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NOTE

The general line of the political report (pp. 2-14) was adopted by the plenum of the National Committee on February 27, 1970.

The Political Resolution adopted by the 23rd National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, "The Course of U.S. Imperialism and the Revolutionary Struggle for a Socialist America" is available in a special issue of the International Socialist Review which also contains the Transitional Program for Black Liberation and the convention resolution on the American antiwar movement. It is available from the national office for 50 cents.

The political report, whose general line was adopted by the 23rd National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, is reprinted from the now out-of-print Internal Information Bulletin No. 8 in 1969, as the second part of this bulletin (pp. 15-24).

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POLITICAL REPORT TO THE SWP NATIONAL COMMITTEE PLENUM

February 27, 1970

by Jack Barnes

First I would like to explain the character of the agenda for the plenum and where the political report fits into it.

There were several points, especially on the struggles of the oppressed national minorities other than the Afro-Americans, with special attention to the Chicano movement, and the question of women's liberation, which we dealt with only in panel form at the convention. We want to give more attention to these points at this plenum in order to fill out the general line of the political resolution and report which the convention adopted. We've done this by incorporating the Third World question in this political report and setting aside a separate point on the women's liberation movement. In addition, we've separated out of the political report two very key points, the two central areas of work in which we spend most of our time -- one, the antiwar movement, and the other, the youth movement -- because we were sure that comrades would want separate discussion on them. It has been in these three areas -- the antiwar movement, the youth movement and the women's liberation movement -- that the biggest changes have occurred since the convention. We have seen the October and November actions, then the SMC conference, and of course, in the youth, the YSA convention and the continued decline of SDS. (See Internal Information Bulletin No. 4 in 1970 for the antiwar report and youth report to the plenum.)

There were two areas -- the Afro-American struggle and the labor movement -- in which we felt there had been no major objective changes since the convention itself. So they were not separated out, but incorporated in the political report for discussion as part of it.

Finally, it became clear as we had discussions in the Political Committee following the convention that the major question to grapple with at this plenum is the organization question; that is, how to organize ourselves on all levels to take advantage of the opportunities that we all agree exist. In order to focus on these organizational questions and devote as much time as possible to them, we've set aside the entire second day for reports and discussion on them.

The central purpose of this report is to look at one single proposition that's come out of the discussions in the Political Committee. That is, we believe that today we have our first opportunity to become the very center of the radical

movement in this country. The evolution of the radicalization since the convention has convinced us more firmly of this.

At the convention we made the point that the steps that American imperialism is forced to take, abroad and at home, to maintain its rule are the very things that keep upsetting the political equilibrium and deepening the radicalization. All of our evaluations are rooted in this basic objective fact of the world situation.

The events of the six months since the convention -- although that's not very much time -- have given us further confirmation of the reality of the permanent political crisis that faces American imperialism. The basic perspective for the 1970's is one of broadening mass struggles and growing class polarizations in American society as the radicalization deepens.

One of the ways to judge the unique situation that the SWP faces today is to look at three basic objective factors. One, the real character of the favorable objective political climate in this country; two, the relationship of forces that exists today in the radical movement; and three, the internal situation of our own movement in relation to these first two factors.

The Objective Political Climate of the Radicalization

It's clear to all of us that we have less and less of a problem convincing people that this is not the best of all possible worlds. A declining percentage of the population of the United States confidently believes that the current system, as such, is capable of solving any of the basic social problems which they are beginning to perceive. This is a very simple but crucially important fact. We also think that the objective developments indicate that this is not isolated to or limited to the United States. This has been true in the colonial world for some time. And it's clear that this is the situation which the Soviet bureaucracy itself is beginning to face right inside the Soviet Union.

The task is less one of convincing people that this is not the best of all possible worlds, than going on from that question to the deeper question that's raised. More and more the character of many of the issues that are being raised as part of the radicalization are such

that their solutions point directly to a socialist society. Questions about the future entire environment of humankind, alienation, the development of the family and sexual and social repression are being raised as part of this radicalization and are questions that raise directly and immediately the need for an alternative society to the capitalist one. These are the kinds of problems for which it's harder and harder to make a case that the solution is simply reforming capitalism, and which make the alternative model of a socialist society appear more realistic. I think that, for example, the last chapter of Comrade Cannon's America's Road to Socialism, entitled "What Socialist America Will Look Like," presented almost two decades ago, would not only inspire but read more realistically to millions of radicalized Americans today than at any other time since he gave those speeches.

What's happening is the development of a consciousness of one of the things Marx predicted, that, in the final death agony of capitalism, as the massive development of the forces of production comes more and more into conflict with the capitalist social relations encasing them, these very instruments of production would more and more turn into instruments of destruction of life, limb, and human relations. Let me read just one paragraph from the speech that Comrade Mandel was prevented by Attorney General Mitchell from giving here, where he summarizes this:

"Marx's famous prediction of a hundred years ago, that the productive forces would transform themselves more and more into destructive forces if they were not in time liberated from the fetters of private property and profit orientation, hits the nail squarely on the head. This does not imply an absolute decline in production but a much more frightful form of decay: a qualitative transformation of the results of increased output which threatens to destroy the last remnants of freedom of choice for the individual, the material biosphere of mankind, if not the very existence of the human race. The output of an ever-increasing mass of increasingly meaningless commodities of increasingly doubtful quality; the pollution of the atmosphere, land and water; and the threat of nuclear and biological warfare resulting from the growth of tremendous permanent war expenditures all testify to the realism of Marx's prediction."

That appreciation of capitalist society makes sense to more Americans today than at any time since Marx said it. It raises the perspective among many battlers against the system of capitalism that their fight will not only eliminate

capitalism, but all the ills that class society in its historical entirety has visited upon the human race. That's the job, that's the realistic perspective, that's what can help motivate anti-capitalist fighters. This is one of the things that makes the current radicalization -- still in its first stages -- quite different in degree from the previous radicalizations in this country.

The breadth of the radicalization is also different. It has affected the army the way no other radicalization has. It's deepening the radical consciousness of every single oppressed nationality in this country, including those that have not really made themselves heard before in their history. It has begun touching women, as women, and it is affecting the youth at younger and younger ages. These objective tests all testify to what we think is the real character and depth of the radicalization.

Another phenomenon to look at is the geographical spread of the radicalization. In October the Wall Street Journal sent a team of reporters out to Dodge City, Kansas to try to see what Middle America was like. They were so astounded that they came back and ran a front-page feature article in the Wall Street Journal detailing what had happened even in Marshall Dillon's town, what the attitudes were of the people they had interviewed, and how this compared to similar interviews made only two years earlier. You can multiply this example many times in your own mind. I was convinced when I saw the radical character and political level of the underground paper in Dayton, Ohio, my home town. It's hard to find a single nook and cranny of this country which the radicalization has not affected. It's another solid objective test of whether we're correct or not.

Although American capitalism has a significant amount of meat and fat left, its capacity to convincingly put forth the perspective of reform, of political and social reform under capitalism, comes more and more into question. What we see is not necessarily an absolute decline or reversal of the accomplishments, in all spheres, of capitalist reform, but -- more importantly -- a growing gap between the steadily increasing elementary expectations or demands for change made by various sectors of the population and the results and the response the ruling class actually provides.

The Relationship of Forces in the Radical Movement

Now let's look at the relationship of forces in the radical movement and

how it differs from previous periods. At the convention we discussed that today, for the first time in almost four decades, it wasn't at all guaranteed that a big wave of radicalization would enable American Stalinism to take big initial organizational steps forward, way out-distancing other tendencies, before tests could be made. We said that's not true today.

First, although we still have large gaps, we have a nationwide apparatus with a public face and functioning units of a revolutionary party. This is not true of the Stalinists or other tendencies.

Second, we are the tendency with the best capacity to mobilize our forces as a homogeneous political fraction for intervention and participation in the mass movement, or for nationally coordinated campaigns.

Third, the expansion of the circulation of our press. This is a place where we have a way to go to catch up. But even here, our situation relative to our opponents should be noted. On the same day that we made the decision to shoot for 7,500 new subscribers to The Militant in two spring months, the Daily World announced that in the next six months they were going to try to get 6,500 new readers for the Daily World. That's what they claim they're going to try to do. Even given the fact that the Daily World is a daily, these are very significant figures.

The Socialist Party and the Communist Party, from the events of the 1950's, still seem incapable of organizing a youth organization in political solidarity with them, that can stand up to and compete on an equal footing with the Young Socialist Alliance. The Young Workers' Liberation League is a new and important initiative by the CP, but the earlier attempts have been failures.

We are not so sure about Progressive Labor. We do know that there's been no objective evidence of advances, either in the character, circulation, or size of their press, and we know about the growing divisions already in WSA-SDS. We've noted that PL's initial reaction to the women's liberation movement was, if it's conceivable, even worse than their initial reaction to the rise of the mass antiwar actions or to Black nationalism. So that's hardly a favorable augur for them.

Another phenomenon is that in the last year or so there has been no major national ultraleft organization to challenge us from that side. Ultraleft currents, ultraleft individuals, ultraleft illusions and confusions in many of the young radicals -- but no single

organization, even like SDS was at one stage, to mobilize or lead under their banner these young people.

These facts mean that our opportunities relative to our opponents are qualitatively better than in 1938 when we founded the party, or in the 1945-46 upsurge in the class struggle, the past periods during which we saw our greatest opportunities. The central thing to grasp is that from the point of view of the relationship of forces we don't see any comparison to any past period.

The Internal Strengths of American Trotskyism

What about the internal situation of our movement? The number of cadres that have been capable of throwing themselves into taking advantage of the main openings of the last half-decade have been, relative to previous periods, quite large. We were at our weakest, and had the hardest sledding, at the beginning of the rise of the Black radicalization as far as the number of our Black cadre was concerned. Relatively few members had to carry the bulk of the intervention. This began changing quantitatively as the student movement opened up, then as the antiwar movement broadened, and now as the women's liberation movement develops. A growing percentage of our comrades are able to participate directly in these mass movements, to intervene as a cadre into the organizations that make up these movements. We can see a basic change in the impact and relative leadership role of our forces as we go from the original student movement, through the uphill struggle in the antiwar movement to the early stages of the women's liberation movement.

We have reached the stage where in our major branches and youth units around the country, we run almost a permanent election campaign. I was struck in reading back over The Militant since the convention, that prior to the issue where Frank Lovell had the roundup article analyzing the 1969 elections we ran a big spread opening the California 1970 campaign. Our capacity to take advantage of the propaganda openings around every major city, state, and presidential election has put us in a situation where, on a permanent basis -- with an occasional skipping of a freakish off-year where there aren't even any municipal elections -- we are fielding revolutionary socialist spokesmen taking our ideas directly to the living mass movements and to wider layers through the mass media.

Crucially important, of course, is the YSA. This, or anything like it, we've never had before. The YSA, in many ways,

has been and remains the key at this stage of our growth and work. It is the link to the youth and it is the link to the broader layers of the radicalization -- a 1,000-plus strong Trotskyist youth organization, capable of beginning to carve out a leadership in the broader youth movement, as was symbolized by the SMC conference.

As we discussed all this in the Political Committee we realized that until we step back and add these things up, the possibilities and challenges and the situation we face don't really become clear.

The working relationship, character, and development of the Socialist Workers Party-Young Socialist Alliance combination in the last decade was probably the key to where we have come today. It is worth mentioning for a moment several of the factors involved in this development.

What is different and unique about the YSA, outside the favorable objective situation, that helps explain this?

One is, the Young Socialist Alliance is not basically an organization that was won to Trotskyism away from allegiance to one of our opponents. The birth of the Young Socialist Alliance involved a coalescence of forces out of the Schactmanite organization, some independents and a few of our own young comrades -- relatively young comrades, that is, those we could assign and declare were young. It's true also that we never assimilated the ex-Schactmanite youth. But the YSA has been unlike, for instance, the YPSL (Fourth) that was trained in and absorbed many of its basic ideas from the Socialist Party and which we took out of the Socialist Party, or other youth groups which the revolutionary party has taken as left-wing splits from the Stalinists' or Social Democrats' parties in which the youth had their training and assimilated warped versions of class struggle politics. The YSA has been and is basically composed of individuals, whom even if they went through this or that youth group briefly, came directly to Trotskyism. We have had the first chance to educate them and to help them assimilate Leninism.

Second, because of the above facts, the element of youth vanguardism or permanent "left-oppositionism" to the party does not exist in the YSA. This also is an important fact when compared to many previous revolutionary youth groups in different countries whose experience in fighting the reformist or Stalinist leaderships held them in good stead in many ways, but which also fostered the idea that an inevitable historical and almost cyclical role of the youth organization was to straighten

out the party as it inevitably degenerated politically in periods of political quiescence. I know our generation of the YSA was very conscious of this because this was a theory that several of the Wohlforthites held, that it was inevitable in periods of prosperity or reaction that a revolutionary workers party would politically degenerate and the youth group, as such, not acting as party cadres, had to split whatever proletarian or revolutionary kernel that was left to re-form a revolutionary party. This theory or attitude has been absent from the YSA.

A third important factor that is probably unique in socialist youth organizations has been the basic absence of factionalism in the Young Socialist Alliance. This has been important to the YSA's growth and advancement. Factionalism -- by that I mean deepgoing premature divisions, permanent cliques, regular factional battles -- is one of the standard diseases that often afflicts youth organizations and cuts into their ability to function. There are differences argued out in the YSA, and it's clear there will no longer be a YSA convention where there are unanimous votes on reports. That's part of the health and growth of the YSA, and reflects the arena YSAers work in, but that's different from factionalism, from a group of young politicians (or not-so-young "professional youth") who think factionalizing is "real" politics.

There's probably one very simple reason why this has been true, and that is the lack of factionalism within, and the character of the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party in this past period. Other than the concrete origins of the YSA that I've mentioned, there's nothing else that differentiates the YSA members from the kind of youth that the revolutionary movement has attracted before.

Fourth is the capacity of the party to be completely flexible in its organizational relations vis à vis the youth. To know when to leave people in the YSA for a long period of time and when not to overwhelm or stand over the YSA, and when to begin going through the process of removing party activists, younger party comrades, from the YSA so its national leadership and functioning local leadership can itself reflect the changing age level and character of the YSA.

It is clear that without the YSA and without a YSA of basically this character, it would have been politically impossible for the party to have made the kind of gains that it's made in the last decade, and to be in the situation it is

today. At the same time it is clear that this character of the YSA is to a large degree a function of the political and organizational capacities of the party.

So in all three of these areas -- the objective political climate, the relationship of forces, and the internal situation the Trotskyist movement finds itself in -- we believe we are in a qualitatively more favorable position than at any time in our history.

The Debs Period, the Thirties and Today

It's helpful to glance back at the two previous radicalizations in the United States in this century. One, the radicalization of the Debs period, and two, the radicalization of the thirties. It's important to do this to at least see in outline form what factors explained these radicalizations and how an understanding of this can help us in understanding the character of this radicalization.

The Debsian radicalization was attributable basically to three factors: rapid industrialization, the beginning of urbanization, and the large waves of immigrant labor into the United States. These three factors more than anything else came together to give the specific characteristics to the political radicalization that took place then.

The radicalization of the thirties, up until the early forties, was basically attributable to deep economic depression, and the fear of fascism and of war.

Each of these radicalizations was quite different, had different characteristics and features and was responsive to a very different set of circumstances created by capitalism as it passed through different stages. We won't see the same kind of radicalization as occurred in the Debs period unless we see a repeat of these conditions -- unrestrained industrialization, urbanization and immigration. And we won't see anything like the kind of radicalization that we saw in the thirties unless or until conditions of deep economic depression and a large and unorganized industrial working class are re-created.

Today, the radicalization is different. Basically, it is a consequence of the long and extended death agony of capitalism, and of the beginning of the Black struggle at home and the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions abroad. The essence of this radicalization has been in one form or another, a growing alienation from a capitalist society which more and more becomes objectively overripe for revolution, but continues on in its death agony, and in a way that makes its contradictions more and more obvious, even to high school students.

In the discussion in the Political Committee Comrade Breitman reminded us that the best generals of a former war are often the worst ones to understand the tactics of the new war. This is so to a large degree because they understood the tactics and strategy of the old war so well, and the new war is different from the old war. That's like the old joke about ROTC. (Students used to joke about it instead of abolishing it!) ROTC teaches college students how to fight the previous war. George's point was that this was one of the challenges that all radicals face as a new radicalization begins. That is, the challenge to be able to see it not simply as an extension of, or repeating the same forms, of the previous radicalization. That was part of the crime of what, legitimately, could be called the real "old left." And at the same time not rejecting, just because of the unique features of the radicalization, the method, principled program, and strategic concepts acquired by the Marxist movement. These are the only tools that can enable you to understand as a revolutionist the new forms of the radicalization. It was here a lot of the "new left" faltered. It was by avoiding these two blunders, by demonstrating a capacity to understand and to throw ourselves into the struggles of the radicalization as principled socialists, that the Socialist Workers Party stood apart from both the "new left" currents and from the other established socialist tendencies.

The Key Role of the National Question

One of the keys to understanding this radicalization is to understand that many of its characteristics were embodied in the early Black radicalization and the rise of Black nationalism. This very complex, but at the same time very important form of the class struggle, the national struggle, found re-invigoration and began coming forward on the soil of American capitalism. Its special characteristics were independence, self-organization, self-confidence, and self-mobilization as an independent force prior to major alliances with other forces, and most important its radicalization outside the control or influence, directly or indirectly, of the trade union bureaucracy or Stalinist party, have been both the models and inspirations for and key characteristics of the other radicalized layers that have developed.

A real understanding of this, to a large degree, explains the character and pace of our growth in the last few years. It was the party's capacity to come to grips with the national question, by studying and participating in the rise of the Black radicalization, and the

absorption of the lessons involved by our cadre that we more swiftly understood, developed programs for, and intervened in the antiwar movement, student movement, women's liberation movement, Chicano radicalization, etc. [See "Black Nationalism, Class Struggle and Party History" by George Breitman, SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 27 No. 12, 1969, 50 cents, for further discussion of these problems.]

It is important to remember that the specific character, the conquests and defeats, of a radicalization largely determine what the early stage of the next one cannot be. In response to the deep depression, the great victory of the social movement that was the CIO was the establishment of massive industrial unions, embracing a large percentage of the industrial working class. But this movement ended at the level of economic organization; the great industrial unions did not go ahead and forge their political instrument, the labor party. The economic evolution of American capitalism in the forties and fifties, with no organized mass political opposition, deeply encrusted on top of these mass industrial unions a conservative bureaucracy.

The same economic and social evolution of American capitalism on a world scale that deeply encrusted this conservative bureaucracy on top of the CIO began, in the early 1960's, breeding the current radicalization. As this occurred, large parts of the industrial working class found themselves not facing a depression and unorganized, but in the midst of a relative prosperity, organized economically in what had become very conservatized institutions, the bureaucratized American union movement.

Thus, what we see is a political radicalization reflecting the emerging worldwide political crisis of capitalism, in which the initial blows against class peace are struck by Afro-Americans as Afro-Americans, by women as women, GIs as GIs, youth as youth, students as students -- outside the union movement. This is the form. The struggles against American capitalism have been taking the form of these categories basically, even though many of these Blacks, women, youth, GIs and even some students are workers, and some organized industrial workers. It is in this way that the attacks on class peace and on the policies of class collaboration that dominated the 1950's began.

It is interesting to note that in Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay, Trotsky pointed out that in a period where the unions have become more and more integrated with the state and encrusted with the bureaucratic, con-

servative petty-bourgeoisified lieutenants and sergeants and corporals of the ruling class, that the beginning and extension of organization and struggle outside the union movement is one of the key pre-conditions to prepare the transformation of the unions themselves into revolutionary instruments of struggle. It is not surprising that we have seen these struggles of the 1960's -- complex and partially hidden forms of the class struggle -- the antiwar demonstrations, nationalist revolts, student actions, women's demonstrations, begin to affect the political consciousness of the American workers, in spite of the union bureaucracy and its seemingly confident hold on the organized workers through its control of the office-holders in the union movement.

The Afro-American Struggle Since the Convention

With the exception of the announcement of the antiwar referendum and the continuation of some of the campus struggles and the struggles for Black jobs, the lull in the Black struggle that we noted at the convention continues. The basic views and ideas of the convention report still stand and are still accurate on this [See "Report on the Transitional Program for Black Liberation," by Clifton DeBerry, Internal Information Bulletin No. 6 in 1969, 20 cents.]

There has been a further development of the crisis of leadership in the Afro-American community. This has been emphasized by the continued decline of the Black Panther Party since our convention. That decline represents a good example of how it takes more than a sincere proclamation of yourself as a revolutionary or the substitution of genuine militancy for a revolutionary strategy, to be a revolutionary.

First, early in their development, the Black Panthers basically took the important concept of self-defense and turned it from a tactic into almost a substitute for a political strategy, and they took its basic character as a mass concept and turned it into an individual concept, the principle of the arming of a handful -- "by twos and threes." Secondly, although they evinced an initial interest in the central need for a mass independent Black political party they were disoriented by the Peace and Freedom Party experience, and then got sucked in by the Stalinists, which process was topped off by the United Front Against Fascism conference. This really symbolized the turn from the logic of revolutionary nationalism to a popular-frontish "Marxism-Leninism" with ultraleft rhetoric. They continued to bypass any electoral initiative based around a transitional strategy of Black

control even though they called themselves a party in the struggle. This evolution opened them up to victimization as the hatred of the ruling class for these Black militants came out into the open in a concerted national campaign, as the Panthers said, as we said, to go after the militant wing of the Afro-American struggle by a literally murderous campaign against the Panthers.

The first response to the decline of the Panthers has not been the development of an alternative leadership, but the initial stage of rejecting part of the evolution of the Black Panther Party and trying to think out what errors were made. What this does in many ways is open up a layer of Black youth directly to our ideas and influence. A layer that in an earlier period would have been blocked off because of their view of the Panthers and of us. This has been especially true on the high school and college campuses, many of which the Panthers dominated until very recently. It is here that the most political and most direct rethinking of the entire experience of the Black Panthers is going on, and where our biggest opportunities for recruitment lie.

Comrades will remember that it was the Panthers themselves who earlier launched a series of attacks on the Black Student Unions. And it's not just the overt signs of the possibilities of openings in this area, like the endorsement Herman Fagg received, but the obvious possibilities for political discussion among Black students that's key. And it is here that the largest possibilities exist for the very important recruitment of Third World cadre. It is also here, more than likely, that a significant percentage of the leadership in the next stage of the struggle of the Black community resides. Of course the main instrument of involvement in this area will be the YSA, but the party can play a big role in this also.

One final thing we wanted to mention. That is, we have not been utilizing and developing, in our election campaigns, the concept of Black control of the Black community like hoped to. Concretizing Black control of the Black community as we did in our Transitional Program for Black Liberation and applying it to the day-to-day struggle in different areas is central to our propaganda and education. It points the way to mass political actions of all kinds and is the nucleus of a fighting program of a mass Black political party. It remains the key to the mobilization of the Afro-American community in political struggle.

I thought our weakness here was especially noticable in a couple of the initial 1970 campaign brochures. This the weakest side of what was an excellent

initial New York state campaign brochure. The section on the war and the section on women's liberation were strong and concrete; the section on the Afro-American struggle stated the need for an independent Black party but not the concretization of different transitional and democratic demands around Black control of the Black community.

While our main recruitment of Black comrades has been from the campus, an omen of the future has been the attraction to our movement of a small number of non-campus Afro-Americans. The concretization of our demands around the basic nationalist concept of Black control will be important for whatever openings there are in the Black community, especially for our candidates.

The Deepening Radicalization of the Oppressed Nationalities

One of the things that we wanted to discuss following the convention and look at more closely at this plenum is the radicalization of the other large national minorities, the Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and Native Americans. At this plenum we wanted to concentrate on the Chicanos, who compose between five and six million people, approximately 12% of the population of the Southwest (although we know you can't trust the Anglo census on this) and are the second largest oppressed nationality in this country.

What Trotsky explained it often takes a victorious revolution to do, that is, bring out with a rush the struggles of the most oppressed and smallest national minorities, has begun prior to a revolution in this country. This is one of the verifications of the depth of the current radicalization. The radicalization and the example and characteristics of the Afro-American struggle has brought forth a race, group, national consciousness in all the oppressed nationalities; a self-confidence, a militancy, a tendency to grope toward independent militant action; a growing consciousness of the right to self-determination and the need to fight to regain control over their own destinies.

This is not just a United States trend. It appears on a world scale as a reaction to the extended death agony of capitalism and in emulation of the anti-imperialist struggles of the colonial peoples, and puts its stamp on the current stage of world history. In the advanced capitalist countries themselves the national struggle has reappeared in new explosive forms. We see it in the news this week in Ireland, in Belgium, in Canada. This phenomenon is not restricted to the

capitalist countries either, as the Soviet bureaucracy faces a growing crisis in the form of the unresolved questions of self-determination. Their justified fear of the Czech May on the Ukrainians is a recent vivid example.

The national minorities existing within the borders of the United States are not identical to the classical oppressed nations we've studied. They have their own unique characteristics determined by the development of American capitalism. The convention political resolution outlined the stages of development of American capitalism: the genocidal slaughtering of the Native Americans and the ultimate forcing of the survivors into reservations; the establishment of the cotton slave South and its overthrow; the incorporation of entire sections of Mexico into the United States; these were the very processes which incorporated these minorities into American capitalism. It incorporated them and then, especially after the defeat of Reconstruction, the rise of American imperialism and the incorporation of part of the Spanish empire, it deepened and rationalized racism to use each and every one of them as a mighty low-wage pool and reserve army of labor and to deepen the divisions among the working masses.

Comrades should go back and read the memorandum Comrade Garza prepared for the last convention. [See SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 3, No. 3, 1969, 45 cents.] It outlines how this process manifested itself in the evolution of the Chicano and Puerto Rican people in this country. They were psychologically brought together through the decades of segregation, discrimination, group exploitation, until their consciousness of themselves as an oppressed group, as an oppressed nationality, as an oppressed race exploded and became overt. Liberal capitalism's plea that they now should strive for individual progress and that they're not really a group, and if one of them works hard and educates himself he can integrate himself into American imperialism, is a little late and a little historically pathetic, as an alternative to self-determination for the young generations of Afro-Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and Native Americans.

The central axis of each of these nationality's struggles is independent control of their own lives and their own destinies. The common thrust of their radicalization is the search for a way to organize around different issues to politically unify themselves to be able to self-confidently enter into broader struggles and test broader alliances.

The resolution our 1963 convention passed on Black nationalism stated simply that " a certain group of people,

living in a certain place, has decided to begin taking its political destiny into its own hands." That was an elementary definition of nationalism. "Applied to the United States," we said, "as it was meant to be, this means that the large numbers of Negroes have decided, and more are in the process of deciding, that they cannot leave their future in the hands of the white oppressors but must unite with other Negroes and decide for themselves what they want in and from the United States.

"This consciousness is the basic feature of Negro nationalism today. It is expressed in various ways -- most commonly in the stimulation of racial pride, declarations of independence, the desire for Negro leadership and control of the civil rights movement, mistrust of whites," and it is present to one degree or another in almost every organization in the Black community.

That elementary description of nationalist sentiment we outlined in 1963 has exploded beyond the Afro-American people to the other national minorities. Just in the few months since the convention we've seen additional examples of the Native American radicalization including the national publicity impact of the Alcatraz occupation. Among the Puerto Ricans, whose struggles have lagged in many ways for the reasons that were outlined in Dick's memorandum, we saw the explosion of the campus and mass anti-draft actions in Puerto Rico itself. Here we saw the rise of the Young Lords, who, with their various political weaknesses are symbolic of the radicalization; the welfare struggles led by the New York Puerto Ricans as such, organized and identified as such, consciously differentiating themselves from the Afro-Americans; the struggles in the various community colleges, including this week's demonstrations in the Bronx -- these are all signs of a change.

The radicalization of the Chicano nationalist movement has been the most striking and important and our comrades have been concretely involved in it. Since the convention the periodic explosions of the high school Chicano struggles have continued. Chicanos have, consciously, organized independent antiwar actions in several cities as part and parcel of the national antiwar action campaign. We saw the solidarity demonstrations and awakening identity with the Mexican students. Most importantly it is visible in the proposals raised by different vanguard groups and individuals, primarily in Texas and Colorado, to organize an independent Chicano political party.

Another way we can gauge the deepening nationalism and independent radical moods of the Chicano militants is in the CP's disappointment in some of its manifestations. For several days the Daily World -- that's the American counterpart to the Morning Star -- ran a big build-up about the importance of the Congress of Mexican-American Unity, which was scheduled to meet at East Los Angeles College. And it was an important conference. But it was easy to tell by the Stalinists' articles that the most important thing was the dramatic unity this conference was going to demonstrate between militant Chicanos and the "progressive" wing of the Chicano community -- a unity especially to get behind key "people's Democrats" like Royball.

After these several days of articles with this tone the conference occurred and the Daily World reported it. They describe how large it was, how the attendance exceeded previous conferences, how surprising was the breadth of organizations that attended, caucuses from the unions for the first time in large number, etc. Then, when they can no longer avoid it, they say, "A surprising highlight came in the closing hours when the convention refused to endorse Rep. Edward Royball, the only Mexican-American congressman from California. The younger delegates were critical of Royball's failure to involve himself more in the movements of the barrio, even though many delegates explained how much he had done to help former narcotic addicts and other things. It is assumed [hoped for!] that even though the delegates rejected endorsing Royball, that the executive board of the CMAU will endorse him later." How that captures the Stalinists' approach!

Then they list some of the things that were done by the conference after this surprising and disappointing "highlight": the protest against the imprisoning of Mexican students from October 1968, a demonstration against it and a call for picketing or representatives of the Mexican government in this country; "a pledge to defend the rights of our brothers and sisters who are here without documents, and who are continually harassed by Immigration; opposition to bussing Chicano school children and for the creation of our own Chicano school system with its own board elected and controlled by the Chicano community." And this was not like a radical youth conference, this was a much broader gathering.

The Independent Chicano Political Party

There have been several initiatives in the direction of independent Chicano political action. There is the Texas development, with the announcement of the independence of La Raza Unida Party and

the need for independent Chicano political action in Texas; the Crusade for Justice call for the second Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver, with the explicit point of an independent Chicano party on the agenda to be discussed and implemented; and the Hayward symposium which our comrades took part in with Gonzales and other figures. The Militant is going to run much of that symposium next week [See The Militant of March 13, 1970].

These are all important notwithstanding their initial preliminary character, because of the long and deep tie that the Chicano community has had with the Democratic Party. This tie, like that of the Black community, has been and remains the biggest obstacle to building various independent mass political actions and to the struggle for self-determination. This problem is reflected in some of the major public figures of the Chicano movement, like Tijerina and Chavez, who are tied in closely with the reform wings of the Democratic Party. There is also the pressure toward popular front politics exerted by the CP members who are involved, in more sizable numbers than we are at this stage, in the various organizations of the Chicano community.

Thus, as with the Afro-Americans, a political break from this Democratic Party domination which is rationalized partially by the absence of an alternative political perspective, is key. What we are looking for today are concrete openings, levers for raising the concept of the need for and possibility of mass independent political action by the various oppressed national minorities. We're not primarily concerned with what's going to happen a year from now or several years from now, with what will happen if a labor party is formed, what will happen if a Black party is formed, what kind of political coalitions may be established, etc. We do not know. What we do know is that a movement toward, and agitation for, education for, discussion about a genuine independent political break with the capitalist parties by one of the national minorities oppressed by the ruling class, regardless of whether or not it is explicitly anti-capitalist to begin with, is a step toward mass mobilization, toward inspiring deepened independent struggles for self-determination, and toward dealing a blow to the capitalist two-party shell game that politically holds in check the oppressed national minorities and American labor.

What we propose to do at the Denver conference, as was outlined in the report Joel Britton gave to the Political Committee following his trip to the Southwest and discussions with the branch

organizers and Latino comrades, is to participate in the antiwar, women's liberation, internationalism and defense workshops along the lines we have previously; to begin to make suggested additions to the program of Aztlan to give it a broader transitional character; and to support and urge initiatives toward an independent Chicano political party with the perspective of becoming a mass political party. I should add that this will be our largest participation in any conference of this kind.

We do not know, over time, what types of political alliances are going to develop among the oppressed nationalities. It is safe to assume that there will be alliances, there will be slates combining parties' candidates, common actions, different forms of electoral, political, and united front alliances. This is in the cards, and as long as it keeps heading away from connections with the capitalist parties, this will be progressive, another step forward. The important thing for us to remember is that a political break, by a section of any of the national minorities toward its own political organization, its own independent political formation, is a step not away from alliances, either with other oppressed nationalities, independent labor formations, or with revolutionary socialist forces, but an initial and indispensable step toward it.

It is a mistake to impose a one-sided "Third-Worldism" on the various national minorities. The desire for Black unity is not basically anti-white, it is pro-Black. The same is true of Puerto Rican unity, Chicano unity, Native-American unity, etc. Radicalized Chicanos do not at all reject politically advantageous alliances with, for instance, Black organizations. But the independent organization, mobilization, unity and self-confidence of their own people is a precondition of such an alliance if it is to be successful.

Joel brought back a story from Colorado that is symbolic of this. I don't know how many of the comrades have seen the antiwar poster that was put out in Denver, which shows a large Chicano high school demonstration coming down the street. And on top of this mass march is super-imposed a big picture of Andrew Pulley with his clenched fist in the air. When I first saw the poster, it seemed maybe a little left, but OK, a good poster. The important thing was that many of the Chicano youth resented that poster. Not because they don't admire and want to work with Andrew Pulley, not because there's any question in their minds about antiwar alliances with forces he represents, but because the picture stood in the way of the impact of the Chicano high-schoolers getting themselves

together.

We're going to see all kinds of combinations (principled, we hope) and alliances (revolutionary, we hope). We can't even be absolutely positive whether the first going mass independent party will be a party of one of the oppressed nationalities or a labor party. It seems likely that it will be the former, but the latter is not precluded. We will see unexpected combinations of these breaks from the tutelage of the capitalist parties. Even a one-county break, if it is genuinely independent, like the Lowndes County experience, is an important step forward in the framework of the radicalization. But a precondition to alliances, and the biggest step toward them, is the independent political organization of any one of the oppressed national minorities. There are different problems, different struggles, and different conditions that they face. We know this.

Lessons of the Freedom Now Party Experience

We should add a note of caution and review some of the lessons we learned from the Freedom Now Party experience. We should be conscious of these lessons as we involve ourselves in, begin collaborating with and participating in the initial movements toward an independent Chicano political party. In The Case for a Black Party we drew one of the lessons:

"A new mass party cannot simply be proclaimed. It has to be created by passing through a series of stages. It has to have an initial stage of education and propaganda devoted to developing and clarifying its basic ideas, testing out its program, and training its cadres. Instead of concentrating at the start on clarifying the nature and problem of the new party for themselves and their followers, and instead of developing a realistic long-range, as well as immediate objective, the Freedom Now Party leaders tended to pin all their hopes on a big vote in their very first election campaign."

This is important in the current situation as the Chicano movement faces divisions within itself, as well as continual Democratic Party pressure and maneuvers (aided by CPers and Peace and Freedom types) to draw it back into capitalist politics. Remember that Reverend Cleage and some other FNP leaders eventually returned to the Democratic Party.

In The Case for a Black Party we said:

"Most of the Michigan leaders became discouraged when the party received only

five thousand votes. Instead of regarding this support for a new, untried, unpopulared, largely unexplained movement as the beginning basis for sustained education and organization, they saw the low vote as evidence of total failure.

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

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

We should add another lesson. The development of the discussion about a Chicano party comes after a number of lessons and ideological stages in the development of the Afro-American struggle. Today we see clearly the importance from the beginning of the Chicano party, of developing some initial programmatic points, democratic and transitional demands suited to the national minority itself, which contains the realistic perspective of going from a small propaganda group to a party of mass action. And this must be part and parcel of the initial propaganda carried out by this party, and of the initial education of its cadres.

At the same time we can't jump to a full transitional program for Chicano liberation by simply changing the word "Black" to the word "Chicano" in the Transitional Program for Black Liberation. That's not how it is done. That resolution came out of the concrete experiences and development of the Afro-American struggle. A transitional program for Chicano liberation will be produced a lot faster because of the experience in the Black struggle and the stage of the radicalization, but it won't appear by simply substituting "Chicano" for "Black."

If we keep these cautions in mind, we can play, on the basis of our earlier Freedom Now Party experiences, and with a larger Latino cadre, an important role in the Chicano party experience. We know that initial attempts to form an independent party don't always work out. But the chances for a positive outcome can only be enhanced by our principled participation.

I don't have to outline the political impact on the Afro-American movement, on the labor movement in the Southwest, on the student movement, etc. if there are initial meaningful steps toward a genuinely independent Chicano political party. We've discussed that before.

I won't go into the question of women's liberation, because there is going to be an entire separate report and discussion on it. [See The Militant of April 3, 1970, or The Politics of Women's Liberation Today, available from Pathfinder Press, 25 cents.] I would just like to make one observation. The most concrete objective sign about the depth of the radicalization is the beginning of the radicalization at this stage of women themselves. Historically it has been late in most revolutionary periods that women, whose forms and characteristics of oppression and exploitation are rooted in the rise of class society before capitalism and are encrusted over and obfuscated by the most persistent reactionary bourgeois ideology, begin openly organizing and developing an independent radical movement in their own interest.

Labor and the Radicalization

Since our convention there have been no major objective changes in the labor movement. There have been some important developments and these are outlined in the memorandum in the kits that Frank Lovell presented to the Political Committee. Maybe the biggest change since the convention actually is an internal party one. That is, our increased coverage and analysis of the labor movement, and Frank's visits. We have begun doing what we agreed to at the convention, keeping a closer eye on the developments in the labor movement.

We should say a word about what may be a new stage in the new left, the new radicals' view of labor, and our responsibilities toward it. We no longer hear the same total rejection of labor as a potential revolutionary force. There is growing hope, open-mindedness to how things might develop, and a lot of illusions and confusions. There has been a change over the decade -- marked in the last couple of years since the French May events -- in the attitude of the younger radicals. There is less emphasis on questions like, "are the workers a force in capitalist society," or "do the workers as a class have any basic conflict themselves with this rotten system," and more questions, like, "how can these conflicts and this force be translated into revolutionary action" and "what connections" -- (they don't really think there are many) -- "to this

current radicalization does labor have."

There are two basic confusions and two basic errors that continue to lie underneath this. First, they often tend to identify the working class as a whole with the union movement. They often think of these two as the same thing. Second, they identify the union movement with the policies of the class collaborationist labor bureaucracy. Thus, by making these two basic errors, they miss all the key connections that they are looking for. They miss the pressure of the working class itself, into and on the union movement, through the radicalization and independent struggles of youth, of Afro-Americans, Chicanos, of other national minorities, of women, through the growth of more antiwar, anti-imperialist, anti-chauvinist sentiments. They miss the initial political blows against the reactionary cold war foundation of class collaboration and thus against the bureaucracy, that are dealt by the change in the American political climate. They don't think of labor when they think of the Americans' reactions against the general effects of pollution, the growing desire to control one's own life, deep feelings of alienation in the changed objective political climate. In fact, one of the worst blindnesses some of the student radicals have is the unspoken premise that they have a monopoly on alienation, and opposition to environmental pollution.

The broad awakening of the American people, in one way or another, to these questions not only affects the workers as individuals, but directly affects the working class as workers on the job and in their neighborhoods. But if one identifies the working class with the unions as they are today he sees little reaction to these issues; and if he identifies union members with the phony rhetoric of the bureaucrats on most of these questions, he misses the changes that are taking place.

There is a growing disequilibrium inside the labor movement itself, between the class-struggle mood, even over reforms at this stage, of the rank and file, especially the younger militants, in the radical atmosphere these take place in, and the class collaborationist crust that has been imposed on this movement for so many years. The bureaucrats -- a little sharper than some of the students -- know the workers are not only unionists but also youth, Afro-Americans, radicalizing women, antiwar people. Over time, there will be an important connection between this broad political radicalization and the elementary defensive struggles inside the union movement, with the workers utilizing the only instrument they have to change their wages, hours and working conditions, that's the unions

themselves. It is this which we are in a unique position to educate about.

It's ironic that there is no indication that those layers of radicals who are so concerned about the year of repression, even of possible fascism, made any connection whatsoever between the ability of the GE strike to be won the way it was, and their concept of 1970 as the general year of repression, the year of fascism. They made no connection between the political analysis they made and this fact of the class struggle. I've not seen a single piece of evidence of that in the press of the entire radical movement.

As we watch the working class as a whole, not just the union movement, we see signs of some of the same features that we see in the general radicalization, including deepening generational conflicts.

We have already seen the beginning of the tendency for some working class militants, regardless of what issues they're struggling over, to emulate the struggles that are going on concretely in society -- the struggles of the Blacks, the national minorities, the students, the antiwar fighters. And secondly, we see some individuals attracted to the party or organizations leading these general struggles because that is a proof it is a conceivable party of their struggles. That is our most direct road to the recruitment of young workers today.

We should continue to educate for the need to fight against all manifestations of the integration of the unions with the capitalist state. For the independence of the unions, for rank and file democracy, for the right to vote on all contracts.

After the discussion at the convention on the importance of not separating the sliding scale of wages from the sliding scale of hours, especially in a period where unemployment is going to rise as inflation continues, we noticed that at least two of our campaign brochures did just that and one did not even mention the sliding scale of hours and wages. In our education we have to explain that the sliding scale of wages and hours is the only elementary protection the wage and salary worker has against the inflationary and recessionary effects of the growing international competition of the big capitalist countries. And we also connect this with our unconditional fight for Black jobs, Chicano jobs, women's jobs and their preferential hiring and upgrading. These points are combined and fought for together by a conscious party whose job is to unify the general interests of the

working class around these struggles against the bosses and their state. If these are separated, the fight becomes utopian.

The Communist Party, Terrorism, and the Threat of Repression

It's clear that one of the factors behind the CP's attempt to form a youth organization is their incapacity to face up to or combat the YSA. In their own way they are very sensitive, more than any other tendency outside ourselves, to the deepening radicalization and its effects on the working class. That's one of the things involved with their concept of the Young Workers' Liberation League and their "industrial concentration" plan. For their own reasons, for their own reformist political ends, and as a transmission belt to the lower rungs of the union officialdom, they are attempting to recruit, propagandize and learn from the changes in the working class. It is important to keep an eye on this, to continue and deepen our educational job, like Tom Cagle's articles, articles by Trotskyist unionists in their own names, in The Militant.

At the convention we discussed the question of repression and rejected as wrong the idea that a big crackdown, a form of McCarthyism, could be used to cut off this radicalization prior to broader mass battles. The only new thing we should add to that analysis is the question of racism. Even after we convince people of the analysis we made at the convention the question is raised, "Well, all right, but can't racism be used to further divide the masses and reverse this radicalization?" The answer is no.

Racism can be used to slow down a radicalization, it can be used to exclude certain strata from initial stages of the radicalization, but not in and of itself can it be used to stop or reverse it. Quite the contrary, there is something quite different built into the ruling class' attempt to use racism to reverse the radicalization. That is, the example of struggle of those who are racially discriminated against, or who you have racist attitudes towards, when you develop political grievances and start to fight, tends to reverse the attitude on this question to one of cautious respect and then emulation. It will not occur exactly the same way in the broader mass movement as it did in the student movement, but we should not have the illusion that the white students of this country of the late 1950's and early 1960's no matter what their class background, were not prejudiced and to some degree racist. It was the struggles of the Blacks, coinciding with growing student struggles themselves, which reversed much of their racism.

It's clear that we'll have to do more work in polemicizing against and grappling with some of the trends toward terrorism and ultraleftism. There are genuine terrorist tendencies, even if small in number, which exist in the left. There has been a series of terrorist bombings since our convention. We have to find ways and means of combating this because these are currents that play right into the hands of the ruling class and its agents provocateurs, its police entrapment and murderous assaults.

Another thing is increasingly clear, and that is as we steadily move more into the center of the American radical movement, while it's not necessarily true that there will be an increase in repression, it is clearly true, and we have some initial evidence for this, that we will start getting an increased percentage of the extra-legal and legal attacks that occur. The Legion of Justice experiences in Chicago and the terrorist attacks in Houston point this out. The capacity of the Chicago comrades and the Houston comrades to react immediately and mobilize themselves brought forward layers of people that had had the same problem but had been unsure or incapable of doing anything about it. The most amazing thing of the Chicago and Houston experiences, even at their initial stage, was how once the party and YSA stepped forward, answered these attacks and began a counter-campaign, we began to get phone calls and visits from all kinds of people who had had similar attacks, who had looked for leadership, and who had previously found no leadership whatsoever in combating this thing.

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There is a growing opportunity to convince increasing numbers of Americans of the need for and possibility of constructing a real multinational revolutionary socialist combat party; a party that confidently applies the transitional program and intends to transform itself, over time, from a small group to a party of mass action. We remain, of course, in a propaganda period, but a period in which it's becoming increasingly possible to use propaganda actions to mobilize and lead growing numbers of people in actions. The antiwar movement has been the best example of this so far, and one which shows how we can at the same time strengthen our tendency.

It is important that we remember two aspects of the combat party. We are not only a party that intends at some stage to go into combat as the leadership of the masses against the ruling class, but we are a party that acts today in such a way that it is continually preparing and deepening its ability to do just that when the time comes.

POLITICAL REPORT TO THE 23RD NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

by Jack Barnes

The draft political resolution that is before this convention is different from many recent political resolutions. The resolution discussed and adopted at our last convention, for example, centered around the immediate conjunctural tasks of the party in light of the 1968 elections. This time the Political Committee's purpose was to step back from the conjuncture and try to take a broader look at the forces involved in this stage of the radicalization and the long-run perspectives of the third American revolution. The convention agenda was planned with this purpose in mind. The other reports and resolutions delineate the conjunctural tasks and campaigns of the party. The antiwar resolution and report summarize our work and discuss the remainder of the campaign for the Nov. 15 mass action. The youth report will present the campaigns undertaken by the youth, including those in which the party will be collaborating. There will be a report and discussion on the Transitional Program for Black Liberation and a national fraction meeting of all comrades actively engaged in black and third world work, to share experiences and discuss practical implementation of the resolution. Finally, the organizational report will lay out the party's campaigns, much of which was presented in the report from the last plenum and the panels on circulation and use of our press and the expansion of our publication program. Several panels will give us the opportunity to discuss our initial evaluation of experiences in the struggles of other oppressed national minorities and the impact of the developing women's liberation movement. These very important panels deal with questions central to our perspectives for the coming American revolution and must be incorporated in the political resolution as we draw together our experiences and evaluations in these areas.

The party has several times before stepped back for a moment to take a broader and longer view. It was done in 1938, 1946, and 1952. In 1938, for instance, we were on the eve of the founding of the 4th International, and much of the discussion prior to the founding convention of our party revolved around the transitional program which was formally adopted for the first time at the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

In 1946, we were in the midst of an upsurge in the class struggle and it was necessary and fruitful to step back again. Not only had the party gone through its

most rapid growth but at the same time there had developed inside the party a challenge to its basic perspectives. So at the 1946 convention, in the report and discussion on the draft Theses on the American Revolution, a basic perspective was affirmed. We challenged the concept of the American century, that is the long term perspective of the international stability of post-World-War-II American capitalism. The central concept we counterposed to the American century was that the post-war expansion of American imperialism as a gigantic world power rooted it in all the powder kegs of the world. Far from the American century, we foresaw a period of explosions, often fomented by and involving American imperialism. We said that the socialist revolution in the United States was not a nebulous perspective far in the future, but the perspective for our epoch. And we reaffirmed our view that the American workers were the force that could and would carry out this revolution. Finally, we stated that one of the keys to our internationalism was stating clearly that the central task of the American revolutionary party was organizing for and leading the American revolution, and that the SWP was the nucleus of this party.

By 1952 the party faced a different conjunctural situation. A decline in objective possibilities had taken place: the rise of McCarthyism, the beginning of the postwar prosperity, and the retreat of the labor movement precipitated another internal challenge to the party's perspectives. This took the form of a search for alternatives to a mass revolutionary socialist party, of which the SWP was the nucleus, to lead the American revolution. So in 1952 the party again stepped back and reaffirmed the four basic points laid down in 1946. It also affirmed two other points.

In the midst of McCarthyism, and in the midst of the beginning of the boom, we rejected the notion that Stalinism could be reformed and become the leadership that could win a socialist world. We said that far from heading towards this kind of reform, Stalinism was headed toward an inevitable disintegration.

Secondly, we rejected the concept that the Reuther wing, or any other wing of the American labor bureaucracy could do this job. We predicted that the Reuther wing of the bureaucracy would always be too late with too little.

Today, almost a quarter of a century since the 1946 discussion, an entirely new radicalization has begun.

So once again it's valuable to step back and take a long view. In one sense we are in a situation similar to 1946. That is, we're in the midst of a growth of social struggles and a growth of the party itself. The 1946 convention was the largest convention in the party's history. This convention will probably be even larger. At the same time, we face a challenge at this convention. But this time the challenge is not internal. There is no division in the party over the basic perspectives we have been developing. But we face a very big external challenge. Thousands upon thousands of young militants are looking for answers to basic political questions. In one way or another the newly radicalizing forces are asking "can it happen here? With what forces, around what program, and with what concepts can a leadership (if it is necessary!) be built to lead the American socialist revolution?" In answer to these questions they are being offered alternatives by all tendencies in the radical movement, by our party and by our various opponents.

The new international and national events have verified the basic perspectives we outlined in 1938, 1946 and 1952 -- not all the conjunctural predictions of the party, but the basic perspectives of revolutionary change, and the exclusion of the possibility of a reform of the labor bureaucracy or Stalinism into revolutionary instruments. In that sense, the discussion at this convention is a continuation of these previous discussions. At the same time the developments which we've observed in the last time period have given new understanding and a clearer and more concrete perspective for the actual course of the coming revolutionary struggles in this country. But even here, we stress the continuity with the past. If we think back to the new phenomena that we analyzed in the resolution and the new perspectives which are drawn from them we see that the main tools we used were a correct analysis of the national question, the concept of the Permanent Revolution, the character and need for a Leninist Party, the concept of uneven and combined development, and the character of the imperialist stage of capitalism. This is part of the basic political capital of the Socialist Workers Party, of the Bolshevik movement, of 50 years of American communism.

It's important to note the way a resolution like this comes into being. It doesn't represent simply an extension of previous resolutions or the result of an evolution from previous resolutions to one which is a little more general. In the last few years the party has been grappling with the new phenomena of this radicalization. We've taken part in new struggles, tested our ideas and presented

them in our publications. In this process we have been approaching a more concrete and comprehensive understanding of the perspectives for the American socialist revolution. Unlike some other resolutions, this one does not flow from several discussions in the Political Committee, but rather from several years of discussion on all aspects of the new radicalization and its perspectives. In that sense it's important to understand the spirit of the report for the Political Committee. We present the general line of the resolution for discussion and approval to guide the work of the incoming National Committee. At the same time the outgoing National Committee proposes that sometime following the convention the party conduct a literary discussion around the points raised in the resolution and the points I outlined earlier -- the national minorities and women's liberation -- which are being discussed at the panels and which will be incorporated by a National Committee plenum into a final amended resolution.

I'd like to outline the three key areas of the resolution. First, it examines the economic and structural roots that on a national and international scale underlie, feed and contribute to this radicalization. It examines how what looked at one time like an ascending world dominance of American imperialism was breeding the forces that would challenge it. Second, the resolution looks at the beginning of the radicalization in this country, its ideological features and its unique characteristics. Finally, in the light of this analysis, it outlines the forces that will be involved in the coming struggle for power in this country, and the kind of instrument necessary to lead these forces to victory. I'll concentrate most of the report on the elements of the resolution which are new, which are codified and put forth in resolution form for the first time.

* * *

The initial job of the resolution was to analyze the international role of American imperialism. Looking back over the last quarter century, we observe that the basic strategic goal of the U.S. ruling class has not changed one iota. That goal has been to rebuff the world revolution, stand up to the colonial revolution, with the ultimate aim of erasing all the conquests of the October revolution. It has been a consistent strategy but it has faced a barrier. In stage after stage the American rulers have been met and rebuffed on an international scale by a rise in the world revolution: by the colonial revolution; by a strengthening of the Soviet Union; by the victory in China; by opposition at home; by a series of events the resolution details. The resolution also notes that when American imperialism meets

a hesitating or vacillating response by its enemies it plunges forward, takes greater chances, and tries to probe further. On the other hand, when it is met by opposition, strength and determination, regardless of how the initial relationship of forces may appear, it is forced to draw back and readjust its timetable. This entire process is capsulized in the history of the Vietnam war.

We have seen a largescale expansion of the American economy, especially in the last decade. War spending and a generalized boom on an international scale have fueled the longest uninterrupted economic boom in American history. But this process itself has begun to breed the contradictions now standing in its way. The growth of inflation lessened the ability of American imperialism to use the dollar's special role as an international currency to "export" some inflationary pressures. As other capitalist countries introduced the most advanced technology into industry on a larger and larger scale, competition became much greater. Under these conditions pressure began mounting to force the American workers to pay for more of the expenses of American imperialism. This has meant an attack on their real income.

As the resolution states,

"The difficulties with the dollar coupled with the consequences of this intensified international competition will exert heavy pressure upon American big business to narrow the considerable wage differential they have been able to maintain over their foreign competitors. This they can do only by increasing pressure on wages, working conditions and the employment and at the cost of heating up the class struggle at home."

This underlies the perspectives for the deepening of the radicalization.

* * *

The current radicalization finds its historic roots in the late 1950's when the new stage in the struggle for black liberation began. It was the rise of the black struggle itself, the rise of mass demonstrations by people who had in the previous period gone through different experiences from the white workers and students, that launched the radicalization. These initiatives by the black masses began the process of sensitizing the political consciousness of a new generation. Blows were dealt to the illusions about the real character of American capitalism. The myth of the progressive, peace-loving character of American capitalism began to be torn away. The myth of American democracy was ques-

tioned. The phony version of history that underlay all the myths about the United States was challenged. This is a very basic point. The mass struggles by Afro-Americans, followed by the success of the Cuban Revolution, laid the groundwork for the change in the psychology and the political sensitivity of young Americans especially, and made possible the kind of response that Vietnam evoked.

Simultaneous with an increasingly inflationary boom, there began to occur some unexpected negative results (from the point of view of the ruling class). Instead of growing confidence in and growing satisfaction from the results of this economic expansion, there was growing dissatisfaction and increasing questioning of it. This mighty technological explosion made clearer, not so much the glory of American capitalism, but the gaps between what could be done and what was actually being done for the great majority. It became clearer that the capitalist rulers were willing to mobilize the power of the economic machine by socializing the costs of all kinds of projects -- going to the moon, massive research, building a gigantic military machine -- but somehow they were incapable of mobilizing the same forces to improve the basic needs of the working people.

The entire environment of the country -- the air, the water, resources, the living conditions -- seemed to deteriorate right in the midst of this boom. In meetings, over television, in the papers, in all kinds of ways, more and more people began to express the idea that the expansion of American capitalism coincided with a tendency for the entire system to fall apart. On the very day they went to the moon, they couldn't get the commuter trains running into Manhattan from Long Island. At the very time that they expend massive resources on destruction in Vietnam, more and more information is revealed about the destruction and perversion of the basic living conditions of the working people.

This general phenomenon is now beginning to sink into mass consciousness in many ways. One of the greatest instruments of the ruling class, the giant communications network, has effects which also turn against them. Their utilization of the media to herald their successes also helps make the contradictions of capitalism more clear, all the more rapidly, to a growing number of people.

There has arisen a questioning of all norms and all accepted values in every realm, not only the obvious ones such as the rise in consciousness in the national minorities and the begin-

ning of the questioning by women of all the accepted norms. In every nook and cranny of society -- religious circles, professional circles, even among Justice Department lawyers -- questions, dissension, refusal to accept the traditional paths as valid and the status quo as norms have thrust a challenge to the rule and ideology of the capitalist class.

This, of course, was accompanied by the phenomena that we're very familiar with, the deepening of the mass struggles, the deepening of the antiwar struggle and the ghetto explosions. But by examining these other phenomena we indicate the degree and universality of change that has occurred in the past period in the consciousness, sensitivity and credulity of the American people as a whole. Many radicals were not prepared for it, expecting to see these developments occur only during a major economic crisis.

What we are really beginning to see is an increasing awareness of the concrete manifestations of two of the most general and very abstract laws of Marxism: first is the growing contradiction between the potential of the advanced technology that is available under capitalism and the limitations put on its use by the capitalist system of private property; second is the contradiction between the tremendous internationalization of capital and the continued existence of autonomous nation-states with all that means in terms of the ruling class' prerogative to wage war (with the added implications of nuclear power) and to pursue objectives by methods delineated by the confines of each national ruling class. It is this, the most general type of crisis which capitalism can face, that is becoming more clear.

Even in the one area where the ruling class thought its position was secure -- the standard of living of the American workers -- problems began to develop. The very capacity to raise the living standards of the American workers and bring a whole layer of young workers into the work force, produces not so much a quieting effect, but something that becomes quite different as the radicalization develops. To these workers, the given standard is subsistence. It's very important to remember that subsistence is not a physical standard. It's a relative historical social standard. What the good lord capital giveth, the good lord capital cannot take away without massive resistance. And the more that has been attained the less willing are those who have it to give it up and the more confident they are about fighting to maintain it.

Finally, it is becoming more and more clear to people that they have absolutely no control over the important

decisions that are affecting their lives. Some force outside themselves, a force over which they have no control, makes all the decisions. This feeling is raised in all sorts of circles -- not only the black movement, not only the student movement, but in all types of circles.

This new radical consciousness raises a very important question. Is there reason and evidence to believe that this process of radicalization will continue to spread and deepen, or is it just a brief flurry, a reaction to a momentary crisis within the general context of a big expansion and forward march of imperialism? In other words, are we going to go forward to a more revolutionary decade in the 1970's or is the real truth that after this brief interlude of radicalism, we will head back to the political conservatism of the 50's.

There are two reasons that we think are proof that we are in the beginning of a certain type of radicalization that will not take us back to the 50's -- not without going through several decisive struggles first. One is that the roots of this crisis lie deep in the dilemma resulting from the expansion of American imperialism in the last 25 years. For the expansion of the U.S. as a world imperialist power has meant that it has become more deeply involved in all the powder kegs of the world. And, as the resolution states, "the very measures required to halt the world revolutionary process and defend American capitalism come into increasing conflict with the ability to maintain stability and class peace at home."

Secondly, this radicalization begins in the midst of a boom and in the midst of an imperialist war. In other words, the very means which have been utilized in the past by American capitalism to buy off and stifle revolutionary struggles have already lost much of their effectiveness. The problem before the American ruling class today is not how to stimulate some type of war-induced economic boom to pacify a restless population. On the contrary, they are looking for ways to crack down on the real wages and working conditions of the American workers in order to prevent a disastrous inflationary crisis. Similarly, they do not look toward the outbreak of a new war in order to arouse the American people into a patriotic fervor. Their problem is how to continue the present war without deepening the radicalization stimulated by that very phenomenon.

It's very important that these two points be emphasized, because in the other two major periods of radicalization, the '30's and the '40's, it was a combination of these two factors of economic

boom and war which were utilized successfully by the ruling class to dampen social struggles.

Thus the perspective is not one of a major reversal of the radicalization, but an increasing class polarization. There will be a continuing tendency in the coming period toward a breakdown of the relative equilibrium that has been characteristic of the heyday of American capitalism. This will mean an increasing strain on the two-party system, the main political instrument of capitalist control. We can anticipate the rise of small capitalist political formations to the right and left. Most important, it will mean the need for a split with the capitalists on the part of the masses of black people and working people, and the formation of their own independent parties.

I want to stress an important point. The term we use is class polarization, and not polarization in general -- the resolution is very careful on this point. It is not predicted that there will occur some sort of general, abstract, right-left split in the American population. It will be reflected in a growing incapacity of the American ruling class to hold the oppressed national minorities and the working class within the forms of political control that have been so effective up until now. The polarization will be a polarization around class needs, against the ruling class enemy.

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It is under these conditions and with this kind of awakening response among different sectors of the population that the efficacy and value of the transitional program becomes clear. The key is finding demands that best correspond to the objective needs of the sector to which you're addressing yourself; that can be tied into its level of political understanding and current stage of struggles; which lead to independent organization and mobilization; and which conflict with one or another of the multitude of ruling class prerogatives to control aspects of people's lives. The central axis of the transitional program is around these kinds of demands.

Secondly, the section on the transitional program notes the great unevenness of development in the new radicalizations. This is true of all radicalizations, of all struggles, but is especially evident in the current stage, prior to the large-scale intervention of the working class through organizations of its own. Different layers come into the struggle at different times; some will move forward, and then recede while others step ahead. As this occurs, however, the lessons of struggle are not lost. The lessons of organization and the

political tools and demands that are raised in one sector are usually picked up and incorporated into the arsenal of struggle of a new section. We see this process in the 1960's, beginning in the black movement, being carried over into the student movement, then into the antiwar movement, and into other sections of struggle. Transitional demands that are put forward by one sector provide lessons which are valuable in concretizing and deepening the program and demands for other sectors.

Finally, through the concept of the transitional program, one of the key problems of this radicalization can be spoken to, and hopefully overcome: that is, finding a concrete wedge to get from small -- relatively small, historically speaking -- nuclei of radicalized elements, from small organizations in different sectors of the population, to mass instruments of struggle. This is one of the most difficult problems facing black radicals. How to get from the relatively small number of radicalized individuals at present to a mass party? How to connect the day-to-day struggle with the kind of decisive struggle that is looked toward? It is this problem that the Transitional Program for Black Liberation was designed to meet. And it is the key problem that must be met in every sector of this radicalization in order to move forward. To the degree that sections of the transitional program are incorporated and understood -- as in some sections of the antiwar movement -- there is progress. To the degree that they are not, then there is unevenness, for instance, in the Afro-American struggle. The concept of the transitional program is to develop a program of struggle that can tie together disparate forces around common actions, in a period where there's no dominant or single force, and to utilize these approaches to construct the revolutionary communist party.

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The resolution combines two basic points in coming to the conclusions it does on the Afro-American struggle and its place in the coming American revolution. First are the concrete experiences of the struggles of the late '50's and '60's: the rise of Malcolm X; the ghetto explosions; the entirely new change in consciousness of the Afro-American people; the rise of struggles by different sectors for community control over the institutions that affect their lives. Second was an application of our basic ideas on the national question, as developed by Lenin and the Bolsheviks and enriched in the contributions of Trotsky. (Incidentally, the degree to which events of the past ten years in the Afro-American struggle have confirmed Trotsky's views on this question is possibly best seen by the fact that

it's only in the light of these events that his views have really become clear.)

To summarize the resolution's central points on the Afro-American struggle:

1) The basic characteristic of the Afro-American struggle is the struggle by an oppressed nationality for self-determination: the struggle to accomplish the historically deferred tasks which the American bourgeoisie proved incapable of accomplishing in their second revolution, and which they turned away from as the U.S. became an imperialist power.

2) The vanguard role of the black struggle for self-determination in the present radicalization and in the mighty struggles to come. It is now clear that this vanguard role will carry over to other sectors of struggle, including the labor movement, and will reinforce and be reinforced by the deepening class struggle in the United States.

In this, we apply one of the basic lessons first learned in the Russian Revolution; that is, the degree to which a revolutionary upsurge brings forth in a torrent the grievances of oppressed groups and nationalities that have been built up over many years. Capitalism, the very system which brought the nation into being, today finds itself not only less able to solve the tasks found in the national revolution, but is faced with the national question in acute new forms: in Ireland, Belgium, Canada, in places where the ruling class assumed this question to be long settled, it has risen again. And the Soviet bureaucrats have also seen it develop in the Ukraine and Czechoslovakia.

We are heading into a period, not of diminution of the national struggle -- in the United States, or anywhere -- but of a deepening of these struggles.

3) The alliance between the struggle by the Afro-Americans and the other oppressed national minorities or nationalities in this country, and the struggle of the workers is the key to the success of the American revolution. This alliance can only be based on the unconditional support by the political leadership of the working class to the struggles for self-determination of the Afro-American people. It's not basically a question of morality, but of necessity. If there is no alliance, the American revolution will be impossible.

The unconditional character of support to self-determination, and the performance as the champion for this, will be proved not only in words, through the clear proclamation of support and education on this issue, but

in deeds. This is the only test that the mass of the Afro-American people will accept and that can justify an alliance.

4) The third American revolution will have a combined character. It will be a workers struggle for power and a struggle by the oppressed national minority for liberation and for self-determination. It will be a struggle which only a workers government established in the United States will be able to bring to a successful conclusion. And through it, not only will all the democratic rights of the oppressed minorities and nationalities finally be brought into being and guaranteed, but the proletarian demands of the workers of all sections of the country will be met. The problem that has bothered, confused and stood somewhat in the way of American radicalism for many, many years (and outside of our movement it still does) is clearly seeing the independent character of the Afro-American struggle for self-determination and the combined character of the coming struggle for power in the United States.

5) This struggle is the clearest manifestation in the United States of the permanent revolution. By this we mean that there will be no stages in this struggle, there will be no middle solution. There will be no solution to the national-democratic demands of the black masses apart from the solution of the exploitation of capitalism by the workers themselves. The revolution will be combined, or it won't take place. There is no black bourgeoisie that is capable of winning national-democratic demands on a capitalist basis and there are no conditions under which American capitalism will grant these demands. It is only the successful struggle for workers power and socialism outlined by the permanent revolution which can do this.

It is from this that the logic of the question of separation comes. Comrades should note that the resolution avoids specifying the degree or form in which the demand for separation will be a part of the struggle or the methods by which the combined revolution will solve the problem of national oppression. The key is in the ability of the vanguard party to convince the oppressed national minorities through struggle that it means to respect their right to self-determination, including separation, and will act accordingly. What is decisive is that the guarantee of the right to separation is the only insurance they have that their demands will be met.

At the same time, the communist movement is well aware of the revolutionary implications of a rise in the desire for separation on the part of the

mass of the black people. This represents the most complete rejection of accepting any possibility of a progressive role for American capitalism.

6) The composition of the Afro-American national minority is a very important factor to take into consideration. The Afro-American masses are overwhelmingly proletarian in composition, generally concentrated in the main industrial centers of the United States. This means: a.) we anticipate that the black workers will play leading roles in the organizations of the black community, including the building and construction of a black political party. This means that there will be a rapid inclusion of proletarian demands along with democratic demands in the program of black political organizations. b.) We anticipate that it will be much easier to win the best militants and much greater numbers to a socialist perspective and membership in the Leninist party.

7) The central crisis facing the Afro-American people in their struggle for self-determination, is the crisis of organization and program. Bits and pieces of a transitional program are raised by various small organizations in the black community. But there is no single organization that puts forth a program that can lead to the construction of a large independent black political party. The most immediate task for us is a propaganda one of projecting the transitional program that can lead toward the formation of a mass black political party.

Our record is one of which we can well be proud. Just contrast our record with the attempts by our opponents to try and figure out the national question, the combined character of the American revolution, and the question of a revolutionary party. There you find a mass of utter confusion. Just read Gus Hall's report to the last Communist Party convention, and note his presentation of the problem. He says that it now looks to him like a tripartite struggle: a class struggle, a national struggle, and a race struggle. And he says, therefore, since it is a tripartite struggle, and since the struggle for self-determination would be valid only if the majority of the blacks favored a separate black nation right now, it follows that the Communist Party is not obligated to defend self-determination of the Afro-American people. Just read the Social Democracy's point of view or Progressive Labor's, all of which have been outlined in our press. This key question of the American revolution is one that is hopeless to solve without the tools of Marxism-Leninism-Trotskyism and the experience of the last period as revolutionists.

An important point to note, it seems to me, is not only that at this convention we are codifying these ideas but the degree to which the party's impeccable record in action, in applying its principled class struggle politics to the black struggle, paved the way for the steps forward in understanding that we have now arrived at. This, despite the lack of any concrete evidence to verify the ideas raised by Trotsky in the course of the class struggle, in the late '30's, the '40's, and '50's.

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I won't go into much depth on the youth movement because you all read the resolution presented to the World Congress, entitled The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International. There are some points to underscore, however. The explosion in American education has caused a qualitative change in the structure and social weight of the American students which affects their importance to the struggle for socialism and the degree to which they will be a factor in all stages of this struggle. The resolution points to the possible role of students as detonators of larger struggles, as we have seen in examples around the world. The student arena has been a proving ground for our ideas and a tested area of recruitment. It is this basic analysis of the change in weight and structure of the American youth movement that establishes our concept of the independent character of the Young Socialist Alliance and the key role of the YSA in contending for leadership among the students in all stages of the radicalization.

We note, in this regard, that the party's orientation, in its most basic sense, is not toward the student movement, and it will not be. The party intervenes, in whatever way possible, in all aspects of the mass movement. But the role of the YSA will become even more important as the class struggle deepens and the party moves forward. This is outlined completely in the World Congress report on the youth movement.

The question has been posed as to whether there will be a contradiction in our orientation as the radicalization deepens. It is clear that the opportunities for recruitment and influence in the student milieu will also expand greatly. As that time, won't the party turn away from the student milieu? Or will we have to pass up other aspects of the struggle in the mass movement? It is here the YSA's particular role is crucial in terms of what it can accomplish among the masses of youth. The party's role, its intervention and

orientation towards the openings that will occur in all areas of the mass movement, remains clear.

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What about American labor? The resolution notes three important points:

1) There is a lack of understanding in the radical movement of the degree to which all these factors in the new radicalization are affecting the American working class. Because of inexperience and lack of knowledge of the mass movement most young radicals don't grasp this at all. Because they don't see an immediate and direct reflection in the union movement of the radicalization, their assumption is that American labor as such, is not being affected. Quite the opposite is the case. The same political sensitivity, receptivity to ideas, questioning of the status quo -- especially among young people -- that we have seen through this entire radicalization has begun to affect, and affect deeply, the workers in this country. In fact, the way in which they have been affected prior to large scale struggles in the unions will be a factor in determining the forms and character of these struggles.

2) Just as the worldwide expansion of American capitalism in the last 25 years has bred the international contradictions that it faces today, American capital has incorporated new and explosive potentials in the American labor movement. The most important, of course, is the growing number of black workers in basic industry. This makes all the more clear the vanguard role that they will play and the possibilities of the black struggle affecting the labor movement directly through the black workers.

Another contradiction has been the incorporation of an entire layer of young workers into today's work force. They are accustomed to the standard of living which they now have; they assume it will continue forever; they assume that if it doesn't continue, then at some stage the government is supposed to do something about it and will respond. Not only have these young workers never known defeat, they've never even known very much struggle to get what they have. But there is a revolutionary potential hidden just below the surface of this conservatism that is often missed. The young workers are not prepared to give up their present standards and will respond in an explosive manner to any such prospect.

Another factor has been the incorporation into the labor movement, and into the unions themselves, of entire layers of young workers in different

industries and fields of work who have been affected directly by the radicalization. Many of them come out of a student milieu; many, in their day-to-day work as unionists, come directly in conflict with the state itself.

It is very, very important to note all this because, as the resolution implies, it is not necessary for a depression to occur to draw sections of American labor into struggle. Quite the contrary, the contradictions short of a depression are potentially the major problems which American capitalism faces.

The major demands put forward and the character of our transitional approach to the struggle focus on these contradictions, as outlined. Comrades should especially note the linking together of the demands for a sliding scale of hours and a sliding scale of wages. In a period where inflationary pressures will continue it will become absolutely necessary for the ruling class to project recessionary measures to put pressure on wages and employment. These demands tie in concretely with some of the major demands in the Transitional Program for Black Liberation. Note that in the same section of that transitional program, where priority for black workers in construction is outlined, so is the sliding scale of hours. And if anyone needs more evidence of why it is important to link these demands, they need only read the papers of the last few days about what's happening in Pittsburgh. This illustrates both the potential and the need for leadership. Linked with all of this, of course, the question of a political instrument of American labor remains central.

Finally, we note that any initial struggles that begin over job conditions, wage scales, etc. in the labor movement will from the beginning reflect and be affected by the general radicalization in the country as a whole, by the level of consciousness, and by the availability of potential allies in the struggles which the workers will face. Already, we have seen a small preview of the dynamic that we can anticipate in the Oil Workers' struggle on the West Coast.

3) The resolution intentionally avoids trying to specify organizational forms of struggle that American labor will go through. It concentrates on the basic political demands that must be raised in confrontation with the bosses and the state, and the crucial role of the revolutionary party in this process. There's no use guessing the exact forms. The Bolsheviks would never have foreseen that their lack of a majority in the unions would not have been decisive;

it was their majority in the Soviets that turned out to be decisive in the Russian Revolution. We project a political program that unifies the class, that confronts the enemy, and that links together the key contradictions which the American workers face. Needless to say, no major left-wing opposition in the labor movement will be able to go very far without clarity on the question of political independence from the capitalist class and without beginning to forge a political instrument of struggle. This question may not be posed at the very beginning of every struggle, but it will very rapidly come to the fore.

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Finally, the section on the party itself.

One of the key aspects to our internationalism is understanding the interdependence of the struggles of the oppressed masses in different countries and their effect upon each other. For that reason, our concept of the revolutionary Marxist party is that it is an international party. At the same time, the specific character of the revolutionary party is determined by the nature of the enemy it must combat and defeat. It is the bourgeoisie that decides the national boundaries of the workers party, not the workers themselves. The centralized bourgeois state, the resolution says, incorporates and reinforces all the divisions among the working masses in order to insure its domination.

Earlier in the resolution, a thumbnail sketch is given of the rise of American imperialism. It says that "after spreading across the North American continent, slaughtering and dispossessing the Indians and overpowering the slave system in the South in the process, it became a world imperialist power at the turn of the century. In the Spanish-American war, U.S. imperialism seized sectors of the decayed Spanish empire outright, dislodged Spain from Cuba, and proceeded to establish its own empire in Latin America and the Pacific." In that thumbnail sketch are described all the components that American capital incorporated in its nation: Afro-Americans, Mexican-Americans, American Indians, Asian-Americans, Puerto Ricans. The drive of American imperialism to incorporate as much labor as possible, from as many different sources as possible, determined the fact that the American revolutionary party will be a multi-national party, will be a party composed of the revolutionists of all these components incorporated by American imperialism.

Secondly, the national divisions and very unevenness that mark American politics express most vividly the need for a single, unified, combat party. Only such a party can forge a combined and unified strategy to overcome these divisions and unevenness and be an instrument capable of defeating American imperialism.

Third is our concept of the vanguard party as the highest expression of the collective consciousness of the working class, and the repository of its historical memory. The party brings to bear the costly lessons of the past on the problems and opportunities of the present. In some ways that sentence captures the essence of the recruitment and assimilation of an entire layer of young people into the Socialist Workers Party. The ability of the party to respond to the opportunities of the previous period enabled us to get to where we are today.

It is important to note that every one of our opponents, to one degree or another, rejects the perspective of forming a multi-national revolutionary workers party which has the perspective of leading a combined struggle for socialism with the national struggle for self-determination.

Finally, the resolution points out the enhanced opportunities for constructing the revolutionary party as a result of the decline of the American Communist Party. It is this -- the single most significant change -- which enables the Trotskyist party to project becoming the party of the revolution in the coming period. For the first time since the degeneration of American communism and the dominance of a strong Stalinist party, it is not an automatic consequence of a new radicalization that the Stalinist party will manage to grow and maintain its dominance over the rest of the left. It is an open field. It is an even struggle. It is a question of which party will be able to intervene in, analyze, and recruit from the current radicalization. On the subjective side, this is the most significant change that's occurred in the last 40 years.

The problem is not so much one of our presently being a small party. A small party with a correct program can accomplish much and can rapidly grow into a large party under revolutionary conditions. The problem occurs when a small party is blocked by a mass reformist or mass Stalinist party. That is the great difficulty which no longer exists.

I would like to conclude with a few examples which throw light on the perspectives for our party. We should think seriously about the full significance of the role of the Socialist Workers Party in the antiwar movement. The intervention of the Socialist Workers Party with its program and perspective was the decisive factor in the rise and development of a mass American antiwar movement. This gives us just a small preview of how a homogeneous party with a correct program and trained cadres can intervene in and affect much broader and deeper struggles. We should look very closely at what happened in France, not just the speed and character of the explosion and the tremendous opportunities that developed, but the role that a small nucleus of Trotskyists were able to play. And thinking it over very carefully, we have an advantage over the French comrades. We have a little time before an explosion of that character. And not only that, we should also consider what a party that had the time and experience to build itself would be able to accomplish without a mass Communist Party to contend with. That's what we should think about.

Our perspective is very realistic. The transitional program for

socialist revolution has been put forward before. Marx and Engels had the rudimentary concepts of a transitional program. But the revolutionary forces were not strong enough in their period to win. Following World War I there was a mighty revolutionary explosion, but only the Bolsheviks built a revolutionary leadership adequate to the task. Then we went through the entire period of the decline in the Communist movement and reaction on a world scale. Coming out of World War II, we saw the beginning of the reversal of this process, the beginning of the expansion of the world revolution, first in the colonial sector and then in others. In the post-World-War-II period we have seen the beginning of disintegration of the Stalinist movement. What our perspectives are based upon today, what the whole revolution turns around, is not a utopian perspective of hoping somehow that this radicalization will inherently culminate in the overturn of capitalism, but the clear political understanding that there is such a possibility because of the real social and political forces that exist. And the one concrete thing that we can do to affect the course of events, a task that is an absolute necessity if we are to succeed, is the construction of the American communist party.