

# DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 12 OF 16

FOLDER 3

MASS PARTY MOVEMENT  
STATEMENTS ON NEED FOR  
NEW PARTY

WHY DO WE NEED A NEW COMMUNIST PARTY?

The overriding and primary issue before honest Marxist-Leninists and all members of the working class is the issue of building a new Communist Party in the USNA to lead the defeat of the bourgeoisie and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. This party must be a Communist Party of a new type, a multi-national anti-revisionist Communist Party.

There is no question of the immediate necessity for a new Communist Party. The "old" Communist Party (CPUSA), the party of revisionism, the party of "peaceful transition" to socialism, has clearly shown time after time that the only leadership it can provide is to lead the working class back to the bourgeoisie.

"The movement" has now had years of "practice" in numerous struggles but we have had only bare hint of revolutionary theory. We have had too many leaflets, and far too little systematic study of revolutionary theory, so that what we have now is a fragmented working class movement, a movement of skilled and experienced proletarian fighters with no Party, no guiding center to keep us out of the turfy marsh of opportunism, revisionism, economism and spontaneity.

"Hence the necessity for a new party, a militant party, a revolutionary party, one bold enough to lead the proletarians in the struggle for power, sufficiently experienced to find its bearings amidst the complex conditions of a revolutionary situation, and sufficiently flexible to steer clear of all submerged rocks in the path to its goal."

J. Stalin, Foundations of Leninism p.102  
WHAT WITH THE NEW PARTY DO?

The communist party of a new type must have certain attributes and must serve certain purposes. It will become the General Staff, the organized detachment and the highest form of organization of the proletariat. What this means is that the party must move the working class from spontaneous struggle and the limitations of trade union reform ~~struggle~~ consciousness to class consciousness and revolutionary struggle. The party must point the road to a socialist revolution. It is the party that must point out the zigs and zags in the movement ahead and arm the proletariat with revolutionary Marxist-Leninist theory and organization. As the General Staff, the party, through its cadre, works with the masses of working people and brings Marxism-Leninism to the working class, and also brings back to the masses the synthesized understanding of the experiences of the masses to aid and guide them in their understanding of how to move. The party does this through ~~its~~ its growing influence upon the advanced ~~and~~ elements in the class and then the middle elements. Further, the party spreads an understanding of class consciousness through its influence on other organizations of the proletariat in which it may take leadership.

The Party must develop over a period of time, and with increasing political practice and understanding of theory to lead the working class in its struggle to throw off the domination of the bourgeoisie and bourgeois ideology. Of course, the party, when it is created will not be fully formed. Cadre must be trained in the science of Marxism-Leninism, and advanced members of the class moved to the study of Marxism-Leninism. As the Party is more fully formed, and as large numbers of advanced workers become class conscious Marxist-Leninists, it can move more fully into the struggle on a mass basis and divert the working class movement from spontaneity and trade union consciousness to class consciousness and revolutionary struggle.

WHAT IS THE BASE OF THE NEW PARTY?

There is no question but that the new Party must be based in and upon the industrial proletariat, the most oppressed and most exploited sector of the working class. There are three reasons for this conclusion: First, it is the industrial proletariat that produces the physical necessities of life--food on the table, a roof over the head, clothing on the body. SECOND: it is this sector that produces the surplus value that is the material foundation of the existence of capitalism. Third: the labor of the industrial proletariat is the most highly organized, most highly disciplined, and most highly collectivized labor of the working class, and it is precisely this organization, this discipline and this collectivization that must make these workers the very foundation of the new party.

History teaches. The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik Short Course) teaches us that in Russia between 1901 and 1900 the number of workers employed in large Russian plants employing 500 ~~workers~~ or more workers increased from 46.7% to 54%, or in other words, over half of the Russian factory workers worked in large plants. ~~1/2~~

"Such a degree of concentration of industry was unprecedented. Even in a country so industrially developed as the United States, only about one third of the total number of workers were employed in large plants at that period."

Bolshevik Short Course, p.147

What is the situation in the United States of North America in the current period? The situation is that since World War II, the concentration of workers in large manufacturing establishments has reached the level of concentration in the USSR in 1910. For the past twenty years, manufacturing establishments that hire over 1,000 workers have been only .7% of all firms, but this less than 1% of all firms employs (as of 1967) 6,062,000 workers, or 32.8% of all workers in manufacturing! Also, in 1967, manufacturing firms that employed more than 250 ~~wr~~ but less than 1,000 workers, were only 3.6% of all firms, but employed a total of 5,042,000 workers or 27.3% of all workers in manufacturing. We see, therefore, that as of 1967 60.1% of all workers in manufacturing worked in ~~the~~ "middle" or large establishments of over 250 employees.

These factories, these workers, are the "pivot" of ~~history~~ capitalism, indeed they are the ~~the~~ pivot of history, and this is where the new Party must, and will, concentrate its strength. It is also necessary to point out that it is precisely these workers in large establishments who were the foundation of the "old" Communist Party (CPUSA) and who were betrayed the worst by the revisionist policies of that party.

#### HOW WILL THE NEW PARTY FUNCTION? HOW WILL IT BE ORGANIZED?

The new Communist Party must be a Leninist party, a party of democratic centralism, a party with one Central Committee, one line, one organ and one set of party rules to which all members are bound. In other words, as Comrade Stalin said:

d"This new party is the party of Leninism."

Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, p. 103

What are some of the features of the new Communist party? Again, we turn to the writings of Comrade Stalin in Foundations of Leninism for guidance. In Chapter 8 of Foundations we find a clear description of the characteristics of the Leninist party.

The main theme, the key point to remember from Stalin's discussion of the Party is that the Party is the leader of the class struggle, that its purpose is to lead and direct the struggle, not tail after it, and that in order to carry out this leadership function, the Party must be organized in a particular and highly disciplined manner.

What does this mean? It means:

- 1) The Party is an advanced detachment of the Working class. Party cadre must be well educated in Marxism and Leninism for they are political leaders in the class and "must see farther than the working class". If the Party and its cadre are lacking in this respect, they can never lead, but will always have to follow, to tail along after the spontaneous movement. Also, the Party is "of the class" which means that the cadre are well grounded, and are "bound to the class by all the fibres of its being."
- 2) The Party is an organized detachment of the working class. This speaks to the extreme and crucial importance of Party Rules and Party Discipline. Stalin describes the Party as "the organizing core" of the class, and also of the Party "spirit of discipline and system... spirit of organization and endurance". This is essential to carry out class warfare and struggle; "formations" and "mass socialist movements" do not have the capacity to do this. In this connection, we must bear in mind the distinction between proletarian discipline and petty bourgeois intellectual discipline described by Lenin in One Step Forward, Two Steps Back. Opportunists do not like, or readily accept, rules and discipline, and we must not forget the problems created; in the Russian party on these questions by their opportunists and vacillators

3) The Party is the highest form of class organization of the Proletariat.

The key point here is the question of the relation of the Party and its cadre to the masses and to the non-party organizations. Party cadre belong to the various non-party organizations such as co-ops, unions, youth groups, church groups, P.T.A.'s, and persuade these organizations to "draw nearer to the Party in their work and voluntarily accept its leadership." Stalin says that these organizations "consolidate the class positions of the proletariat" and "centralize the leadership of the struggle." These organizations will be key in the United Front Against Fascism, and cadre must be influential in them.

4) The Party is an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Party is not an end in and of itself, but is a means, the best and most organized means, of defeating the bourgeoisie and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. And when state power is seized, the Party will continue to function and grow in order to consolidate and expand the dictatorship. Millions must be imbued with the spirit of discipline and organization; the Party must be able to carry on struggle against the forces, habits and traditions of bourgeois society even after seizure of state power.

5) The Party embodies unity of will, unity which is absolutely incompatible with the existence of factions. NO FACTIONS!

This means that the Party must be strong because of its iron discipline, but there cannot be iron discipline, unity of will, unity of action, without "conscious and voluntary submission" to the centralizing line of the Party. This in turn means there must be democracy within the Party, and this brings us ~~to the subject of~~ Democratic Centralism.

Democracy and centralism have a dialectical relationship of struggle. One grows at the expense of the other. Leadership must have a firm grip on the subject of democratic centralism. Democracy is defined as "the guarantee that every comrade is able to, and urged to, make the maximum contribution unhampered by lack of faith in leaders or fellow members." Also, "centralism rests on and guides democracy. Democracy serves and ~~strictly~~ strengthens centralism."

Note well that "Democracy serves centralism". The political line is binding on all, and all inner party struggle is around the line and is based on objective criticism and self criticism. Centralism and democracy are a reflection of unity and struggle within the Party, but democracy is conditioned by, and supports unity, while "centralism is the expression of unity and is the overwhelming demand of the revolution"

In a democratic centralist organization, the experience of the masses, the evaluation of the practical application of the line, goes up, and the adjusted line comes down to the organization. The starting point is the line. The skill of the struggle is to rally around the line, isolate the incorrect projections and unite on the basis of the struggle. Force is prohibited; persuasion is the only allowable weapon.

The Party is centralized around the line, but practical application of the line is decentralized. Thus, "the Leninist demand for organizational decentralization is precisely to allow the necessary authority to apply a centralized line."

Democratic centralism guarantees full discussion of every political effort, and also maintains the unity of the Party, unity based on full understanding and acceptance of the Line. Iron discipline rests on this unity.

6) The Party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements

Because capitalism constantly and increasingly proletarianizes the various other strata of society, the proletariat is not an isolated class. Petty bourg. and intellectual elements will constantly enter, or attempt to enter the party. They will bring with them the poison of opportunism and vacillation, and will seriously, perhaps fatally, hinder the struggle of the proletariat. Therefore, "ruthless struggle" must be waged against these tendencies in our party and they must be purged when discovered.

It is dangerous to have the view that these elements can be defeated within the Party. They will impede our motion toward unity and implacable class conflict. The best thing is to KEEP THEM OUT!

## We Need a Communist Party

We need a Communist Party  
And we don't mean the C. P. U. S. A.  
Without a true, blue, new type of Communist Party  
The proletarian revolution won't go the workers way.  
We've got to support the liberation struggles  
And we've got to fight to free the colonies.  
Because we know from the national question  
That we can't see no freedom til -  
All oppressed people are free!  
We're gonna enter the struggle comrades  
Without no hesitation  
Because history's called us comrades  
Into this righteous situation!  
And cause we looked at the world, comrades  
In all its various relations!  
Don't you know we see our history  
And say the slogan, "Free the Negro Nation"  
Liberation, working class power  
And we'll fight for the power  
Every hour of the day  
And we'll hold onto the Communist science  
And you bet we will destroy the C. P. U. S. A.

(Repeat first 4 lines)

MAKE EVERY FACTORY OUR FORTRESS!

ARM THE CLASS WITH ITS GREATEST WEAPON  
THE IDEOLOGY OF MARXISM-LENINISM!

BUILD A MULTI-NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY!

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

~~STATE OF EXPLANATION~~

This is a moment of total crisis in the American people's movements. One has to have lost all sense of reality not to recognize that this is one of the gravest moments in our history. It is a moment fraught with utmost danger for the people of the entire world. Yet at the same time, there never has been such confusion, and frustration within the American left. What is becoming frighteningly clear is that no one has any satisfactory answers to the most burning questions of the moment -- no one has any adequate long-range answers to the most compelling question of all: what do we do about it?, where do we go from here?, how do we move forward?

What is desperately needed is a conception of a bold new strategy, one designed both to frustrate the plans of the rulers to undermine and destroy the most elementary liberties of the people at the same time as it moves in the direction of the only real solution of the enormous immediate problems of the people -- the taking of power by the people -- the taking of control of every economic, social and political institution now controlled by the ruling class, and the vesting of that control in the people who live and work in these institutions.

Without such a strategy the movement is rudderless. It becomes splintered, aimless, demoralized. It exists only from frustrating emergency project on a national level to frustrating project on a local level. In its frustration and desperation it becomes prey to calculated efforts on the one hand to utilize the growing dissatisfaction of millions of people with the present system to revitalize the capitalist controlled Democratic Party. On the other hand, in the absence of a unifying and realistic strategy, some movement activists are drawn to romantic and adventurist theories of individual deeds of "derring do" which at this moment in our history may lead to disaster and a shattering of any real possibility of organizing the successful struggle of millions. Caught in the vacuum between these two poles are tens of thousands of honest, dedicated, independent militants who, in desperation, either accept (often against their own instincts) the leadership of one or the other of these polarized tendencies; or, in frustration and despair, leave the arena of social struggle for unhappy and unsuccessful searches for personal havens from the storms of the world.

The formulation of a bold strategy, charting a long-range and permanent path of struggle would galvanize and reactivate those thousands without whose commitment and energy the effective and permanent organization of potential millions will be impossible.

Equally crucial, only the emergence of such a strategy, which gives long-range meaning and content to the most difficult of immediate tasks, can bring the enthusiasm and dedication which the pressing emergencies require.

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THE MOMENT DEMANDS A BOLD  
NEW STRATEGY ON THE LEFT

The times cry out for a bold departure on the left. All of the great successes and bitter frustrations of the last decade, point in the direction of a strategy which would have at its core the building of a permanent mass-based party of the people. This party would be based upon the fundamental program of taking state power as well as power in every institution and area of American life and placing it into the hands of the people. Just as organization for industrial unionism was the fundamental strategy of the thirties, so organization for people's power must be the fundamental strategy of the seventies.

The perspective of building a party of the people, not as a vague dream of some distant future but now, is the key to the survival, the growth and the victory of the American left. It is the central strategy of the period. It is the key to both (1) the successful organization of defense of elementary liberties against the abandonment and destruction of these forms by the dominant section of the ruling class moving toward open terrorist dictatorship; and to (2) the organization of a far-reaching and simultaneous struggle for the only objective which can resolve the most pressing, immediate problems of the people which the rulers are increasingly unable to solve; the taking of power away from the rulers in every level of life; political, economic, social and cultural. And at this historic moment it is the only strategic perspective which can avoid the dangerous and desperate trap of rebuilding illusionary reliance upon the alternative party of the ruling class.

1. The strategy of building a party of the people is the key to the organization of the defense of elementary liberties now under ever-increasing attack and to effective resistance to experimentation with fascism. Only a party of millions of oppressed peoples who have no objective stake in the capitalist system can lead a successful struggle for the defense of elementary democratic rights in this era of dying imperialism. The so-called liberal wing of the ruling class (while occasionally upset at the experimentation with forms of mass repression by the reactionary dominant wing of capital) is too threatened itself by developing internal crises which shake the very foundations of capitalist rule. When faced with the alternatives of preserving democratic forms or suppressing an upsurge of the people which threatens the foundations of capitalism they have time and again weakened and acceded to measures which lead to open terrorist rule.

Only a powerful, independent, permanent force which has no class interest in the abandonment of elementary liberties can be strong enough to take advantage of every split, division, and

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momentary fissure in the ruling institutions to forge alliances powerful enough to repel particular assaults on elementary forms of popular liberties. Only such an independent and permanent force can, in the course of the organization and unfolding of such struggles, instill at their very center the understanding that only the people can be relied upon to defend their own liberties. Such an organization can implant in every struggle for the defense of the people's rights the seeds of the basic perception that the only real defense of traditional liberties in this era of dying capitalism lies in the people's taking power.

~~The~~ The building of a party of the people is also the key to the organization of the fundamental struggle of the moment and the era -- the taking of power. The essence of the program of a party of the people -- the return of control of all the institutions of the country to the people -- stems from the overriding fact that the rulers of this country and the system of social organization which sustains them, capitalism, are unable to solve any of the immediate and fundamental problems of the people. The rulers and the system through which they have governed are bankrupt -- and every day the symptoms of bankruptcy become sharper.

That the rulers have defaulted and are bankrupt; that the sovereign people must take back into their own hands the power over their own lives -- that they must take the solution of all their problems into their own hands -- is the essence of the analysis of conditions and forces in the United States which requires the formation of such a people's party. It is in this sense, therefore, that the building of such a party is the key to the development of the strategy required for the survival, growth and victory of the left.





A mass party of the people could emerge as the champion of the finest traditions of the nation -- and the enemy of the worst. That it would organize, participate in, and lead struggles in every area where the people are oppressed and suffering can and should have a galvanic effect upon their willingness to organize and fight.

Out of these daily struggles in every community, every town, every state, and among every section of the people will emerge the confidence that the people are the best defenders of their own liberties, the best solvers of their own problems, and the best rulers of their own lives. Out of the daily building, rebuilding and growth of this permanent form of organization will emerge the understanding which was first expressed by early, militant organizers of American working people -- the courageous men and women of the IWW -- that the only fundamental weapon which the oppressed peoples have is the power of organization.

Fighters for the emancipation of humanity from the bondage of the capitalist system of economy, in which the satisfaction of human needs is subordinated to the production of commodities for profit, have from the earliest days recognized the central and decisive role of the working people of a nation in overthrowing the shackles of a system of profit and exploitation. This leading responsibility for the creation of a new society liberated from the destructive drives of production for profit has been assigned to the working people by the foremost thinkers of the social movement over the years, not out of any romantic idealization of the working class, but because of a profound perception which underlies the political theories of most radicals from the mid-nineteenth century to today. This is the understanding that the very heart of the problems of capitalist society, the source of its oppression, its decay, and its ultimate downfall, is the contradiction set up by the private ownership of socialized means of production. This insight leads to the recognition that the final resolution of this contradiction, the social ownership of the means of production, can be achieved only when the men and women who operate but do not own the means of production, take the control of these forces into their own hands. Out of this understanding has arisen a recognition of the decisive and primary role of the working class in every successful revolutionary movement of this era.

This recognition which has characterized the theory and shaped the strategy of as diverse movements as the Soviet, the Chinese, the Vietnamese and the Cuban struggles, must remain central in the thinking of all who would attempt to chart a strategy to take power in this last and most powerful stronghold of world capitalism. But it is essential that we not be paralyzed

by sterile and dogmatic formulations lifted out of context from the experiences of past years which would lead to futile debates as to whether the working class is the "only" revolutionary force, or necessarily the "leading" revolutionary force at every level of the struggles to come. What must be understood is that the general crisis of capitalist society, the bankruptcy of the system which has so infected ~~the~~ poisoned every aspect of society, has created a situation in which many groups of oppressed people, now have, together with the workers, an objective and real stake in the taking of power and in liberation from the oppression of the capitalist system. This means that an academic discussion as to which sector of society is most advanced, as to which group of the oppressed peoples is the "leading" group, is not particularly helpful at best, and can be enervating and divisive at worst.

What is essential to grasp is that the taking of political and economic power away from the most powerful capitalist class history has ever known, lies in an alliance of all of the oppressed classes, nations, groups of people. In this alliance, from time to time, pressed by the particularities of the given moment, and the special manifestations of the general crisis, one or another of the oppressed groupings will assume leadership and surge to the forefront of the struggle. This in turn will stimulate other groups to respond, as the upsurge of the embattled students in Paris in 1968 sparked the historic actions of the French workers, much to the surprise and even shock of their formal leadership.

It is impossible to chart out which section of the oppressed peoples will surge forward at which moment. At one historic instant it will be the Black people rising in the urban ghettos of the North and the rural ghettos of the South. At another instant it will be the fury of the students spilling out beyond the confines of the schools and the universities. And at another instant it will be the workers in the factories and plants lashing out against the growing economic tensions and the insanity of factory life.

The road to victory, to people's power, to the final elimination of the source of all the oppressive problems which haunt the nation, lies in the ability of all the oppressed sections of society to learn to respond at the historic moment, to the initiative one of the groups has taken and to launch a general offensive against the rulers at the instant ~~they~~ are reeling from the shock of the impact of the particular crisis. This is why the political instrumentality through which the taking of power will be achieved must be a party of all the oppressed peoples, all the oppressed groups, and not a party of any one group or any one section of the oppressed peoples. Within such a party,

through its daily experiences, this central lesson, this one great liberating truth, can be learned -- that only through the combined strength and will of all the oppressed peoples and groups can power be taken from the American ruling class.

This party of the people must have as its central objective and the very reason for its existence, the taking of political power away from the American ruling class. This is why the party of the people must inscribe on its banners the concept first raised by the Black militants of the Panther Party -- that it is a party which proclaims as its goal the cry which so electrified hundreds of thousands when it was first raised four years ago by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton -- power to the people.

The organization of a political party which proclaims loudly and clearly that this is its objective is the central strategy for all on the American left who would achieve the final abolition of the system of capitalist oppression and its replacement by a society in which the greatest dreams of humanity are realized -- a society in which exploitation and production for profit are banished and the needs of all human beings are the guideposts of production. Within a party which has set these goals of taking power there must be and will be the widest discussion as to the form and structure of the new society to be built when power is taken from the rulers.\* There may be, and probably will be, enormous differences among the oppressed peoples who will share in the building and the leadership of the party as to the form and content of the new society. Some will call the new society they seek socialism, some communism, and some will see a new association of nations freed of imperialist and capitalist domination; some will not find the label they desire anywhere in the present lexicon of the left, here or abroad. But what all will share and all will agree upon is that the present system is bankrupt; that its rulers are bankrupt; that the people must take

\* ~~As will be discussed later~~ There are profound lessons to be learned from the long and hard and sometimes bitter experience of those peoples who have struggled for years against enormous odds and the constant opposition of the American ruling class, to build a better society free from exploitation. ~~But as will also be discussed later,~~ there are no pat models in existence for the new society which can be built here after the most powerful center of the world capitalist system is taken over by the people of this country.

control over all the institutions of American life. And in the course of the common struggle to take power the shape of the future will begin to emerge, and the party of the people which from the beginning sets the taking of power as its goal will, at its own tempo, and consonant with its own experiences, place further goals on its agenda.

The building of such a mass party ties together the deeply-felt need for permanence in struggle in the American left and the idea which is central to the strategy of the period -- that both the defense of elementary liberties and the solution of the most immediate and overwhelming problems of the people demand the ousting of the rulers and the taking of power. From the merger of these ideas flows the driving organizational necessity for the creation of a powerful mass-based political instrumentality. The building of such a party of the people has every potentiality of rallying divided, discouraged and, sometimes, demoralized activists.

Unless such a bold and permanent strategy is projected now, the hard and often frustrating daily necessity of responding to emergencies will lead inevitably to debilitation and demoralization of activist forces, and even to surrender. And unless such a strategy is projected now, and the first preparatory steps taken, we may expect the fostering of the most dangerous illusions in the "other" party of capitalism, and an abandonment of the struggles of the people. ]

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Theories for the left which have at their core a reliance upon the "liberal" wing of the ruling class and a revitalization of the Democratic Party machinery as a "lesser evil" to the Republicans, can only serve to delay and paralyze the emergence of a sound strategy. Any strategy for the people's movement which calls for the defeat of ~~the Republicans and~~ reaction must have at its heart the building, on a permanent basis, regardless of the outcome of any election, of an independent mass-based anti-capitalist party of the people, strong enough to take advantage of every split and division within the ruling class. This is not a strategy just for the moment -- not a strategy to meet the transitory needs of any election year. This is a strategy for the entire period of struggle which lies ahead. This is a strategy for the taking of power. ]

Rarely, if ever before, in modern history has such responsibility rested upon the shoulders of the left in any one country. The unique responsibility of the American left today to think through a strategy of struggle which has the potentiality of victory in this country, flows partly from the unique role of the American ruling class today as the last and most powerful base of world reaction, and partly from qualitative change in world relationships in this era caused by revolutionary change in military technology. This, in turn, has brought about a qualitative change in the dimensions of responsibility of the American left to the peoples of the entire world.

The ultimate defeat, on a global scale, of the designs of the most reactionary section of world finance -- capital to enslave the world no longer can be assured through a military solution on a world scale, as was German fascism in the 1940s. German fascism was ultimately destroyed in a military struggle on a world scale, culminating in the armed occupation of its home territory by military forces of the allied socialist and capitalist armies. It will be difficult, indeed, to draw up the balance sheet of history to evaluate that particular solution. Thoughtful and provocative questions about the military response to German fascism in World War II have been raised by A. J. Muste and recently by Noam Chomsky.

What must be sharply understood today is that, regardless of the assessment of the past, no such ultimate solution is available today to the peoples of the world. Global warfare in an era of atomic military technology is global suicide. It is nowhere written in stone that the planet itself would survive such a catastrophe. Although with courage and blood, peoples throughout the world, particularly in Southeast Asia, are defeating the American military machine, the bitter truth which the American left must come to grips with is that the final defeat of American reaction can only come through the internal power, will and strength of the American people. It cannot come through any outside, intervening force nor if the world itself is to survive, can it come through any global military struggle in which (in desperation) one or another of the great powers might unleash the ultimate nuclear weapons.

The American left dare not afford the romantic luxury of fantasizing itself into the image of those brave resistance fighters behind enemy lines in World War II, who contributed enormously to the ultimate military victory of the allied armies. Unlike German fascism, the final defeat of American reaction will not and cannot come from outside. No victorious armies, red or otherwise, will finally battle through to the heartland liberating those courageous bands of resistance fighters who remain alive to welcome their liberators. American reaction must be ultimately eliminated by the only force which is in a position to accomplish this historically essential task -- the American people themselves. And until this is accomplished American reaction will continue, in one form or another, to have a devastating effect upon the peoples of the entire world. When viewed in this light, the responsibility for developing a creative strategy which has the potential of winning millions within this country to the realization that the solution to their own immediate problems lies only in the taking of

power into their own hands is awesome and inescapable. The development of such a strategy, sweeping enough in its conception to meet the imperatives of the period, is a responsibility which is as deep, if not deeper, than any responsibility faced and assumed by the left of any country in the world in recent history. It is often the absence of a strategy, potential with success, which leads to personal demoralization of honest activists.

Recently in the left there has arisen what might be termed a "strategy" in default of a strategy. This is the notion that no national strategy is really necessary for the left as a whole and might even be a detriment. In more sophisticated terms, this emerges as almost a deification of "local community" organizing without the "smothering influence" of top level "coordination."

This fear of any unified strategic direction for the left reflects itself in hundreds of ways including, at some moments, an almost pathological fear of organization itself. It has its roots in the revolt of the new left in the early sixties and uses much of the vocabulary of "participatory democracy," "parallel institutions," and so forth. It is a characteristic and, on occasions, dominant approach of large number of activists. Growing out of a healthy and positive reaction against the worst features of the functioning of the old left in the '30s and the '40s and the years of the cold war, it reflects a sound fear of organizational control from on top which crushes and destroys local initiative and creative thinking. Like almost every approach and concept discussed so far, this fear of "national control" also contains an element of soundness if integrated into the totality of an overall strategy. But also, like every other approach and concept discussed, if it stands alone and dominates the thinking of the left, it turns into its opposite. It becomes an approach which results in prolonging indefinitely the power of the present rulers, through frustrating the emergence of a powerful winning strategy.

This is because, without joint planning, joint pooling of resources, joint defense and counter-attack, the taking of power into the hands of the people becomes a romantic dream. The American rulers are too powerful and the stakes too high on a global plane for anyone to expect that the smashing of their rule could possibly be accomplished without the total coordination of every ounce of strength in every conceivable section of the oppressed peoples of the country.

A unified national strategy and the building of organizational forms which can implement, develop, evaluate, or change that strategy is particularly essential at a moment in history when the sharpest splits are developing among the rulers themselves.

These are reflected in momentary crises which rock the foundations of every institution of ruling class control. The whirlwind around the Pentagon Papers was such a moment, as were the ITT scandals and now the Watergate crisis. These splits and crises themselves reflect the heavy intensification of the fundamental contradictions of American society. These splits and the internal crises they engender offer extraordinary opportunities for the left to assume the leadership of millions who, for that particular moment, are rocked, shaken, and ready for action. But this requires a unified long-range strategy, with organizational forms to implement it. Whether the unified strength of the people can be hurled against the particular crevice in the enemy's position at precisely the moment of crisis can make the difference between a vast leap forward in the strategic direction of taking power, or it can mean another lost opportunity to strengthen the leadership of the left among millions. Often it means abandoning the millions to the demogogy of the "liberal-led" wing of the rulers' political structure, the Democratic Party, or their "extreme right-wing" spokesmen. The possibility of a people's victory in this country lies in the inevitable development, one after the other, of crisis after crisis, from the local to the very highest levels of institutional control. These crises emerge primarily from the intensification of the internal contradictions which have beset this society from its very origin.

This requires a unified long-range strategy and the political forms for implementing the strategy on every level of life; local, regional, and national. Otherwise it will be impossible to react properly to each internal crisis as it develops to throw the full weight and unified power of the people against openings often suddenly and dramatically revealed; to take instant advantage of the sudden deep splits and fissures exposed, in order to weaken and undermine the power of the rulers and strengthen the forces of the people in preparation for the next assault. We are moving into periods of crises on the political-governmental level, as well as on the economic level; and we must be prepared (in Bobby Seale's words) to "seize the time."

The lessons of the recent governmental crises are crystal clear. Every important section of the political apparatus of the ruling class has forfeited the moral right to govern; and millions of people instinctively sense this, under the sharpness of the revelations of the moment. But only a left guided by a long-range strategy which has at its heart the taking of power from the rulers, and armed with permanent political organizational forms on every level of life could "seize the time" and take the leadership of the millions momentarily stirred by the crisis.

We have said that the deep instinctive fears of "national organization" are well founded. In developing such an essential

national strategy and forms of political organization suited to implement it, the left must learn from the bitter mistakes of the past, both in this country and throughout the world, and struggle against the rigidity, bureaucracy, narrowness, cruelty, elitism, and suffocation of individual and collective initiative which sprang, sometimes from the mechanical introduction of theories of political "vanguard" organization developed to meet the particular needs of Czarist Russia of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and sometimes from the elitism of the New Left itself. But to permit the errors of the past, no matter how devastating, to become a justification for the rejection of any concept of a national strategy for the taking of power, and for the building of political organizational forms of permanence to implement and develop such a strategy, would be to surrender to the enemy.

The battle must be two-fold: to develop a bold and sweeping strategy for the left which has the taking of power at its center; and, in the course of developing such a strategy and the political organizational forms necessary to implement it, to conduct a constant daily struggle against a style of elitism in political life.) Some of the questions involved in opening up such a struggle are discussed later in this paper in Point V.)

It will be very necessary, at some point, to emancipate the American left from the fears of any permanent national organization or of any national plan of strategic direction by probing into the results of transplanting automatically to this country in the twenties, and the years which followed, an organizational theory developed to meet "the concrete conditions prevailing" in Czarist autocratic Russia. Certainly much of the bureaucracy, commandism and arrogance which characterized an older style of work which so repelled the young activists who came into political struggles in the early sixties is traceable to a mechanical and artificial utilization in this country of a form of political organizational life born out of a wholly different time and place.

A mechanical return to old formulas and old styles of work will not fill the existing vacuum in strategic thinking and permanent structure; but will merely intensify the splits and fragmentation, and feed the widespread and paralyzing fear that national structure and strategy inevitably require the commandism, elitism and dogmatism of the centralized structures of the present and the past. ~~As Staughton Lynd concludes in his Liberation article, the times urgently call for starting "fresh" rather than for return to old formulas and old forms.~~

Why a mass party of the people built around the central



concept of taking over of power in every area of life rather than a new national mass organization of the left, as friends in the New American Movement seem to suggest?

What is important to stress at this point is the concept that the strategy proposed here centers upon the building of a mass political party of the people, not a general organization of the left which might be a "transitional" form to something else but which is not, in itself, a political instrumentality for the struggle to take power.

Political parties traditionally, in this country and throughout the world, have been the form through which contending classes or alliances of classes have sought to take and hold political power. It is a form which remains deeply engraved in the thinking of millions of Americans as embodying the concept of bidding for political power. It is a form which legitimizes subjectively in the minds of millions the struggle for political power. It permits the introduction of the concept of permanence in organization on the left. It boldly throws into the consciousness of all who come in contact with it the radical and startling idea that political parties which take power do not have to be controlled, as in the past, by the wealthy rulers of society, but can belong to the people. And by being in form a political party, not merely another organization, the mass party of the people says -- by its every moment of existence, and no matter what the issue or the nature of a given struggle in which the party is involved -- that the essence of that immediate struggle is its relationship to the real purpose of the party, the taking over of political power.

There are, in addition, a hundred practical reasons why the form of a political party is decisive, not the least of which is the ability, inherent in the form, to continue a long and potentially successful struggle to maintain its legality for as long as possible against the inevitable efforts to illegalize and isolate it. But most important of all: the bold and open organization of a political party, based squarely on the program of people's control over the institutions of the country, says to millions of people (in a way which thousands of articles, books, lectures and speeches cannot) that the taking of political control over the destiny of the country is a serious and realistic objective, that it is on the agenda of history, and that we are organizing now the political instrumentality to reach this goal.

~~SECRET~~

A party which has as its central strategic objective the taking of power must be prepared to spell out loudly and clearly the fundamentals of the road to power which it sees ahead. As Staughton Lynd points out in his article in Liberation, this is a question which, in the American left, "few people dare to talk about." Staughton calls this, "An aspect of the radical failure of nerve in this country since World War II."

What is overwhelmingly clear at the present moment is that no responsible grouping on the left today can avoid this question any longer. The perspectives of the road to power can no longer be relegated to a few hortatory phrases at the end of an hour-long analysis of the "present situation." It must become the very heart and center of strategy -- the principal concern and discussion of all on the left. A clear vision of the perspectives of the road to power is, after all, the only guarantee of the emergence of that sense of permanence which all agree is so missing from the activities and struggles of a movement tied to the syndrome of crisis to crisis, rally to rally, and event to event. It is this vision, this perspective of the road to power which gives courage, gives stability, and strengthens the morale of people in dark and difficult days and encourages boldness and daring at those moments when an enormous leap forward is possible. The unfolding of such a strategy, the beginning of the bold expression of the perspectives of a road to power in this country, requires that a party of the people carefully deals with a number of threshold considerations.

A mass party of the people, which has at the heart of its program the taking of power and the return of the control of the institutions of the country into the hands of the people, must have at its very core and embedded in its structure, program, and leadership the understanding of the unique capitalist quality of the struggle for Black freedom in this country. This understanding does not flow primarily from deep-felt moral indignation at the unspeakable treatment of Black people from the first days of slavery until the present -- important as the quality of this feeling is to any movement for radical social change in this country. It flows from a perception of the unique character of the origins of American capitalism, a perception which both explains the past and points the way to the future.

As Marx pointed out, all capitalist societies have needed as a condition for their early development what he called "the primitive accumulation of capital." This was a relatively swift, open plundering of wealth to prime the pump, to launch the building of the factory system. In the European countries the slave trade was a primary source of the primitive accumulation of capital, and upon this to no small extent the British, French, Dutch capitalist systems were built. Black people were stolen from Africa and sold to plantation owners in the colonies of the New World, and this was an economic foundation, upon which the major European capitalist systems were erected. Thus Marx speaks in Capital of European capitalism emerging out of the "bloody womb" of African slavery.

This form of primitive accumulation generated a pattern of antagonistic yet dependent relationships between the 'mother' countries on the one hand and the colonies existing outside them, on the other. But the unique aspect of the origin of American capitalism which has so profoundly shaped its past and which, if correctly understood by a mass party of the people, can provide a key to the transformation of the system in the future, is that primitive accumulation of capital in this country, resulted in the establishment of a colony inside the 'mother' capitalist country itself, not outside as was otherwise universally the case. This was, in a sense, inevitable. American capitalism itself developed out of a colonial relationship with the European capitalist system. The new capitalists of New England and the middle Atlantic states

were not powerful enough to seize and utilize colonial areas outside the homeland; they turned instead to the slave system right at hand, within the 'mother' country itself. To grasp the wealth needed to launch the factory system, American capitalism stimulated, encouraged, and protected the internal expansion of the slave system and the slave trade. Thus, unlike the Europeans, the American capitalists built into the very heart of their system, as a basic internal contradiction, the fundamental conflict between 'mother' country and colony which in all other countries emerged as an external contradiction.

This unique aspect of the origin of American capitalism has shaped the entire course of American history. In a very real sense an understanding of the significance of the origins of American capitalism in the enslavement of the Blacks can result, not only in the freedom of the Black people from the remaining chains of that enslavement; but, in the final freedom of the peoples of the entire world. This is because just as a comprehension of the origin of American capitalism lies in understanding the sharp conflicts of mother country and colony built into the heart of the American capitalist system; so its demise lies in an understanding of the dynamics of the time bomb implanted into the innards of the system at its very origin, the fuse of which was lit when the first Black slave was brought to this continent.

It has been suggested that, in the present period of the last stages of imperialism, the external contradictions between mother imperialist countries and the former colonial countries has become a dominant, if not the dominant, contradiction in the world struggle against capitalism. In this respect the embedding of such a contradiction within the heart of the most powerful and dominant capitalist system in the world has extraordinary significance. And when the power and force which that struggle unleashes becomes intermeshed, as it has begun to do, with the power of the labor-capital contradiction -- as the Black people, both in the North and the South, enter the working class -- the centrality and catalyst quality of the resolution of the questions of Black liberation in this country become overwhelmingly clear.

The "search for the special features in the history" of the country, which all radicals have been taught is the central task of the left in fashioning a winning strategy in a given country, in this country leads inevitably to the necessity of a thoughtful examination in great depth into the precise way in which every one of the contradictions and internal conflicts in American capitalist society have been influenced and shaped by the operation of this fundamental and unique characteristic. Every critical turning point in the history of the country has been shaped by this unique characteristic of American capitalism. This will be as true of the future as it has been of the past. From the very beginning of the embedding of the slave system into the center of the American capitalist economy, this unique internal contradiction has been the cause of a fundamental instability which has, from time to time, shaken capitalist rule to its roots.

When Wendell Phillips, the Abolitionist leader, wrote, prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, that the liberation of Black people from the rule of the Lords of the Lash would lay the basis for the liberation of white people from the rule of the Lords of the Loom, he reflected a beginning insight into this fundamental social dynamic which was to emerge clearly for the first time in the Civil War and the years of radical reconstruction. This was the dynamic which Lenin, many years later, was to characterize as sounding the knell of world capitalism. This dynamic which is in so many ways the key to the understanding of the American past, if grasped and understood, may well be the key to its future.

The betrayal of 1877 retained in the very heart of American capitalism the unique legacy arising out of its origins: a system of slavery, an internal colonial rule that affects every aspect of life; not only throughout the South -- but, also, in the supposedly "free" North and West. The implications of the "great betrayal" of 1876-77 were terrible indeed; but we must understand that for its victory the rulers paid a price which is the key to their overthrow, their "Achilles' heel." The bourgeois-democratic revolution was renounced; it was left incomplete. If the popular forces enter the struggle to complete this revolution, they will grasp the secret that can lead to victory and power in this country; and, in so doing, they will sound "the knell of world capitalism."

The initiative and leadership in this struggle rests, as it must, with the Black people's movement in particular. The

linkage of a colonial movement in the very guts of the capitalist stronghold, together with the momentum unleashed by the exploitation of working people by capital, provides the very essence of the special and peculiar features of the history of this country. It provides the key to a winning strategy.

There is a tendency in the radical left today to cavalierly brush off the lessons of the monumental struggles of the Black people of the South in the early '60s as a "liberal" phase. Nothing could be more destructive to the emergence of a long-range strategy than a failure to understand the fundamental revolutionary significance of the struggle to complete the incompleting democratic revolution within the heart of the most powerful capitalist nation in the world.

A party of the people, which has as its objective the taking of power in every institution of life must, at the very heart of its program, pick up and carry forward the banners of the struggle to complete the democratic and freedom revolution which burst loose 100 years after its first betrayal -- in the historic upheavals of the Black peoples of the South in the late '50s and early '60s. As long as this revolution remains incomplete, as long as the fires of an oppressed colonial people smolder inside the very heart of the mother-capitalist country itself, the struggle to fulfill the promises of democracy and freedom, long-abandoned by the rulers, will flare up again and again; led in this era by the oppressed colonial people themselves, by the Black people -- both in the heartland of the colonial oppression, the South; and in the colonial-areas transplanted North, the urban ghettos of the nation.

Such a party, which understands the extraordinary dynamic of a struggle to complete the democratic and colonial revolution in the very heart of the capitalist country itself, will place support and assistance to this struggle in whatever form it erupts, North or South, at the very forefront of its strategy. This understanding flows not out of "liberal," "humanitarian," or "guilt" feelings; but out of the objective understanding that this struggle can play a unique and galvanizing role in shaking the very foundations of capitalist rule, and in preparing the moment for the taking over of power by a coalition of the forces of the people, strong enough to take and hold power.

It follows, then, that certain special and critical questions of organizational forms and relationships flow from the recognition of the unique role of the struggle for Black freedom and liberation in this country. Precisely because the capitalist class abandoned the aims and goals of the democratic revolution in order to recreate and strengthen its original form of rule, the task of completing that revolution has been primarily assumed (in this historical period)

by the oppressed colonial peoples themselves, by the Black people South and North. It is an historical inevitability, therefore, that the political leadership in the enormous task of undertaking such a struggle has been, and will continue to be, exercised by the Black people themselves; expressed at different times and different moments by different organizations, individuals, and groupings. A party of the people -- will, therefore, have to develop (from its very inception) organizational forms and methods of work which reflect this dual necessity: on the one hand, the acceptance of political leadership from the most advanced organizations of the Black people, in the unfolding of the strategy and tactics of all the varied struggles designed to carry through and complete the democratic and freedom revolution of the Black people; and, at the same time -- the acceptance of the responsibility to participate fully and completely on every level in the working out of the strategy and tactics of these struggles; insofar as they involve the activization, the education, and the organization of every other section of the people, for support to, participation in, and assistance to these struggles as they emerge.

This dual relationship, flowing from the nature of the internal colonial oppression itself, would express itself organizationally, probably, in two separate but interrelated ways. On the one hand, a mass party of the people should develop the closest alliances and forms of alliance through which on a daily level in every community and state, and on a national level working relationships can develop with Black political organizations committed to the struggle for the freedom of the Black people, and for the transfer of power to the people. On the other hand -- since the catalyst problems of Black liberation are both separate and distinct, growing out of the special characteristics of internal colonial oppression within a capitalist "mother" country; and simultaneously intertwined and interrelated to the overall problems of American capitalist society -- full equality and participation on every level of activity and decision-making is essential between Black and white people within the new mass party of the people.

This dualism in organizational and political approach seems to be contradictory placing emphasis upon working alliances on every level with predominantly or exclusively Black political organizations, together with the simultaneous building of a mass people's party in which, also on every level, Black people participate fully. But this reflects the reality of the interrelation between the unique nature of the struggle for Black freedom, the struggle to complete the incompleting democratic and colonial revolution, the unfolding of a national liberation struggle within the heart of an advanced capitalist country and the unique impact of these struggles upon all the other problems involved in the

unfolding of an overall strategy directed at the monumental task of the taking of power in the last stronghold of world capitalism.

The American left has been plagued during the last decade with the seeming insolubility of developing political struggles which reflect the complexity of this reality. Every "solution" which has emerged, either in the traumatic "purging" of white participants from the SNCC organizational forms in 1966 or in the development of essentially all-white anti-war and student radical movements in the late '60s, has reflected an oversimplified "Blacks organize Blacks" and "white organize whites" approach which, in seeking to escape from the complexity of reality, avoids the necessity for finding organizational expression for the interrelationship between the power and strength of the development of separate forms of struggle and organization within the erupting Black political movements, simultaneous with the development of unified forms of struggle and organization for the overall tasks of the struggle to wrest power from the present rulers of the country.

Only a mass party of the people -- whose program has at its center and core the understanding of the scientific basis for the proposition that the struggle for the freedom and liberation of the Blacks, as an internally oppressed colonial people in the heart of American capitalism, is the "Achilles' heel" of American capitalism -- can develop this difficult, but potentially powerful and essential duality of organizational approach. To sum up: This duality consists of, in the encouragement and acceptance of the emergence of separate political forms of organization among the Black people, the development of forms of alliance and cooperation on every level with these Black political organizations through which their leadership and guidance can be sought and developed, together with the simultaneous building of a party in which -- on every level -- Black and white people together participate, in the shaping of policies and the carrying out of activities directed towards the unfolding of the overall strategy of the struggle for power.)

The program of a mass party of the people must contain approaches and proposals designed to meet the pressing needs of all sections of the people. It must come forward as the champion of the solution of the most immediate and most fundamental of the problems which oppress every separate and distinct group oriented an.

Essential to the survival and success of such a mass party of the people is that these programmatic proposals, designed to meet the central problems of each of these sections of the people, not be superimposed from outside -- but, rather, must be derived from them. Such programs cannot be spelled out by the thinking, no matter how creative, of removed outsiders. A mass party of the people, able to meet the felt needs of the moment, dare not function in a bureaucratic, dictatorial, nor manipulative manner; in the sense of attempting to provide ready-made programmatic answers to the problems of the different sections of the people.

A mass party of the people must learn from the people; it must derive its program, both strategic and tactical, from those who are most directly affected by the particular problem. This requires a very deep confidence in the people, a confidence which flows from an understanding of that profound truth which the leaders of the Chinese revolution have so often brought to the forefront of the consciousness of the revolutionary movements throughout the world: that the people make history -- not a party, and not individual leaders, no matter how brilliant and creative they may be.



In order to be able to learn from the people, to derive its programmatic positions from the experiences and thinking of those most profoundly affected by a given manifestation of the oppression of the system, a mass party of the people must develop, from the moment of its organization, the ties with each particular organization of the distinctive sections of the people's movements which have begun to create, through life experiences, programs to meet the particular and most pressing problems of the section of the people they represent. Thus, out of the closest working relationships with the many newly-developing women's organizations, the rank and file trade union caucuses, the organizations of the Chicano people and the Puerto Rican people, the organizations of welfare workers, the student organizations, the organizations of health workers, the political organizations of professional workers, and literally hundreds of other organizations now emerging locally, regionally and nationally which are attempting to formulate programs to meet the pressing and burning needs of their constituencies, a mass party of the people can develop overall program positions on the most pressing needs and issues of the day.

As was the case in respect to the special and unique character of the struggle for Black freedom, here too, there is no contradiction in duality of organizational thrust and activity. Only strength for the common struggle can develop out of a recognition of the interaction implicit in an approach of duality. Women will continue to build and strengthen organizations of the Women's movement, at the same time as these organizations and the women in them can give the leadership and guidance necessary to the mass party of the people in the development of the necessary programmatic positions and courses of action which the entire party of the people ought to be advancing. A similar approach is essential in respect to working people who are participating in the building of workers' organizations, whether they be the new forms of rank and file councils and caucuses or the existing trade union structures. Likewise, young people, students, older people, welfare people, professionals, and members of every distinct grouping in society would be encouraged, and urged to continue to participate in and build and strengthen the separate and independent organizations as well as encouraging growth and organization where they do not now exist.

What is essential is that a way of work -- a way of life, if you will -- be built into the relationships between these organizations of the people and a mass party of the people which reflects equality and mutual respect. Such respect and equality rather than domination and direction have rarely characterized the thinking and conduct of the parties of the left throughout recent history, both in this country and abroad. A mass party of the people has no chance for survival, much less success, in this

country unless it foreswears from the first moment of its organization the hierarchical attitude towards the other organizations of the people which the so-called "vanguard" parties of both the past and the present so often manifest. Nothing could be more destructive to the generating of creative energy, so desperately needed at this moment, than a recreation on any scale of the distortion of the "vanguard" role.

There is hardly a person in the movement today who has not experienced the brutalizing effect of the attempts by a small and, most frequently, secret group which has decided in advance of a meeting upon a given course of conduct or tactic and has then forced its will upon the bewildered or unsuspecting participants in the formal meeting, often by sheer force or superior parliamentary skill. There are also in the movement today many persons equally repelled by the experience of having participated themselves, either in the private groupings of the old left or the new left, in the brutalizing process of manipulating large numbers of unsuspecting people through the abuse of the concept of the vanguard "cell" or "caucus."

Unless a relationship of absolute honesty and equality is established from the first moments of the organization between the party and the many and varied presently-existing organizations of the people, there is no chance whatsoever that such a party could grow, develop, and attract to itself the thousands of movement activists who are, in the deepest sense of the word, "independent" radicals; without whose wholehearted committed help, no such party of the people could conceivably survive, much less succeed. Thus, in a practical sense, a renunciation of the classic distortion of the "vanguard" role of domination and control of other organizations is an absolute essential if those people most important to the launching and development of the party, those who are presently actively involved in the building of the separate organizations are to be involved.

But even more fundamentally, an avoidance of the pitfalls of "domination" and "control" is essential if a mass party of the people is to be built, flexible enough and powerful enough to meet the enormous responsibilities involved in the tasks set for it by the demands of the period. One of the root causes for the isolation and defeat of parties of the left in the past in this country, is to be found in a way of work which almost inevitably inheres in a mechanical translation of the "vanguard party" concept.

Too often those groups (both in the old and the new left), in the name of building a "Marxist" party, operate in such a way as to reject one of the most fundamental principles of Marxism: that the people make history. In life, these groups (both now and in the past), in essence, function upon a theory that the

political party is the primary maker of history rather than the people. If one operates in political life upon this unspoken philosophical assumption -- then policies, program and decisions will emanate from a party center to its members and, then, to the people; the objective of "leading" the people becomes in life "directing" the people; organizational relationships with other people and other organizations are for the purpose of "controlling" and "directing;" the party provides ready-made "blueprints" and "stages;" the party becomes totally absorbed in "planning history" for the people. And, thus, it becomes immaterial to listen to the opinions of the people because the political party functions in a looking-glass world in which the primary motivating force in social change is the party rather than the people. Relations with the people and even, ultimately, with the party's own members remain important -- but only for the purpose of directing them.

But, as the history of the left in this country has proven on many sad occasions, organization built upon this hypothesis is built on sand. For the teaching of the leaders of successful revolutions remains valid: only the people are the primary makers of history. The great initial movers in vast social changes are the people themselves thrown into turmoil and motion by the impact of the pressures and conflicts of the real world. No political party "created" the titanic struggles of oppressed peoples against the oppressor, nor the heroic upsurge of colonial peoples against the imperialists. The people move in sudden and, often, unexpected ways. But they move in response to the pressures of objective relationships. The people move and, when they move, history is made.

If the people make history in this sense the role of a party of the people is to be a weapon in the hands of the people in winning those objectives which reality and the influence of social relationships has set for them. To be such a weapon, a party of people at all times must be in the most intimate and the most interconnected relationship with thousands upon thousands of people -- and with all of the many different and diverse organizations of the people. To develop this sensitivity of relationship, a party of the people must be constantly talking to, listening to, and learning from the people and their organizations. This is impossible if the relationship between the party of the people and the people and their organizations is one of hierarchical domination and control.

Such a style of work leads to disaster. It breeds inevitably the most intense bitterness, hostility, suspicions, and antagonisms between the leaders of such parties and the people in movements and organizations outside the "directing center," and, sooner or later, even with their own members who are not part of the guilding hierarchy.

But more seriously, it leads objectively to the inability of such a party, in the long run and at the moments of greatest crisis, to perform that role it has set out for itself -- to "lead" the people to victory. This is because "correct" policies and "correct" tactics of struggle, particularly at the great moments of crisis, can only be grounded upon the thinking and decisions of the people themselves. These decisions, often fateful to the course of history, are "proper" only to the degree that they are rooted in the reality of the experiences and thinking of millions of people. A political party of the people which functions in such a way as to absorb these experiences and thinking, which listens to the people at these critical moments and learns from them, can serve as a powerful fighting arm of the people at such moments of destiny. On the other hand, a political party which has been structured and which functions upon the essentially metaphysical conception that the party (not the people) makes history, will too often make the wrong decisions, lose the historical moment, and become isolated and ineffectual.

A party whose style of work is essentially directional and elitist too often adopts on an a priori basis an hypothesis as to what the people ought to do about a given problem. The hypothesis is rarely tested in the crucible of reality. The process is that of a one-way street. The leadership of such a grouping does not particularly listen to the opinions of its own members as to the decision. The members do not listen to the opinions of the people. The listening process does not occur; not because there is not time to listen, nor even (as is sometimes the case) because it is very disconcerting to listen. The listening and learning does not take place, primarily, because the theory of organization they are functioning under renders it unnecessary to listen to the people. The political grouping has already decided, out of its own head, how the people ought to move. There is, accordingly, no need to consult the people. And who has the time or patience for unnecessary work? A recreation of this style of work based upon a distortion of the concept of a "vanguard" party -- which has plagued the left of this and other countries for so many years -- would prove devastating for the building of a mass party of the people which must have the perspective of aiding the millions of powerless people to take power in this country.

A party which is born out of the realization that the historic moment has arrived when the American people can and must take control over their own lives and destinies back into their own hands, cannot, in its own life-style, negate the very essence of its being. It cannot function, itself, as an instrument of control and domination over the very people it seeks to set free. To the contrary, it must -- in its every action and way of life -- function as an instrumentality through which those who take

part in its activities learn and experience the process of participating fully in the making of decisions which profoundly affect their lives. Only in this way could a party of the people -- at this time of distrust and disillusionment with "national leadership forms" -- win the confidence and respect of those people most important to its success: those thousands of independent militant activists in every area of the country.

The establishment of confidence and mutual respect would require, from the very outset of the planning and organization of the party of the people, the total rejection of any hierarchical relationship with the other organizations of the people in each of the various areas of life. In all matters -- from the original development of programmatic positions for the party of the people to the unfolding of daily and long-range questions of tactics of struggle in these areas, the party must strive constantly to maintain the relationship of duality in organizational thrust.

A party of the people would accept leadership and learn from organizations of the various sections and groupings of the people what were the problems closest to the particular organizations. At the same time, absorbing this knowledge and experience directly from the organizations and people most closely involved in the particular question, the party would serve the indispensable role of helping to integrate the particular struggle and the particular issue into a common strategy, directed at the common enemy.

In this later role, decisions would be made by the party with the full and equal participation, in this process, of the representatives of the particular section of the people directly involved. Here, as has been discussed in respect to the relationship between the party and the Black political organizations, a duality in respect to the individual would occur also. Women, active in the important and essential separate women's organizations, would participate also, fully, in the life on every level of the party of the people. Similarly, those working people, active in rank and file caucuses or trade union forms, would be encouraged to develop the same duality -- full participation in the party on every level without any contradiction to their work and activities around the particular and special problems of working people. This duality in organizational forms and functions is, to be sure, a difficult objective to achieve. It is possible only if the tendencies toward domination and direction -- which are the heritage within the American left of past distortions of the concept of the "vanguard" role are eliminated from the beginning in the growth and development of the party.

Just as the taking of power is at the heart of the solution to every one of the pressing immediate problems of the people today -- it is equally true, flowing from the central characteristics of the unfolding crisis of the present system, that the key to the opening of the road to power is the present organization of a political form which will participate in struggles for power, for control by the people, in every area of life nationally, regionally, and locally and in every organism of social life, whether political

economic, cultural, or social. The question of power, the question of control over institutions which affect the daily lives of people is, as we have discussed, objectively at the heart of every one of the pressing and overwhelming problems which immediately are affecting millions of people. Increasingly, it is instinctively being grasped by millions as being at the core of their problems. In the shops, in the schools, in the communities -- issues of power and control are increasingly emerging as central. These qualities are particularly becoming dominant in the thinking of the Black communities, North and South. The party must be in the very center of each of these struggles wherever they develop. The form and content of these struggles will, of course, vary radically; but stimulation, encouragement, and full participation on every level is the highest imperative for such a party.

Whether the struggle be in a Black community over local control of the police; or in schools; or in factories over workers' control in the production processes; or in universities over student-faculty control in the decision-making procedures; or on a national level over people's control in the environment-destroying industries or in the most crucial area of forcing and keeping the peace; or in the thousands of new and uncharted areas in which questions of power and control can and will erupt -- the party must be deeply involved in the development, deepening and interrelating these struggles on a local, regional and national level. This is the key to the unfolding of the perspectives of the road to power for a number of reasons; but, primarily, because it is through these struggles that the fundamental truth of our times will become clearer and clearer to more and more people: that the critical problems of the day will be solved only when the people of the country take the solution of these problems into their own hands.

It will be through the full participation of the party in these struggles that the people will come to learn the contours of the road to power -- the interrelationship of each struggle for power and control with each of the others; the strength which lies in coordinated struggle, in coordinated planning, in coordinated concentration of forces; which only a unified party of the people can help to provide. It is through the participation of the party in these varied struggles on every level of life and in every area of life that the different sections of the people will come to learn from one another's special skills and talents, and from one another's special and unique experiences. And perhaps most important of all, through the participation of the party in these struggles, the different sections of the people will come to learn and understand the one enormous truth, the perception of which is essential to the taking of power on a national level -- that all the peoples in their struggles for power, for control over their own lives, for dignity and independence face the same common enemy.

What we must understand is that it is absolutely impossible to blueprint the exact course and road of these struggles; or to know, with any precision, in advance which struggles, in which area of life, will erupt with such power and force as to enable a coordinated and united effort, employing all the resources and forces of the people's movements, to accomplish the boldest and most daring moves in the direction of the taking of power. The people must learn to be prepared to defend their victories in such a way as to surge forward. They must be prepared for the most incredible surprises and for the most unexpected events. There is no "scenario" or "blueprint" which can sketch out all of these twists and turns and, utterly unexpected, explosions. In 1901, Lenin characterized the suggestion that the Czarist autocracy "may fall only as a result of a properly prepared siege or organized attack" as "stupid and doctrinaire;" pointing out that, "on the contrary, it is quite possible, and historically far more probable, that the autocracy will fall under the pressure of those spontaneous outbursts or unforeseen political complications which constantly threaten it from all sides." [Where To Begin].

The sharpness of the conflicts developing in this crisis-stage in the life of American capitalist society is characterized by the intensity and frequency of ~~these~~ "spontaneous outbursts" and, above all, "unforeseen political complications." The path to the forward resolution of these conflicts, through the taking of power by the people, lies in ~~the building of a strong and powerful party which is able to help millions of people~~ ~~to take advantage at the critical moment, of these unexpected events, and use them to mount a unified and coordinated offensive at that moment against what may be a temporarily disarrayed and disorganized enemy. It is impossible to chart out in advance when these moments of political crisis will occur and what form they will take. No one prophesied with any degree of accuracy the depth~~

at the Watergate crisis of 1973

and intensity of the May events in France in 1968. What is essential is the building of a mass party of the people with roots and ties to every section of the people, skillful enough and experienced enough to help to analyze these moments of history swiftly and accurately and to, at that moment, provide the unified planning and thinking which can help every section of the movements of the people (locally, regionally, and nationally) to throw their combined strength into the particular arena which that moment of history has catapulted forward as the decisive grounds for struggle. This is the path of victory.

In the initiation, development and extension of these struggles it is essential that no paralyzing barriers be placed upon the nature of the arenas to be fought in, nor upon the forms of struggle to be waged. None of the shibboleths of either the old or the new left can be permitted to shackle the development of these struggles for people's control over institutions which affect their lives. In this connection, it is necessary for those of us who have our political roots in either the old or the new left to honestly discard those preconceptions of the past which may narrow down the arenas and the forms of struggle; and, in Staughton Lynd's bold phrase with which he ends his article in Liberation: ". . . be humble enough to start fresh." It is in this spirit that it will be essential for many who have their roots in the emergence of the new left to "set aside all the old debates about direct action and electoral politics," as Lynd also says in his article. A party of the people must be prepared to enter fully and energetically into the struggle in every available arena. This will necessarily include participation in election struggles in every form and on every level.

The hesitation and reluctance of many who have their ideological teeth in the organizations of the new left to have anything to do with what is derogatively termed "electoral politics" is based upon a well-founded mistrust of the way in which participation in capitalist-controlled election contests in the past, too often, became the vehicle for the development of politics based upon a reliance upon the "liberal" wing of the ruling class. "Electoral politics" became synonymous with maneuvering to guarantee the election of a "liberal" spokesman of the ruling class; the culmination in political life of the dominant "lesser-evil" philosophy. On the other hand, an equal cynicism developed out of the sterile and so often frustrating "use" of the electoral processes by small and often rigidly doctrinaire Marxist parties to "educate" people by running candidates who could "use" the forum of the election to expound their sometimes sectarian positions to a non-listening public.

Participation in election struggles for a party of the people, must have neither of these characteristics. A decision to participate in a given election, for a given governmental unit, would be made in exactly the same way as a decision to participate in any other struggle for people's control over institutions in any other arena. The determining factor would always be whether participation in that particular struggle would or would not advance, at that moment, the level of understanding, the morale, the fighting spirit of the people involved. The decision would never be made on the abstract consideration of an opportunity to "educate," nor the opportunist consideration



of aid and assistance to a "liberal lesser-evil." Since the entire strategic thrust of the party should be the necessity and the realistic possibility of the taking of power by the people, the decision to take part in a given election struggle ought to be undertaken seriously with the objective of the taking over of political power in the particular unit involved at some point in the realistic future. In other words, an election struggle waged by the party must be carried on not as an "educational" nor "agitational" tactic; nor within the traditional atmosphere of a "protest" vote, designed to "pressure" the major candidates of the capitalist parties into a more "liberal" position. Instead, its election struggles, as indeed all its activities, must reflect the solid conviction that the struggle to take power, whether in a neighborhood council, a town council, a city government, a congressional district, is a real struggle, a deadly serious struggle in which the perspective is victory, if not in the first round, at some point in the real and immediate future.

And what must be understood is that victory on many levels in election struggles is a real perspective for a party of the quality and strength projected here. These election struggles would have to be combined, at all times and in all ways, with every other form of struggle, including the many varied forms of mass direct action which are beginning to emerge -- as Staughton Lynd has pointed out in his 1971 Liberation article. Lynd indicates that as the possibility of victories on more and more important levels becomes a realistic likelihood, the people who have rallied to the banner of their party in an election victory may well have to turn to the most varied means of direct action, including massive strikes, to defend and protect people's power in a given governmental area.

The perspective of the most serious undertaking of election struggles, with the aim of actually taking political power in many varied areas and levels of governmental forms, is not at all contradictory to the classic teachings of revolutionary leaders for the last two centuries: that an entrenched and ruling class will not peacefully or easily give up its positions of power on the stage of world history. Our own history teaches this lesson forcefully. The people of the North and the West who had rallied to the anti-slavery positions of the newly organized Republican Party in the election of 1860 were, shortly thereafter, forced to defend by arms their election decision against the massive force of the slaveholders who would not be ousted from their national positions of power without a bloody upheaval. No one can pretend to chart in advance the turns and twists of history, particularly when a powerful ruling class is threatened with final expulsion from the arena they have so long controlled. People must learn, and must be helped to learn, that they must organize themselves not only to utilize all available forms to take political power at all

levels of life, including, at this stage of history, the form which is primary in their own consciousness as the means at hand to take over political power, the election struggles -- but that they must organize themselves to defend, in every way necessary, the victories they will achieve in this arena.

This ~~The~~ bold strategic conception of a party of the people, anti-capitalist in content, with the central objective of taking power, was never part of the living policies of the American left during the thirties and the forties. What is fascinating from the point of view of beginning to understand the complexities of that period, is that this strategic objective -- a total break with the capitalist controlled two-party system and the building of a wholly independent party of the people -- was originally formulated, by both national and international spokesmen for the left in the early thirties, as the American form of the "united front" against the fascist threat. The necessity of breaking completely with the capitalist-dominated two-party structure and the building of an independent party of the people, as a weapon in the struggle against the fascist danger and, at the same time, as a launching pad for the struggle for the taking of political power -- were acknowledged as essential steps in the formulation of a strategy for the American left at the beginning of the thirties. But, almost without discussion, this strategy receded from view until it became one of those "far-off" objectives which was briefly mentioned, if at all, at the tail end of the "real" discussions about the "real problems" of the day. The strategy was never tried, never implemented, never really accepted. ~~As~~ ~~was pointed out earlier,~~ It fell victim to the distortion of the united front theory which was at the very heart of the errors and hesitations of the left during this period.

As reliance upon the "liberal-wing" of the ruling class internally, together with reliance upon the "vision" of the Soviet Union externally as a fundamental catalyst for social change, imperceptibly, and without debate, replaced the original formulations of anti-fascist strategy -- the organizing thrusts of the American left shifted away from the necessity for building a powerful independent political weapon for the people. In its place emerged the building in a hundred different forms of props and supports to the liberal-wing of the ruling class, the Roosevelt-led Democratic Party. By the mid-thirties, the concept

of a central strategy of total break from the capitalist-controlled parties and the building of a mass independent party of the people had vanished from the thinking and organizing of the American left. It remained, if at all, only as a romantic afterglow.

In its place appeared the "hard-headed," "practical" policies of what came to be known as "work within the Democratic Party." The building of a powerful mass party of the people -- anti-capitalist in content, with the strategic aim of the taking of political power away from the present rulers -- has never been at the practical center of the political and organizational thinking of the American left; at least, not since the vision of Eugene Debs captured the imagination of so many at the turn of the century.

There is another, more subtle and harder-to-define, reason why this central strategic objective has not been in the forefront of the thinking of the American left since the 1920s. Under the impact of the successful Russian revolution, the left in this country transplanted the form rather than the content of the Leninist concept of a "vanguard party" to the American scene. In so doing, the original concept of a party which represented the immediate and long-range interests of the oppressed classes -- which, in Marx's own words, was to be the principal weapon of struggle in the hands of the oppressed against the rulers -- became lost and submerged in the form that the party took in Czarist Russia: a small, tightly-knit, secret, conspiratorial grouping of full-time professional revolutionaries, which the conditions of the autocracy mandated. A confusion about role took over, and has shaped the political thinking of the American left; and has haunted it ever since. If the "vanguard" party, the "leading force," the "principal weapon" of the oppressed -- was the small, secret, tightly-knit band of full-time revolutionaries, the role of a "mass" party or "mass" form of any kind inevitably became (to use the embarrassing, but rather honest, terminology of the left of the twenties) a "transmission belt," a "conduit," or (to use the harshest term of the enemy) a "front." This mechanical transplantation of the "vanguard party" concept, implicit in the one-dimensional application of the Russian pre-revolutionary forms of organization to the American scene, effectively crippled the possibility (even where it was attempted locally or regionally) to the building of an independent party which could develop, within the context of American traditions and American history, into that powerful political weapon for the oppressed classes which Marx originally visualized.

It crippled this possibility because, in the thinking of the left, a two-stage process took over. A "mass organization" is basically viewed as a stepping stone from which the most active, the most "developed" people enter into the second stage, the "real" vanguard party. The "mass organization," whether or not it takes a "political" form -- becomes, within this frame of reference, a vehicle for the carrying through of the immediate plans and policies of the "real" vanguard party; plans and policies which have been discussed and decided upon outside the framework of the "mass" organization and within the framework of the "vanguard party."

This leads inevitably to the eventual destruction of the "mass" organization, as the sad history of the American left testifies. Even any limited effort to build a "mass party" of the people -- whether it was the A.L.P. in New York; or the abortive attempt at a national party in the 1948 Henry Wallace campaign; or even the more recent "third party" efforts in a few localities -- has suffered and, eventually, founded on this two-stage way of thinking. The political horizon of the past years is strewn with the wreckages of such "mass" organizations. But even more serious -- this two-stage thinking has frustrated the growth and development of a party strong enough, and confident enough, to bid for and hold political power. The "two-stage" way of thinking undermines and eventually destroys the ability of those members of the "select" group to relate honestly and openly to people with

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whom they are working. It encourages an inwardness and reliance upon manipulative approaches. It also creates an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust among those who are not members of the selected groups. All of which makes the building of any mass organization of the people, no less a party of the people, extremely difficult.

But most fundamental of all, the ultimate outcome of this way of life and way of work is to destroy the possibility of building a real vanguard party in the sense that Marx and Engels, and even Lenin himself, meant. History calls for the emergence of a powerful political party which will truly represent the oppressed classes of society in their struggles against the old society and those who rule it. It must be a party which draws upon the thinking and the experiences of all the oppressed. It must be a party which is wholly responsive to the needs, and desires of the oppressed millions of people. It must be a party in which decisions, tactics, policies are, in the true sense of the word, the product and property of large numbers of people. It must be a party in which the largest numbers of people (tens of thousands, and then millions) develop the deepest confidence -- a confidence which can only flow from the feeling that it is their party -- that it belongs to them and to no one else. Such a party can truly be a "vanguard," a leader of millions. But such a party can only be built openly and honestly; with participation, from the beginning, of people who are not thinking and functioning in a "two-stage" fashion; but who are fully and honestly building a "one-stage"

instrumentality. Such a party can only be built in an atmosphere of trust and give-and-take, which reflects a total commitment to the party of the people; and not to some "higher," and smaller, self-anointed group.

Such a party would formulate its policies and make its plans and decisions with the full knowledge and with the full participation of the people of the community, of the factory, of the school, of the area who are to be directly affected by the decisions arrived at. Some of these decisions will be sound. Some will not. But only through this open process of give and take will learning take place. Decision-making would be an open process; open to the members of the party of the people and open to those people affected by the decisions. A party of the people (built in this spirit) can win the respect of the millions of people necessary to the achievement of its central goal.

More than this -- the building of a party in this spirit would reach for that essential: the beginning of the building of the new within the womb of the old. A mass party of the people in this spirit would make possible a daily struggle -- not only to forge a powerful instrumentality for the extraordinary act of the taking of power in the last stronghold of the capitalist world -- but to build, in the course of that struggle, the beginnings of the new and better way of life for all people in the new society which must replace the old.

It is time to face -- before it is too late -- some blunt truths. It is still possible today to build such a party openly with the people, from one reach of the country to the other. It is still possible to organize such a party, to begin to function in the way discussed here -- in such a way as to involve thousands of people in the most important decision-making processes and in the formulation of the most critical policies. It was not possible to build such a party in the conditions of the autocracy of pre-revolutionary Russia. It is not necessary, and it is in fact harmful and disastrous, to apply mechanically, to the present moment, the concepts of organization Lenin found necessary to develop to meet the particular conditions of his period. It is better to be able to build a mass party of the people openly and with the participation of thousands, at this particular turning point in world history. There is no virtue per se in religiously following the concepts developed to meet a different set of problems -- and there is great danger in doing so: danger in alienating many thousands of militant activists who want no part of the distortions in practice, which have flowed so freely from the mechanical application of old concepts in the thinking of the American left. This is not to say that the situation may not drastically change -- and that it may unhappily be necessary at some point, perhaps even in the near future, to reconsider the

methods and forms of organization of a party of the people which new conditions of mass terror and repression may require. We are not at that point now. What must be utterly and completely understood is that the building of a party which is deeply responsive to the thinking, to the feelings, to the needs of the people; which is subject to the controls of the people; whose decisions are made in the clear view of the people and with their fullest participation -- is not a step backwards from the concept of a "vanguard party;" such as the American left has mechanically known in the past, and in the present.

The truth is that it would be a fantastic step forward for the American left to begin building such a party at this moment -- while there is still time. The most critical problem of new societies after the taking of power (as the fascinating, recently published, study of Lenin's last writings\* reveals) has often been the struggle to change, to re-shape both governmental structures and the political party which led to the taking of power; to eliminate a deadly bureaucracy and elitism which cuts off control by the people, and which is an inheritance not only of the old governmental methods of the ousted ruling class -- but also an inheritance of political methods of organization; inherited from a clandestine, underground pre-revolutionary period. In the spirit of the new understanding that it is necessary to struggle to build the new while we overthrow the old let us begin the experience of building the type of political weapon which is necessary not only for the taking of power -- but for the holding of it as well: a party responsive to people's needs and subject to people's controls.

For Discussion:

Some thoughts on Mass political and economic demands of the Party

1. community based free child care facilities
2. conversion of the imperialist weapons industry into research on anti-pollution and environment saving methods and machines and/or public transportation.
3. universal sick and personal leave days for all workers of a minimum of 40 per year, (this is in addition to already existing s&a and comp.)
4. the right of recall by majority petition of any elected official : city, local and national.
5. freedom of speech, press, and assembly guaranteed at the place of work.
6. the right to meet on company property by any groups of workers.
7. state and federally subsidized guaranteed pension for any worker victim of runaway shop.
8. universal licensing requirements throughout the USNA in regards to para-professionals, teachers, technicians etc.
9. full coverage - unemployment compensation, food stamps, health care for all striking workers and their families.
10. abolition of garnishment.
11. free and unharassed travel from the USNA to countries on its northern and southern borders.
12. right to recall by petition of any appointed official of the state - ie. police commissioners, judges, foreign affairs ministers etc.
13. salaries and expenditures of all elected officials must not exceed average national income.
14. guaranteed safe housing with rents and mortgages frozen at the 1965 rate for all citizens over 60 years of age.

FREE THE NEGRO NATION!

EQUALITY AND FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN!

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD UNITE!

BUILD A MULTINATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY OF A NEW TYPE!

RV