as they understand that period. Thus the Communist Party's strategy -- and hope -- is to transform the union movement by a re-run of their heyday of an alliance with a "progressive" sector of the union bureaucracy, with themselves as leaders of "progressive" unions, carrying out a "progressive" line of support to "progressive" Democratic Party politicians. The Workers League sect offers as the answer to all questions the immediate construction of a Labor

Party whose program will be counterposed to the demands of the Blacks, women, students, and Chicanos.

In its rise the CIO led the struggles of many oppressed social layers as part of its drive to organize the unorganized workers in the mass-production industries. This ascending industrial union movement was a vast social movement with the potential of transforming itself into an independent working-class political instrument that could draw all the oppressed layers into political struggle with it, for the first time breaking the grip of capitalist politics on the masses in the U.S. The failure of the CIO movement to break through onto the political plane greatly facilitated the incrustation of the union movement in the succeeding period of war, prosperity and witch-hunt with a conservative, class-collaborationist, self-seeking privileged bureaucratic layer. This bureaucracy steadily narrowed down the scope of the union movement, and politically subordinated it to the Democratic Party. The union bureaucracy became the biggest obstacle to a new radicalization, any break with class-collaborationist political quiescence, any forms of struggle that would threaten class peace or escape their control.

As the transitional program points out, when masses of workers radicalize, in addition to struggling to transform the unions, they will have to construct and utilize organizational forms like strike or factory committees, councils, or political organizations that are distinct and separate from the official union organizations.

The important question at this stage is not predicting what forms the workers will create in their future struggles; or how many and which unions can be transformed into revolutionary instruments. The key thing to understand is that building the independent movements that have emerged in the new radicalization and deepening their struggles, is part of the process of the radicalization of the working class and the preparation of their fight for political independence; and that the struggle to transform the unions includes fighting within the unions for support to the central demands of the independent struggles rising in the current radicalization.

Our program for the union movement flows from the concrete

situation facing the working class, both the unionized and unorganized sectors, and the forces in rebellion outside the union movement that are allies of the working class.

The demands we raise flow from two historical factors: 1) the failure of the union movement to go beyond the economic organization of the workers to political organization, and the existence of a privileged bureaucratic layer whose interests are alien to those of its members and all the oppressed; and 2) the incapacity of American imperialism to escape basic international contradictions that will impel it, at some stage, to mount a heavy attack on the living standard of the workers and to attempt to reduce the mighty power of the unions to impotence.

The following are the outlines of the program we propose:

1. In the face of unemployment, inflation and the threat of imposition of an "incomes policy," our program calls for a sliding scale of wages and hours; full compensation for every jobless worker, including youth unable to find jobs; preferential hiring, upgrading, and training of workers of oppressed nationalities and women workers; and full equal rights for oppressed nationalities and women in the union and on the job.

2. To counter the ruling class's use of the labor bureaucracy to limit and control the unions and keep the decision-making power out of the hands of the rank and file, our program calls for rank-and-file control over all union affairs, complete union independence from all government controls, and defense of the unconditional right to strike.

3. In face of the ruling-class monopoly of politics through the two capitalist parties, we explain the need for an independent labor party based upon the unions.

4. In view of the need to transform the unions into instruments of struggle around the issues that face the working masses and other oppressed layers as a whole, and to unite in struggle all these allies decisive to the future struggle to defeat the capitalist state, our program calls for full support to the struggles of the oppressed nationalities for self-determination; full support to the struggles of women for their complete liberation; the

immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Vietnam.

The above is an outline of the initial program around which we strive to educate left wing forces in the unions. Stress on one or another aspect of this program is determined by the concrete situation. There are no tactical prescriptions generally valid for all unions. Because of the continued power and grip of the bureaucracy, we still have to use flanking tactics in the unions, which makes the immediate target of our demands the class enemy, and which avoid the premature precipitation of power struggles in the unions. Our basic task remains one of propaganda and education aimed at explaining this program.

The crisis of union leadership is part of the crisis of leadership of the working class that characterizes our epoch. Our program for the union movement is a class-struggle program for the formation of a revolutionary leadership in the unions. The outcome of this struggle is crucial; ultimately it will determine the fate of the unions.

Our program is a program of struggle; it is not a listing of promissory notes. We do not predict or promise beforehand how many of the unions will be transformed into instruments of revolutionary struggle, whether a labor party will be formed or what its initial character may be, what other forms of mass organization the workers will create in relationship to other mass organs of struggle outside the union movement as the radicalization deepens. Our union program is part of our general transitional program and is linked organically as part of the decisive task of building a mass revolutionary-socialist party.

3. In the final analysis, the decisive question is the construction of a mass Trotskyist party. We proceed from the recognition that the SWP is not yet that mass party, but a small and growing nucleus of cadres formed around the revolutionary-socialist program necessary to build such a party. Thus the recruiting, training, and assimilation of such cadres are indispensable preconditions for building a mass workers party. This has been the central task since the formation of the American Trotskyist movement and there are no general rules on the ways and means to be used to accomplish it.

These depend upon the objective stage of the class struggle, the degree of radicalization or conservatism, and the size and experience of our own forces. Many different tactics have been used in the history of our movement: entries, splits, fusions, regroupments, and colonizations of cadres in promising political situations in the various sectors of the mass movement.

Today our immediate goal is the recruitment of more and more of the young militants radicalized in the current political struggles, and the transformation of these recruits through education and experience into Trotskyist cadres.

All our opponents to one degree or another act as if they already were mass parties whose central problem is the deployment of their forces. Thus the Communist Party has launched a daily newspaper, with a circulation below that of The Militant, as if their size and ability to directly influence all areas of the class struggle required a daily paper. Progressive Labor has for several years "colonized" its members into various unions, under the illusion that they are going both to transform themselves into a mass proletarian organization by this and directly influence the course of the unions' development. The Workers League sect, which carries lack of appreciation of reality to the extreme, has formed committees of a few of its members previously "colonized" in the unions to "form a Labor Party now."

A corollary to the pretention of all these propaganda groups that they are affecting social struggles like mass parties, is their sectarian and factional refusal to recognize that united-front type formations are absolutely necessary to mobilize masses of people and that this cannot be done today by any single socialist organization alone. Thus we are treated to the spectacle of the Workers League calling for a mass general strike to stop the war, the ultralefts calling for mass trashing to stop the war, the CP calling for immediate mass actions to stop the war, PL calling for a mass migration to Detroit in support of the GM strikers and to bring down the imperialist warmakers -- all as a substitute for building the antiwar movement.

All revolutionary parties at different times selectively

colonize people into promising political situations in industry. But the purpose of such colonization cannot be a shortcut in overcoming objective developments and artificially "proletarianizing" the organization by transforming colonized individuals into workers. The key to becoming a mass working-class party, in composition as well as in program, lies not in such individual transformations but in the recruitment of politicized workers to a revolutionary alternative to the parties of the rulers and the programs of their misleaders.

All of our opponents are wrong about the way a socialist party obtains working-class cadres. Workers become politicized by the struggles they engage in, and radicalized by the important social and political issues facing the country and at the center of the radicalization. As this occurs they begin to look for an alternative political organization to support. Our own recruitment experience in the 1930's and 40's confirmed this. We recruited politicized workers.

How many radicalized and politicized workers will be recruited in the future to a revolutionary program and organization or to a reformist or ultraleft dead end depends on one key factor: the prior development of revolutionary cadres capable of participating as revolutionary socialists in the struggles as they arise.