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THE DECLINE OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM: PROSPECTS FOR A SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

**National Committee Draft Resolution
May 2, 1975**

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THE DECLINE OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM: PROSPECTS FOR A SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

This resolution is not addressed to immediate tasks and conjunctural perspectives. Instead it examines on a broader scale the roots and the various components of the crisis of American capitalism. These are compared and contrasted both to the postwar capitalist economic boom and political reaction as well as to the labor radicalization during the 1930s. The purpose is to clarify the dilemma faced by the ruling class, the structural and ideological changes taking place in the American working class and among its allies, and the revolutionary perspective inherent in the radicalization of the working class that is just beginning to unfold.

I. GROWING CONTRADICTIONS OF WORLD IMPERIALISM

In the quarter century since World War II recessions have occurred in each of the major capitalist powers. During these slumps, however, world capitalist industrialization, productivity, employment and trade as a whole continued to run their expansionary course and thus cushioned the recessions in each country. The current American depression is not only the longest and deepest of the six U.S. postwar slumps; more important, it is a component part of the first *world* recession since 1937-38, simultaneously affecting all the major capitalist economies.

This recession on a world scale is a product of the increasing exhaustion of many of the motor forces that fed the quarter-century world capitalist boom—for instance, the reconstruction of European and Japanese industry, the massive growth of the automobile and related industries in the 1950s and 1960s, the mechanization, automation and computerization of whole new branches of industry.

The expansionary stimulants of deficit financing and massive credit growth, used to help bring capitalist economies out of recessions in the last quarter of a century, have turned into perilous measures. Inflation is less effective and more dangerous than ever before as a means of bringing capitalist economies out of a recession.

The war in Indochina brought more clearly into the open the unfavorable shift in the world relationship of class forces against imperialism. It demonstrated the new limits imposed on the *use* of American imperialism's massive military machine. The imperialist giant today finds itself increasingly hobbled not only by the nuclear parity of the Soviet Union, but by the absence of semicolonial allies and clients with solid social bases, by the drain on U.S. capital, and by political opposition from the American people.

The defeat in Southeast Asia was a setback of historic proportions for U.S. capitalism.

Meanwhile, in Europe, the powerful working class offensives registered in the May 1968 prerevolutionary upsurge in France and the "creeping May" in Italy in the autumn of 1969 clearly indicated the growing trend toward broad *social* crises in the heart of the imperialist powers of Europe. From being an allied reserve, offering military, political, and economic support for embattled American imperialism vis-à-vis the colonial revolution and the workers states, sectors of European capital were becoming an additional source of weakness.

These events of the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s

incided with the end of the long wave of the post-World War II capitalist economic expansion; they also signaled a significant decline in the productivity edge American capitalism had over its most powerful competitors. The edge in labor productivity had enabled the dollar to play its role as world currency. It had also enabled U.S. imperialism to make massive investments and massive military expenditures abroad simultaneously. The peaking of the postwar international capitalist boom in the 1968-1971 period signaled the approach of a new long wave of relative stagnation and heightened inflation, as well as increasing interimperialist competition and conflict.

Yet as the oil crisis, the prelude to the 1974-75 depression, demonstrated anew, American imperialism remains by far the single most powerful force in the world capitalist arena. Its economic output alone is as great as all the other major capitalist powers put together.

Furthermore, the competitive pressures of the unfolding social and economic crisis eliminated all pretense that the European Common Market countries would establish a single currency and state structure as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism and an effective challenge to its hegemony.

Before the nuclear-arms age, such shifts in the relationship of forces could have precipitated an interimperialist war for the redivision of the shrinking world market, as in 1914 and 1939. But the qualitative military superiority of American capitalism, and the deterrent presence of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, have radically altered the framework in which the classical interimperialist contradictions have to be resolved.

The policy of *détente*, too, is based on a mutual recognition of these new economic and military relationships of forces. While Moscow counts on economic aid from the capitalists to boost Soviet industrial and technological capacities, American imperialism, through a tacit political understanding, is assured of assistance from the Soviet bureaucracy in the form of counterrevolutionary intervention against the independent actions of the world working class. The Stalinist parties around the world are called upon to collaborate in this task. This *quid pro quo* constitutes the essence of the policy of *détente*.

All these convergent factors have precipitated a major crisis of world capitalist leadership.

II. CRISIS OF PERSPECTIVES OF THE AMERICAN RULING CLASS

The American ruling class that was so confident and arrogant from 1945 on is now floundering in search of a new world strategy. This is reflected in the pessimism expressed by the bourgeois statesmen and commentators as they seek to assess the prospects of American imperialism from a broader historical perspective. To them the collapse of the "American century"—which they were so sure of thirty years ago—evokes visions of declining empires and a coming "dark age." They see the world as careening toward a new "era of scarcity," or suggest decades of zero economic growth as the only alternative to the destruction of the life-supporting capacity of the earth's environment. They "philosophically" weigh the probability that "democracy" cannot be maintained much longer if inflation and social unrest continue. They plead for a "new Keynes" but many of them act as if they are looking for a "new Hitler."

Such pessimism stems from a recognition of the shift in the world relationship of class forces to the disadvantage of capitalism, the shift in relative weight among the imperialist rivals themselves, and the scope of the problems generated today by a decaying world economy based on production for profit and restricted by outmoded national boundaries.

This crisis of leadership and orientation is not confined to the American bourgeoisie. Despite the relative decline of the American dollar and Washington's power, there is no world capitalist power capable of stepping in and replacing Wall Street's hegemony.

However much the lesser capitalist powers may chafe under U.S. domination, they cannot free themselves from dependence upon Washington. Singly or collectively, they cannot afford to, nor are they able to, police the world and yet they cannot afford not to have it policed.

These are the sources of the disarray in the world bourgeois leadership and the increasing divisions among them. As these divisions become intensified, they lead to further loss of confidence among the ruling classes in their own ability to rule. They deepen the broad general malaise stemming from these conflicts and crisis of leadership.

Under these circumstances the *real* perspectives that continued capitalist rule presents to the American workers are cuts in the standard of living, new military adventures, and curtailment of democracy.

1. The ruling class will seek to boost profit rates by increasing the rate of extraction of surplus value from the American workers. This means holding down real wages, whittling away working conditions, and lowering the standard of living. It also means cutting down on the social legacy to be bequeathed to future generations—the natural environment, the schools, the hospitals, housing, organization of the cities, and the entire productive system. This is the quality of life capitalism has in store for the great majority.

In their struggle against the relative advance of German and Japanese capital, the American bourgeoisie call on the American masses to be "realistic" and accept the doleful fact that American capitalism cannot sustain the relatively high and growing standard of living the working class has come to *expect* as a *right*. The capitalists call upon the workers to lower their expectations in order to "keep America strong."

2. The threat of military adventures, and along with them the possibility of nuclear annihilation, will continue. Rivalries among the imperialist powers will sharpen as they compete for markets, raw materials and the export of capital. There will be increased efforts to impose American imperialist needs and perspectives on the masses of the colonial and semicolonial world with the inevitable resistance this will generate. The capacity of Stalinism to control the outbursts of class struggle on a world scale will continue to be overestimated. Since *détente* was proclaimed, events in Greece, Cyprus, Portugal, the Arab East and Indochina have amply shown how impossible it is to prevent the masses from disrupting the status quo.

At every opportunity, the ruling class will push as far as it can, testing the limits on the use of its massive military power and nuclear blackmail, trying to see how much of an edge it can get through threat of military action. Inherent in this bellicose probing is always the danger of miscalculation.

3. The ruling class will seek to curtail the democratic rights of the American workers, to undercut their ability to learn the truth about the actions and activities of the big corporations and the government, to hamper them from entering the political arena in an independent manner. They will seek to increase divisions among the workers and to block any development of international working-class solidarity.

Driving down the living standard of the masses of American

workers, maintaining American economic positions abroad by deploying U.S. military might, curtailing the rights and liberties of the American workers on the job and in general—these are the realities America's imperialist rulers hold out for the coming period.

III. CHANGING CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS

The transformation of American labor into a class-conscious social and political force will be heralded by the rise of a class-struggle left wing in the union movement. Such a formation will begin to provide leadership for all forms of social struggle by the oppressed; and it will chart a political course of class independence, breaking millions of workers away from the agents and parties of the bourgeoisie.

The beginning radicalization of the American working class has not yet reached the stage of radicalization of the unions. But the effects of the combined social and economic shocks of the last half decade, coming on top of the changes in attitudes wrought by the movements of social protest and the radicalization of the 1960s and 1970s, have brought us to the threshold of a new period in the transformation of the political consciousness of the working class. Thus a different stage in the process of radicalization is opening; new types of struggles are coming onto the agenda.

* * *

The mounting skepticism toward the American system of bourgeois democracy began in the 1960s as a *moral* questioning by young people as they came to see "the system's" refusal or incapacity to meet the just demands being made by Black people. Little Rock, the sit-ins, Mississippi and Selma, then Watts, Detroit, and Newark became symbols of the social injustice pervading America.

From the Black struggle and all it revealed about the racism running through American democracy, this questioning spread to other benighted outlooks and institutions upholding capitalism and upheld by it—religion, the "work ethic," unequal education, anticommunism, the "organization man" and hierarchical authority, marriage, and the family.

A new stage was opened by the Vietnam war as outrage over the aims and methods of American imperialism became a mass phenomenon reaching beyond the campus and the youth. The resulting radicalization extended to new arenas of struggle and challenged more of class society's sacred cows. Other oppressed nationalities, soldiers, women, gays, prisoners, began to demand their human rights.

The experience of the Vietnam war produced a profound change in the attitude of masses of American workers. The growing strength of what the bourgeois pundits today call the "new isolationism" constitutes the heritage of the overwhelming opposition of the American people to the government's policies in Indochina, and their skepticism toward Washington's military adventures.

Among the radicalizing effects of the Vietnam war and the antiwar movement is the dawning realization that war, war preparations, and the accumulated burden of the costs for past wars are central parts of the bosses' "answer" to world capitalist competition and its periodic crises. "Revisionist" reassessments of the Korean War and even World War II are gaining a wider audience.

The American people have been sensitized to threats to use American military power. The credibility gap makes it more difficult to stage "provocations" like the Tonkin Gulf incident. There is more awareness that increasing escalation of the military budget brings something besides jobs for those employed in the

war industries—it brings death, destruction, senseless maiming and killing, and misery to the world, to American GIs, and to workers' families here at home.

In the last half decade an alteration has also occurred in the American workers' understanding of the reality of American democracy.

The working of American "democracy" abroad has been seen in Vietnam and Chile in relation to the Pentagon, the CIA, the State Department, the White House, and Congress. Watergate and the exposures of the domestic crimes of the CIA, the FBI, and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), profoundly shocking to some, revealed deep violations of democracy at home.

As the Watergate scandal unfolded, American workers began to see the spectacle, not as an isolated case of crooked politicians being caught, but as proof of a general threat to fundamental democratic rights. Watergating seemed to go hand in hand with an attack on the social and economic gains made in recent years by sections of the proletariat and their allies. The real targets of Watergate methods were the Blacks, the Chicanos, the women, the youth, the prisoners, the antiwar GIs, the undocumented immigrant workers. It was seen as an assault on the idea itself that working people in general have a *right* to basic human necessities.

More Americans came to suspect that, like anticommunism, racism, and sexism, references to "national security" were intended to hide the real actions and motivations of the rulers.

The "credibility gap" represents in reality a crisis of political confidence in the government, the beginning of a crisis of "legitimacy." For the first time since the 1930s growing numbers of the American working people not only disbelieve what the rulers tell them but question the goals and values of the ruling class.

Significant and progressive shifts in cultural patterns and values have already taken place in broad layers of the population, despite the escapist and subjective expressions these have taken in some cases.

This is further reflected in such developments as the rise of the gay liberation movement, the independence displayed by juries in political cases, the politicalization and mood of rebellion in the prisons, the readiness to reveal secrets that led to exposures of such scandals as the Pentagon papers and COINTELPRO program.

Social norms and relationships are being newly examined from the standpoint of the historically oppressed or exploited. The critical reappraisals testify to a loosening of the bonds of bourgeois ideology and its conservative assumptions.

Modern means of communication, especially television, have played an unprecedented role in the rapid spread of news, ideas and actions, making more vivid the realities of wars and crises, and spreading innovative trends.

The actions connected with the radicalization of the 1960s took place by and large outside the framework of organized labor. This absence of the organized power of labor was the strongest limitation upon the development of the radicalization.

But by the beginning of the 1970s the young workers especially were beginning to be significantly affected. They responded not so much as producers or unionists but as young people sensitive to the injustices of society.

Between the wage-freeze of August 1971 and the economic depression of 1974-75 the workers began to discover that, in addition to being morally questionable, the system as a whole was just not giving them what they expected and needed. They reacted to the strong doses of wage controls, speed-up, food shortages, the energy crisis, cutbacks in social welfare, double-digit inflation, double-digit unemployment in some sectors of industry and layers of the population, and large-scale layoffs.

Today growing numbers of American workers sense that they are faced not with just a temporary economic depression, as

serious as that may be, but with a more enduring *social* crisis that is worldwide. It is not simply that they hear such admissions from prominent figures on television; the working class can see the evidence all around. They can see it in the decline in education, public facilities, health care, housing, and growing pollution of the environment.

They are beginning to sense that the economic problems they face are much greater than before, that the prolonged period of relative prosperity has definitely come to an end; and while the period now opening may have its ups, the ups won't be high or last long and the downs will be really deep and long. The estimates of the workers are accurate. We face a period in which stagnation will predominate over boom and in which the employers will seek to tighten their control over job conditions, speed of the line, health and safety conditions, the organization of the work.

Combinations of breakdowns and shortages, slumps and inflation, speed up and degradation of labor, new wars—that is what American capitalism promises for the future.

Fed by unrest over the current depression, the greatest collapse in public confidence since the Hoover administration has accelerated the crisis in leadership faced by America's rulers.

The only program capable of blocking eventual radicalization of the unions would be massive social reform. What the liberals call a new "New Deal" would entail large-scale concessions in job-creating public works programs, unemployment benefits, housing, medical care, education, protection against inflation, and similar reforms.

While the ruling class is capable of making concessions and may even initiate a few highly publicized projects, social reforms of the scope that could meet today's expectations are beyond their reach. That course would necessitate the stabilization of the world capitalist economy, renewal of its expansionary course, and a vast strengthening of America's dominant position.

Three major obstacles block a perspective of reform so far-reaching as to assure a decade of social and political stability.

First, the international evolution of the class struggle itself will touch off new explosive convulsions throughout the world. An imperialist foreign policy able to block further advances of social revolution is beyond Washington's reach. It was the transformation of the "New Deal" into the "War Deal" that rescued the capitalist economy from the crisis of the 1930s, and defused the radicalization of those years. Any attempt to emulate that course today would spark massive political opposition.

Second, the state of the international capitalist economy following the end of the long boom precludes social and economic concessions to the working class on a scale sufficient to close their minds to radical ideas. The more likely perspective is continued convulsive developments in the world capitalist economy, sharp ups and downs, new breakdowns, renewed inflation and shortages, with some of the satellite regimes skirting bankruptcy. A new massive increase in the already bloated war budget of the Pentagon, far from helping to resolve the crisis as it did at the end of the 1930s, would rapidly set off another round of rampant inflation, triggering new social struggles by the American people.

Third, American capitalism's real economic perspectives will make it increasingly difficult for the ruling class even to maintain concessions and advances already won, let alone meet the heightened expectations of the oppressed and exploited.

There will be no willing patriotic sacrifices for some supposedly higher "national interest." While appeals to racist and sexist attitudes to offset the radicalization will evoke an echo in some sectors of the working class, they will be qualitatively less effective than before and will stiffen the resistance of their victims.

The U.S. is not heading back to the prolonged prosperity, reaction, and quiescence of the 1950s and early 1960s. The road ahead is one of increasing class consciousness, class struggle and

class polarization, leading from radicalization toward a revolutionary situation, regardless of the oscillations along the way.

The world crisis of capitalism does not favor extensive and effective long-term capitalist *reform* in the United States but development of the prerequisites for a *revolution*.

IV. CHANGING CHARACTER AND COMPOSITION OF THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS

Contrary to the widely trumpeted myth of bourgeois sociology, class differences did not vanish during the postwar boom nor did the American proletariat dissolve into a generally comfortable new petty bourgeoisie. In fact, developments were in the opposite direction.

The extensive industrialization, automation and monopolization of factory, farm and office in the 1950s and 1960s led to a massive increase in the size of the American working class, both in absolute terms and in relation to other classes. This has produced major alterations in the composition and placement of the class.

The proletarianization of the American population has proceeded on a number of fronts, spurred by the needs of monopoly capital in a period of accelerated expansion:

- Agricultural industrialization and mechanization drove millions of farm families off the land while simultaneously broadening the agricultural proletariat.

- Industrialization of the South brought about a further proletarianization of the majority of the Southern population.

- These two processes, together with the large-scale northern migration of the Black population, produced a rapid proletarianization of Afro-Americans.

- Chicano and Puerto Rican labor entered the urban work force, as well as the agricultural proletariat, in large numbers.

- The expansionary boom brought millions of women into the labor market.

- The growing utilization of "part-time" workers absorbed additional large numbers of women as well as youth into the work force.

Alongside this extensive proletarianization of the population, there have been important changes produced by the automation and monopolization of American industry in the placement, disposition, and character of American labor.

- The percentage of workers employed as craftsmen, operatives and laborers, what government statistics call "blue collar workers," has fallen.

- As in all advanced capitalist countries, there have been sharp increases in the service sector of the economy, the percentage of clerical workers, and in the number of public employees working for the various departments of the federal, state, county and municipal governments (none of whom the ruling class statisticians call "blue collar workers").

- The mechanization of many trades has eroded the skill levels and standing of a growing number of crafts, especially the building crafts such as masons, carpenters, and painters, whose skills are even less needed in prefabricated construction.

- The "industrialization" and automation of a large amount of white collar office and sales work, and even what is referred to as "intellectual labor," has created a new reservoir of proletarianized and alienated labor.

This monopolization and industrialization, extending up and down the line from farms and mines, processing and transportation to storage and distribution, have sharply reduced the classical petty bourgeois dreams and illusions of even skilled sectors of the American workers. Proletarianization has altered

the workers' concepts of themselves in comparison with earlier generations. American workers tend to think of themselves nowadays more as workers than as potential independent producers. Few believe they will one day be able to have a shop, farm, or small business of their own, assuring them an independent livelihood. They are more interested in wresting some degree of control over the machinery, work decisions, and health and safety environment they are subjected to, than in aspiring to own a small business or escaping back to the land.

At the same time, while they do not expect to be able to rise above their own social class, they believe their children are *entitled* to a better education and a better life than they had. With fewer traditional petty bourgeois illusions than any previous generation of American workers, they nonetheless feel that have a *right* to what are considered "middle class" standards of living. These encompass a guaranteed income, rising as productivity increases; expanding medical and retirement guarantees; adequate transportation; a decent and continuing education; peace; and a healthy environment for their children. This conviction is a revolutionizing—not a conservatizing—factor.

The changes in the composition of the working class and in the mass organizations of the workers, the unions, deserve a closer look.

A. Blacks

The Black population is today more proletarianized and more urbanized than the white. A significantly higher percentage of Black women are in the labor force than white women.

A higher percentage of Blacks than ever before are engaged in basic industry, especially auto, steel, and transportation. Blacks comprise about 22 percent of all workers employed in manufacturing and in construction. At the same time Blacks make up a disproportionately large percentage of the lower-paid service jobs and lower rungs of public employment. About 27 percent of all employed Blacks are service workers.

The unionization of Black workers reflects this employment pattern. In the UAW, the Steelworkers, AFSCME, Letter Carriers, and Postal Clerks, Blacks comprise about 20 percent of the union membership. In many locals it is significantly higher. In the Longshoremen the percentage rises to nearly half.

The unions today are the organizations having the largest Black membership. In auto the percentage of Black union-local officials is higher than the percentage of Blacks in the industry, and many locals are run largely by Blacks. The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists is an initial reflection of this development.

The rapid expansion of the service and public-employee sectors of the economy; the proletarianization of Black and female labor; the significant concentration of Blacks and women in these sectors; and the fact that these are also the most rapidly growing sectors of union organization are all interrelated phenomena.

B. Women

The increase in the percentage of women in the work force has been one of the biggest changes brought about by American capital in the postwar period.

In 1930 women constituted only 20 percent of the work force, and less than 25 percent of all women of working age were employed. By 1945, largely because of the needs of the war industry, women constituted 30 percent of the work force, and more than a third of all women of working age were employed. But by 1972 women constituted 37 percent of the work force and 44 percent of all women were employed.

While the decade following World War II saw a small decline in the number of women in industry and employment, reversing some of the gains established during the war years, by 1955 the

curve of employment began to climb again. The last twenty years has seen a steady rise in female employment. During the boom of the 1960s two-thirds of all new jobs created were taken by women. This rate of increase in female employment was dependent on the rate of expansion of the economy as a whole.

The highest percentage of working women, while classified by the government as "white collar," went into the fastest growing sectors of the working class—office workers, service employees, sales, public workers, and teachers.

Towards the end of the postwar boom, through the enforcement of quotas and affirmative action suits, women even began to win a slightly larger percentage of jobs in basic industry.

Forty percent of all working women are either the sole or major wage earners in their households. At the same time, working wives are the single largest source of the "affluence" of many American working-class families.

The growing integration of women into the work force has brought with it a heightening of class consciousness among women. As they increasingly see themselves as long-term and permanent members of the work force and are recognized as such by others, the need to protect their jobs and working conditions by joining unions and adding their militancy to collective actions becomes more obvious and urgent. This is part of the process that has given birth to the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

C. Youth

The American working class in the 1970s is younger than at any time since the 1930s. In 1960 only 16 percent of the working class was under twenty-five years of age. Today it is more than 23 percent.

The rise in the formal educational level of the working class as a whole is especially marked in this generation of young workers, male and female, who spent more time in school before permanently entering the labor market. Today over 28 percent of the labor force has completed one or more years of college education, up 12 percent as compared with twenty years ago.

This means that the American workers coming into industry are subjected to the general social, cultural, and ideological influences affecting their generation in general for a longer period before their assimilation in the work force.

The young workers of the present generation are different in another sense. They are a completely fresh and undefeated layer that does not bear the scars or the memory of the Great Depression, the witch-hunt, and cold war. They are imbued with the more militant attitudes of the developing radicalization. Since they came into the labor force when there was close to steady work for all adult members of the household who wished to be employed, they expect more as their rightful due.

It is the young workers who have reacted most militantly to the speedup and deterioration of working conditions in the last half decade. And they looked least to the ossified union bureaucracies to protect their interests. They were largely responsible for several waves of wildcat strikes, local actions, sabotage on the line, high turnover rates and absenteeism.

In the decade of the late 1960s and early 1970s the young workers often tended to be hostile to the unions or indifferent to them, not identifying with them as *their* organizations. But, as the struggles with the employing class intensify, the problem of transforming the unions into instruments of struggle against the bosses, or facing massive defeats, is beginning to appear in a new light.

D. The Unions

At the beginning of the radicalization of the 1930s barely 5 percent of the working class was unionized. Those that were

organized were trapped in the antiquated structures of craft unions led by a conservative bureaucracy that stood in the way of building fighting organizations of the working class.

Labor's giant step in the 1930s and 1940s, the organization of basic industry and the establishment of industrial union shops in auto, steel, rubber, and elsewhere, transformed the character of the American labor movement. In a few short years it became one of the most powerfully organized working classes in the world.

By the end of the 1930s close to 16 percent of the labor force was unionized. By the end of the war it had risen to more than 23 percent, and the percentage continued to rise until 1953 when it peaked at 25.5 percent.

The ossification of the union bureaucracies over the last two decades, their failure to fight to maintain working conditions, to organize the unorganized, to mobilize the unions in behalf of progressive social struggles, and their political subordination to the needs of the employers' two-party system, have led to a stagnation and decline in union membership since then. Today roughly 23 percent of the labor force is unionized.

Among the more striking defaults of the union bureaucrats has been the absence of any sizable advances in unionizing the South, parallel to the growing industrialization and urbanization of that region.

Similarly, they have shown brutal indifference to—and in the case of the Teamster bureaucracy even helped lead the attack against—the fight to unionize farm labor.

Big inroads have been made by the construction bosses against the craft unions. Mechanization and prefabrication in the construction industry coupled with the reactionary white-job-trust mentality of the bureaucracies of the skilled trades led to stagnation and a decline in membership among the skilled craft unions and the undermining of union-shop conditions. The weakening of such unions is now being registered in the mechanization of the building trades like painting and carpentry, and automation of the printing trades. Industrial conditions are tearing down the craft-union structure along with its accompanying mentality and customs.

But expecting the big boom to last forever, the union bureaucracies set themselves up, not as the leadership of a class with a historic mission in society, but as representatives and defenders of the benefits enjoyed by a small layer of the most privileged white male workers.

The large-scale, rapid unionization of public employees in the last decade, including the unionization of millions of teachers and others who formerly considered themselves "middle-class professionals," has brought into the labor movement significant new forces whose every struggle with the boss is a struggle not only against the government but against the two political parties supported by the labor bureaucracy.

The failure of the union bureaucracies to fight for the elementary needs of the masses of workers they represent has already led to the first revolts against some of their most corrupt sectors. The overturn of the Boyle machine by the Miller leadership in the United Mine Workers, the establishment of the right of the miners to vote on their contracts, and the growing social consciousness of the miners have given a glimpse of the initiatives to be expected from the powerful industrial proletariat.

V. RADICALIZATION AND MOBILIZATION OF THE ALLIES OF THE PROLETARIAT

Even in a country like the United States where the workers comprise the vast majority of the population, the working class cannot succeed in wresting power from the capitalist rulers and beginning the socialist reconstruction of society without strong

support from allies of their class. Traditionally these have belonged primarily to the small independent producers, craftsmen and proprietors, both urban and rural. This still held true during the radicalization of the 1930s when the farm population was about 30 percent of the total. The large-scale changes wrought since then in the structure of industry, agriculture, and the labor force through the growth and further monopolization of American capital have radically reduced the size and altered the configuration of the classical petty bourgeois strata.

Although the composition and character of the allies of the proletariat have undergone significant changes, these changes in no way lessen the importance of winning these allies. Clear and concrete answers must be given to their demands if the workers are to mobilize the full striking power of the forces available for the socialist revolution.

Today the crucial problem is to overcome the divisions *within* the working class as a whole. In accomplishing this, the working class will also win the oppressed layers of the petty bourgeoisie, mobilizing them as part of the forces of the coming American revolution.

A. The Oppressed Nationalities and National Minorities

The oppressed nationalities and national minorities play a double role. They constitute a growing percentage of the working class and at the same time they are the most important allies of the working class. In this respect they differ from the exploited layers of the petty bourgeoisie, and all other allies except the women. To see only one side of this duality, and to ignore the other, would be a fatal error for a revolutionary party.

Oppressed nationalities and national minorities are exploited as proletarians. This exploitation is intensified by their pariah status since they are at the same time oppressed as a distinct people. The struggle against this twofold oppression is one of the central driving forces of the third American revolution, closely intertwined with all other problems and issues facing the American working class.

Their importance as allies of the proletariat stems from several factors:

National oppression and the racism used to justify it are rooted in the historical development of American capitalism, in the uncompleted tasks of the second American revolution (which emancipated Afro-Americans from slavery but failed to give them equality), and in the rise of imperialism.

National oppression is used by the ruling class to divide the working class, to buy off leaders and privileged strata, thus weakening both the class consciousness and political independence of the workers, and bolstering capitalist rule. With or without legal sanction, a major component of the industrial reserve army has been kept in a pariah status.

The overwhelmingly proletarian composition and superexploitation of the oppressed nationalities and national minorities mean that they will be the most consistent and cohesive of all allies of the working class in its struggles. More and more they will furnish leadership in the fight to transform the labor movement into a fighting social movement, using its power to back the struggles of all the oppressed.

1. Blacks

The most important changes in the Black population have already been noted:

- The postwar mechanization of Southern agriculture.
- The urbanization and proletarianization of the Black population in the South.
- The massive northern migration of the Black population.

- The big influx into basic industry during and after World War II.

- The increase in the number of years Black youth spend in school and the percentage that receive high-school degrees and some post high-school education:

The period since the end of World War II has also seen a historical advance in the struggle for Black liberation.

Faced with the new needs created by the efforts of American imperialism to establish its domination in the semicolonial world, and with the new social and political dangers created by the changes in the economic structure of the South, the more alert representatives of the American ruling class began to recognize that Jim Crow as a system of legal segregation, maintained through extralegal terror, had ceased to be the most effective means of perpetuating the pariah status of the Black proletariat.

Under pressure from growing mass resentment, the U.S. armed forces were formally desegregated during the Korean war and then in 1954 the Supreme Court declared school segregation unconstitutional.

But it was only the decade-long direct-action struggles, mobilizing millions of Blacks and their supporters, that downed Jim Crow. Their power and determination played a decisive role in altering the Black masses national consciousness and self-confidence. This was reflected in the rise of Black Power and Black nationalist sentiments; in the modification of the opinions of masses of white workers; in the upsurges of other oppressed minorities and social groupings; and in the moral questioning that has so deeply motivated the youth radicalization.

The effects of the mass struggle to end Jim Crow followed by the powerful rise of Black nationalist sentiment, were subsequently seen in the vanguard role played by Black GIs in opposition to the Vietnam war.

The high point in the "civil rights period" of the new rise of the Black struggle came with the battle of Birmingham and the march on Washington in 1963, the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the Selma, Alabama, confrontation. The impact of the masses in action was even grotesquely echoed in Lyndon Johnson's "we shall overcome" speech before the Congress.

Giant rebellions in the Black community, beginning in New York in 1964, spreading to Watts in 1965, and Newark and Detroit in 1967, and culminating in the 1968 nationwide outbreaks after the death of Martin Luther King, ushered in a new stage of struggle in which Black nationalist ideas spread rapidly. These spontaneous upsurges along with intensified struggles by Black students and other sectors of the Black community, forced more concessions from the ruling class and brought forward new leaders who became targets of stepped-up government repression.

The percentage of Black enrollment in the country's colleges and universities tripled in a five-year period at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s. "Great Society" dollars were poured into poverty program funds, a good part of which went into salaries of "aspiring" leaders, Black and white.

Riding the crest of the postwar boom, the ruling class coopted a layer of the leaders or potential leaders of the rising Black radicalization by granting them economic, political, and social concessions.

The face of the Democratic party also underwent a significant change. The threat posed by the unconditional opposition of Malcolm X to the Democratic party and the first halting steps toward independent Black political action, such as the Michigan Freedom Now Party and the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, was adroitly countered. From the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to the election of Black mayors in a half-dozen major industrial cities, to the emergence of the Congressional Black Caucus, and the election of more than 1,100 Black officials in the deep South—where less than a decade ago the masses of

Blacks were barred even from voting—the lure of “working within the (two-party) system” attracted the overwhelming majority of a generation of potential Black leaders.

The following features should be added to the picture of the crisis of leadership of the Black movement:

1. The total default of the organized labor movement whose class-collaborationist leadership was unable to rise above its own narrow concern of maintaining its privileged position.

2. The calculated policy of the powers that be of eliminating any potential individual leaders—such as Malcolm X—who seemed capable of inspiring the Black masses in the direction of independent mass political action.

3. The government harassed and murdered a layer of leaders in the generation of the 1960s. Groups like the Black Panthers, whose ultraleftism turned them away from any mass perspective, were left defenseless before the government’s use of terror.

4. The numerical weakness of the revolutionary Marxist vanguard which prevented it from providing a revolutionary leadership except in the realm of program and socialist perspectives.

But despite this crisis, the rise of Black nationalism and the massive ghetto explosions brought about a historic advance in the self-confidence of Blacks and their image of themselves as a people. The upsurges also changed the way white Americans viewed Afro-Americans. Despite the lack of adequate leadership of the Black movement, its power won numerous concessions and registered advances throughout the decade of the 1960s. This has been symbolized in the at least token participation of Blacks at every level of society and culture, from TV commercials to sports, from elected union posts to the Supreme Court. In the late 1960s even the income differential between Blacks and white workers narrowed by a tiny, though perceptible, amount. Blacks began fighting for preferential quotas, training and upgrading in industry and the educational system, as necessary and irreplaceable steps along the road to real equality.

But the costs of the Vietnamese war and the increasing economic crunch brought an end to the Johnson period of concessions and buy-offs as a tactical expedient in coping with rising Black militancy. The Nixon-Connally 1971 wage-control and economic counteroffensive followed recognition that the new economic realities and world relationship of forces precluded having both guns and butter. Further progress toward equality became incompatible with maintaining competitive superiority in the world market.

The Black population did not share in the brief economic upturn of 1971-72. From the high point of Black median incomes equalling 61 percent of white median incomes in 1969, the ratio fell to 58 percent in 1973. Black unemployment rose steadily from 6.4 percent in 1969, to 10 percent in 1972.

The 1972-73 rollback in virtually every area of social expenditures—housing, education, transportation, child care, welfare, etc.—was part of the drive to take back the gains won by the radicalization of the 1960s. These cutbacks, aimed at the working class as a whole, hit Blacks and other oppressed nationalities and minorities the hardest. But instead of reversing the radicalization, the cutbacks only served to contribute to the opposition that spurred forward the Watergate crisis and the downfall of Nixon.

These are the present battle lines in relation to Black liberation and the labor movement. While the ruling class is forced to try to reverse the drive toward real equality, the Black movement must press forward with demands for immediate government enforcement of concessions already won and for preferential treatment. The racist counteroffensive in education, housing, jobs and other areas puts the Black leadership and the labor movement to a decisive test, especially in a period of economic stagnation.

2. Chicanos

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the rise of Chicano nationalism. As with Afro-Americans, the new militancy was rooted in the major economic and social changes within the Chicano population that took place during and after World War II—a significant urbanization and proletarianization of the Chicano population and a large influx of Mexican workers to provide inexpensive labor for the expanding agribusiness in the Southwest.

The ascending Chicano movement in the 1960s was influenced by the advances of the Black civil-rights movement and the rise of Black nationalism, the colonial revolution, and the student radicalization.

Later the growing opposition to the Vietnam war plus the extremely high Chicano casualty rates helped fuel the rising militancy. The Chicano movement, in a period of rising struggle and consciousness and less affected by ultraleftism than the Black movement, organized sizable actions against the war.

Starting in the mid-1960s, the focal point of the Chicano movement was the broad campaign developed in support of attempts to organize the Southwest and West Coast migrant farm labor employed by the most advanced monopoly agribusiness in the world. Many of the cadres of the unionization drive gained their initial political and organizing experience in the civil-rights movement, and radical students were rapidly drawn into support activities.

From the beginning *la causa* was conceived not only as a union organizing drive, but as a broad social movement in the interests of all Chicano people. As such, it was—and remains—in marked contrast to the prevailing character of the rest of the labor movement.

The United Farm Workers union faces tremendous odds. A factory in the fields is more difficult to organize than a factory within four walls, and the seasonal character of the labor force adds to this difficulty. The UFW also faces some of the most powerful monopolies in the world, which are backed by the federal, state, and local government, by the strikebreaking of the Teamster bureaucracy, and by the foot-dragging indifference of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy.

The leadership of the UFW, oriented to the Democratic party, has so far proved unable to build the kind of mass movement of farm workers and their allies that is necessary to overcome these odds.

The limitations of the UFW leadership are exemplified by the switches in the union’s position on undocumented workers. The reactionary campaign conducted by the UFW—at least for a period—to deport undocumented workers was a serious blow to the union.

Despite such errors and setbacks in the organizing drive *la causa* will continue to be a focal point of the Chicano movement. Sixteen percent of the Chicano population remains employed as agricultural workers, and the increasingly seasonal and migrant character of farm labor makes them more subject to hardships and superexploitation. Periodic upsurges of struggles are certain to continue.

While Chicano nationalism partly took its inspiration from the Black movement, several important differences should be noted:

1. Half the Chicano population consider Spanish to be their first language. The right to use their own language in school, at work, on the ballot, and in all aspects of life is one of the central demands of the Chicano struggle.

This is closely tied to the struggles of Chicano students who face, in addition to inferior educational facilities, a denial of the right to study and learn in their own language, resulting in an even higher rate of functional illiteracy than among Blacks. Language and related cultural oppression were major factors in precipitating the massive Chicano high school student “blowouts”

in Los Angeles, Denver, and several Texas cities in the 1960s.

2. Eighty percent of the Chicano population is located in a well-defined geographical area of the country, and is linked by history, culture, and language to both Mexico and the United States.

3. A racist and xenophobic offensive against foreign labor and particularly "illegals" who are easiest to victimize, is one of the central campaigns of the ruling exploiters in every economic crisis. International labor solidarity is fundamental to unifying and defending the working class, its gains and its organizations. The right to move freely back and forth across the border, the right to work in the United States when and where a worker chooses, without fear of harassment because of lack of work papers or immigration documents, is one of the demands at the very heart of the Chicano struggle. This claim puts the labor movement to a severe test that it has flunked up to now.

The Chicano movement has moved ahead of the Black movement on an important front. The various attempts to construct Raza Unida parties—with their strengths and weaknesses—have provided some of the most advanced attempts yet made to move in the direction of political action independent of the two capitalist parties.

A key test for the Raza Unida parties came in the 1972 presidential elections. At the first "National Convention of Raza Unida parties" in El Paso, Texas, in September 1972 it was clear that a big majority of party activists favored maintaining independence from both the Democrats and Republicans. But the Raza Unida parties were not in a position to field their own presidential candidate and were under heavy pressure to give support, directly or indirectly, to McGovern.

The real test came in the actual campaign. The Texas party ran its most ambitious state-wide election campaign and, despite programmatic lacks, it was clearly independent of and in opposition to the Democratic party. In Colorado the Raza Unida party also ran a clearly independent campaign, although on a smaller scale than the Texas party. Raza Unida activists will face this same test in 1976.

Although there are excellent opportunities for developing a powerful mass Raza Unida party movement, the growth of the parties remains limited and uneven.

The clearest indication of this unevenness is the smallness of the Raza Unida groupings in Southern California, where there is a Chicano population of more than one million in Los Angeles county alone. Moreover, the Los Angeles Chicanos have repeatedly displayed their combativity, and several independent election campaigns have demonstrated significant support for independent political action. Yet no leadership has emerged capable of organizing that support and consolidating an independent party.

The Texas Raza Unida party is the strongest. There the organization has enjoyed a growth in organization and political influence. Initially this party was largely limited to Crystal City, where it was founded, to San Antonio, and to several small towns in the Rio Grande valley which, like Crystal City, have a majority Chicano population.

In the 1975 elections, the RUP won a majority of offices in Zavala County, of which Crystal City is the seat. It made significant advances in Robstown, on the outskirts of Corpus Christi, and began to expand its influence into such urban centers as Houston and Corpus Christi.

Thus, while the Texas Raza Unida party has achieved only a small part of its potential, its survival and progress in Texas over a five-year period offers testimony to the viability of the concept of an independent Chicano party.

The accomplishments of the Raza Unida parties remain an example for emulation by the Black and labor movements.

Another indication of the potential of independent Chicano political action is the growing effort by the Democratic party to hold onto the Chicano vote. This has resulted in the election of

Chicanos to two state governorships for the first time. While César Chávez and other influential figures in the Chicano community have remained tied to the Democratic party, the response to Raza Unida party campaigns confirms that when presented with a viable alternative, significant numbers of Chicanos can be broken from the Democratic machine.

3. Puerto Ricans in the United States

Some of the biggest changes in any of the oppressed national minorities since the radicalization of the 1930s have been among the Puerto Ricans. Because of the massive emigration from the island since World War II, 40 percent of all Puerto Ricans now live in the United States.

The superexploitation of the Puerto Rican colony by U.S. imperialism imposes conditions much worse than those on the mainland even in prosperous times. Prices are higher than in the U.S., wages are one-third to one-half those on the mainland, and unemployment is three to four times higher. During a depression, this superexploitation has a catastrophic impact on the Puerto Rican working masses.

The Puerto Rican minority in the U.S. is concentrated in the hardest, lowest paid, and least organized jobs in industry. However, in some of the newer, faster growing unions such as the hospital employees and service workers, Puerto Ricans make up a considerable part of the membership, and they are a significant and growing percentage of the garment workers on the East Coast.

Because of the connections between Puerto Ricans living in the United States and in Puerto Rico, the struggles of the Puerto Rican population within the U.S. are linked closely to the struggle for independence in Puerto Rico and to the colonial revolution.

The Puerto Rican minority has close contacts with the Black struggle because of the proximity of the Black and Puerto Rican populations in the ghettos and because there is a significant percentage of Black Puerto Ricans.

Puerto Ricans have certain concrete struggles in common with Chicanos, particularly fights against discrimination on the basis of language and the organization and mobilization of migrant farm laborers.

The right to bilingual education, bilingual civil-service exams, bilingual ballots; the right to Spanish-speaking personnel in public facilities like hospitals and libraries; and the right to be able to conduct legal proceedings in Spanish are fundamental democratic rights around which significant battles are being fought. The struggle for Puerto Rican, Black, and Chinese community control over the schools in District 1 in New York City stands as one of the most advanced struggles of this type.

As with the Black and Chicano movement, the ruling class has sought to draw the Puerto Rican radicalization into the two-party system to prevent it from taking an independent route. Herman Badillo's election as the first Puerto Rican in Congress, representing the Bronx, is a case in point. It is important to note that the largest Puerto Rican radical nationalist party in the United States, the Puerto Rican Socialist party (PSP), opposed Badillo when he ran for mayor of New York on the Democratic party ticket and stated it was against any work in the capitalist parties.

4. Native Americans

Their size, location and place in industry do not give Native Americans the same social weight as Blacks, Chicanos or Puerto Ricans. But their moral weight is immense. They stand as a living reminder of the real 400-year history of American capitalist expansion and its attendant degradation. They testify to the fact that class society could advance only on the basis of extermina-

tion of collectivist, egalitarian forms of social organization, and subsequent misery and inhuman exploitation of Native Americans.

The nationalist cultural awakening of the Native Americans and the growing militancy of their struggles against the abysmal situation in which they have been placed has added another important element to the upsurge of the oppressed national minorities.

The coldly calculated victimization of the leadership of the American Indian Movement as part of a government plan to destroy it as an organization shows that the ruling class ascribes a political importance to Native American struggles beyond their social weight. Their demands for political and cultural autonomy, for respect of treaty rights and restoration of lands stolen from them are a component part of the coming American socialist revolution; and the granting of these demands will be one of the responsibilities of the coming workers government.

5. Other Oppressed National Minorities

Chinese-Americans, Filipinos, Dominicans, Haitians, Arabs and other oppressed national minorities each have their own particular history of emigration, oppression, and superexploitation. American imperialism's white racist ideology has provided justification for discrimination against them as pariah sections of the industrial reserve army.

None of these national minorities are large in size or deeply implanted in industry. Although they lack social and political weight comparable to the Afro-Americans, Chicanos, or Puerto Ricans, the radicalization and accompanying nationalist awakening have already increased the militancy of these groups against their oppression as racial minorities.

The emergence of Asian-Americans Against the Vietnam War; the role of Chinese parents in the District 1 struggle for community control in New York; Chinese struggles against discriminatory hiring policies in the construction industry and police brutality; the role of Filipinos in the California farmworkers organizing drive; the actions of Dominicans and Haitians against the deportation of undocumented workers and political exiles; and the demonstrations of Arab auto workers are all signs of this development.

Even national or racial groupings that are not oppressed national minorities or nationalities in the United States suffer from the pervasive racism and xenophobia intensified by the ruling class in periods of social crisis. Anti-semitism aimed at Jews, and white racist prejudice against the Japanese-Americans are clear examples.

B. Women

Women constitute both a growing percentage of the working class and an increasingly important ally of the working class. Women are not a minority. They constitute more than one-half the population and are not restricted to any geographical area, social strata, or occupation. Like the American population as a whole, they are increasingly proletarian in composition.

Oppression of women as a sex is, like national oppression, indispensable to the maintenance of the profit system. Sexism is the necessary ideological underpinning of the maintenance of the family as an institution of class rule. The family is the institution to which the rulers abdicate social responsibility and care for the young, the old, the sick, the unemployed, and to which they shift the burden of economic crisis and breakdown. It is a burden felt especially keenly by working-class families. The family is a primary mechanism for inculcating authoritarian, hierarchical attitudes into each new generation.

Sexism is also one of the main tools by which the ruling class

keeps the working class divided, weakening class consciousness and unity, and reinforcing reactionary religious and obscurantist ideology.

Widespread acceptance of the idea that "woman's place is in the home" is used to promote the myth that women do not seek employment out of necessity but out of choice. The consignment of women to the home keeps a reservoir of extra labor available and reduces the social costs and consequences of large numbers of periodically unemployed women.

The oppression of all women as a sex, like national oppression, creates a pariah section of the industrial reserve army, a labor pool whose superexploitation generates high rates of surplus value and helps drive down the wage level of all workers.

The oppression of women as a sex does not stem from the peculiar needs of capitalism alone. Its historic origins go back to the dawn of class society. And the struggle for women's liberation poses the problem of the total reorganization of society from its smallest repressive unit (the family) to its largest (the state). It demands a thoroughgoing reorganization of its productive and reproductive institutions in order to maximize social welfare for all.

The search for solutions to the issues raised by women's liberation is one of the central driving forces of the third American revolution. The ability of the workers vanguard to provide clear and concrete answers to the questions posed by capitalism's oppression of women will be decisive in mobilizing the forces necessary to overturn capitalism.

Three processes—developing over the postwar decades—led to the emergence of a women's liberation movement with a political character and social depth vastly different from that in the last working-class radicalization of the 1930s:

1. The large-scale introduction of women into the labor force and the significant rise in general educational level that accompanied this process.

2. The growing realization among millions of people that the development of the productive and technical capacities of industry and science has now made possible unlimited abundance and the socialization of "women's work" if society is rationally organized and planned.

3. The challenge to bourgeois social and moral norms, a consequence of the broad radicalization, made it possible for significant numbers of women to develop as cadres, organizers and political leaders.

All of these conditions reached a unique expression at the end of the 1960s when the antiwar movement and student radicalization were at their height. Many of the initial cadres of the women's groups came out of these movements. The rapid spread of the movement, its deep reverberations through all layers of society, penetrating into the organized labor movement, attested to the ripeness of the other conditions that bred it.

Because of women's distribution throughout society, and the radical character of the questions posed, the rise of the women's liberation movement has already deeply affected mass consciousness and every aspect of culture in the broadest sense of the term. Literature, TV, movies, and other avenues have felt its impact. There is an irresistible tendency to challenge all values and mores and to review all aspects of existence, every facet of society by looking at them through women's eyes.

The most basic assumptions of class society about women are being carefully scrutinized and rejected by millions of women and men. On a much higher level, the ferment of the woman question recalls the radicalization of the Debsian pre-World War I period, or even the pre-Civil War radicalization, where the specific question of women's role in society was also a distinct component of the general social ferment—although on a much more restricted practical and theoretical basis. The vanguard role of women in other social movements is also parallel.

Struggles by women directed toward their emancipation are one of the clearest indicators of the depth of the current *social* crisis and radicalization. The fact that these struggles began to emerge *before* the effects of a major economic crisis were felt confirms this all the more emphatically.

The large increase in the percentage of employed women, in the number of women who are heads of households, and in the unionization of working women, combined with the rise of the women's liberation movement, has created difficult problems for the ruling class. The flexibility of the use of women as reserve labor—the vast majority of women who drop out of the labor market in hard times are not even counted as unemployed—has been diminished by developments over the last half decade.

The attempts by the ruling class to wipe out the gains made by the oppressed national minorities and women through preferential hiring and upgrading victories in the last period is an extremely important part of the political counteroffensive mounted by the Democrats and Republicans. And the resistance of women to being shoved out of work on the basis of last-hired-first-fired is growing. There has been rising opposition among women to having seniority rights broken by maternity leave, being denied access to apprenticeship programs for skilled or "heavy" jobs, being superexploited, or being denied the right to participate in bargaining units because of "part-time" classifications.

As with the oppressed nationalities, the road toward true equality and equal opportunity for women lies through preferential treatment—quotas, affirmative action in industry, education, politics and society—to correct the inequality of opportunity established by centuries of discrimination.

The radicalization of women and the examples of direct action by others in the last decade have made housewives react with anger and frustration to the economic squeeze on their budgets and have led them to be more inclined to try to do something about it themselves. The meat boycott and the popularity of consumer investigations like those of Ralph Nader are harbingers of the protests to come.

The challenge to the bourgeois social order represented by the rise of the women's liberation movement means that the gains won by women have become a major target of reaction, second only to the Black movement. In Boston the antibusing drive, the attempt to reverse the right to abortion, and the anti-ERA demonstrations have provided an instructive example of the combination of targets selected in the country as a whole by the most rabid reactionary forces.

The right to abortion and constitutional and legislative guarantees of equal rights for women, as obvious as they may seem to some, represent a challenge to class society and its entire ideological superstructure. The protectors of the bourgeois order know this.

Many of the initial participants in the women's liberation movement rapidly faced a crisis of perspectives. Some were won to revolutionary Marxism. Others went in the direction of ultraleftism or forms of personal escapism. Still more were drawn into the two-party game of capitalist politics, where the ruling class was again quick to create openings for leaders of the movement.

Like the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam and abolition of the draft, the Supreme Court decision to legalize early abortions was part of the ruling class's general attempt to defuse the radicalization and eliminate some of the issues that had become focal points for mass mobilizations.

But the abortion victory, as with other democratic concessions to women, could not eliminate the roots of the oppression of women or defuse their struggle for long. On the contrary, despite temporary lulls or downturns in mass action, such gains only serve to generate new demands and to create more favorable conditions for building an independent mass feminist movement capable of mobilizing women in struggle against their oppression.

C. Small Farmers

The mobilization of the traditional petty-bourgeois allies of the working class in the United States poses problems far different from those in countries where the working class is a minority and surrounded by large numbers of independent producers, including a massive peasantry.

The extensive monopolization and mechanization of American agriculture in the decades since World War II; the vertical growth of many of these monopolies, giving them control of everything from the land, seeds, fertilizer, and farm machinery to harvesting, processing, packaging, distribution and giant retail outlets; the generation of a sizable agricultural proletariat that has a significant "nonwhite" composition and is overwhelmingly seasonal and migrant; the transformation of many farmers' cooperative associations into big businesses or subsidiaries of the largest commercial banks; the internationalization of the agricultural monopolies which play an important role in American imperialism's foreign policy—all this has been one of the biggest economic "revolutions" of the last quarter century.

The elimination of the less productive small farmers who cannot compete with finance capital's collectivization, mechanization, and monopolization of food production continues. At the end of World War II, 17.5 percent of the population lived on the land. By 1960 this had fallen to 8.7 percent. Today it stands at 4.5 percent and continues to drop. During the same period farm output per hour of labor increased 600 percent. Agribusiness is now the sector of American imperialism with the greatest relative productivity edge over all foreign competitors.

The results of this gigantic explosion in agricultural productivity help highlight the disproportion between productive capacity and the limitation of the capitalist market, between potential production and the limitation of national boundaries. The glaring contrast between vast personal wealth for some while millions go hungry or die of famine has become one of the generators of the coming upheavals in both the United States and other countries.

While farm dwellers today constitute a small percentage of the total population, their importance is greater than their numbers would indicate. Disruption of the relationship between agriculture and industry directly affects the quantity, quality and cost of the food, fibers, and other farm products the working class must buy. Soaring food prices, threatened shortages, and actions taken by some small farmers to dramatize their plight have brought this home to American workers in the last few years.

The ruling class does its utmost to play upon the divisions between the farmer and worker to set each against the other in order to maintain the dominance of capital over both. But the real antagonism—that between the small working farmer, the agricultural worker, and the workers on one side, and the interests of monopoly capitalism, including the giant agribusinesses on the other—will be one of the important elements in the coming American revolution. If the workers vanguard proves capable of providing correct solutions to the problems faced by the small farmers, they will be able to win them to labor's side.

D. The "Middle Class"

While the monopolization of American capital has diminished the relative importance of the petty bourgeoisie, it has not eliminated it. In fact, monopolization continually breeds a petty bourgeoisie that occupies the cracks and crevices of production, distribution and services, where they play an essential role. Some sectors of the petty bourgeoisie—those offering specialized services and technical skills—even increase in significance relative to the population as a whole and relative to their own past weight.

The exact configuration of the middle classes must always be examined concretely since it varies greatly from one country to

another and often from one area to another inside a country.

For example, in the United States the independent owner-operator truckers—whose job action in early 1974 attracted national attention to the way they were being squeezed by soaring oil prices—play an important role in distribution. But, unlike France, the small independent baker is an uncommon phenomenon.

It is also necessary to examine the spectrum of professionals and technicians situated between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

At the one end, sizable numbers of teachers, technicians, service workers, government employees, etc., are really for the most part skilled, usually salaried, workers. They have no perspective of ever being able to make their living other than by selling their labor power to industry or the government. Their goal, in good times or bad, is not to open their own little school or laboratory somewhere. Growing numbers are willing to consider the idea that the solution to the social and economic squeeze they feel is to organize as part of the union movement and fight collectively—using labor's methods of struggle—to better their condition. The ruling class does its utmost to perpetuate the illusion that they are really "professionals" who belong to the "middle class," not the working class. In reality, however, the distinction between a teacher or a lower salaried technician and a woman or man on the assembly line at Chrysler is a distinction within the working class itself between skilled, semiskilled and unskilled, between wage and salaried workers.

To an intermediate category belong the modern small masters, the independent truckers being one example. The small masters are a broad and variegated category, hybrids between capitalist and laborer. Included are those who have accumulated enough capital to begin to hire others to work along with them, those who are on the verge of becoming capitalists. Also included are those who simply own their own tools, even if they are expensive tools, hire no labor, and with each turn of the business cycle find themselves much closer to joining the unemployment lines as "fellow workers."

At the other end of the spectrum of professionals and technicians are the well-heeled doctors, engineers and lawyers, many of whom are self-employed and whose skills are remunerated by the ruling class at a rate enabling them to live at a standard qualitatively above even the most skilled workers. They are able to make sizable investments assuring them security in old age. These layers as a whole consciously identify with the employing class, its political command, and ideology.

However, even these professionals, especially the younger members, are not immune to the changes in social values and mores, as actions like the resident doctors' strikes in New York and New Orleans indicate. Beginning to react against capitalism's archaic and inhuman organization of medicine as a priestcraft, utilizing labor's methods of struggle, the young doctors are advancing demands that are quite comprehensible to the masses of workers (80-hour week; no more than 48 hours on duty at a stretch, etc.) The more radical young members of such professions can move sharply to the left under the fluctuations of a growing social crisis.

Leaders of the working class also have to distinguish between sectors of the middle class that are social parasites (lawyers, advertising specialists, insurance agents), those whose function is to increase the rate of surplus value (time-in-motion experts, foremen), or those whose role is related to the state's repressive apparatus (cops, many social workers), from those that fulfill functions that can be useful to the proletariat if won to the side of the revolution (technicians, engineers, statisticians). A distinction must be drawn between those required to maintain the present *relations of production* and those needed to maintain and expand the *forces of production*. The latter are more easily attracted to a revitalized class-struggle workers movement and are needed in the

task of winning workers control and planned production.

It is also important to examine carefully the character of actions taken by various sections of the "middle classes" under pressure of the capitalist crisis. Many are not petty-bourgeois actions as such, that is, actions aimed at winning demands that concern and interest the petty bourgeoisie as a specific social class (like the silver standard crusade among the small farmers of the 1880s and 1890s or the fight backed by small merchants to maintain "fair pricing" laws).

While large numbers of petty-bourgeois women were involved in and helped sparked the meat boycott, for example, this was an action appealing to a majority of working-class participants as *consumers*, not producers, and certainly was not a petty-bourgeois movement.

Interest in and support to consumer protest and environmental protection movements, and muckraking exposés like those initiated by Ralph Nader and his associates are not the concern solely of the petty bourgeoisie and a thin layer of the most privileged workers. The availability and cost of credit for housing, cars, and durable consumer goods; the quality, operating costs and safety of these goods; and the profiteering in utility rates, medical costs, the oil shortage, and similar items directly affect the great majority of the American working people.

The impact of protests around such problems is limited at present by the absence of a class-struggle labor leadership capable of linking up with them, associating the power of labor with them, generalizing and leading them in a class-struggle direction. Nevertheless, the protests are bound to increase as the social crisis deepens, and the labor movement will find it more and more difficult to abstain from playing an active role in them. It will be increasingly obliged to participate not as part of the Democratic party machine or through government agencies but as the independent and unifying organizer of the working people as a whole.

E. Students

The changes in the needs of American industry since World War II, under the impact of a virtual technological revolution, have meant vast alterations in the size and character of the student population since the 1930s. As potential allies of the proletariat, college students occupy a place different from the one they held earlier in the century, when they were predominantly bourgeois and petty-bourgeois careerists attending college to better prepare themselves to take on their responsibilities within the bourgeois world.

Today more than 75 percent of teenage youth in the United States graduate from high school, and of those well over 50 percent go on to some college institution. In New York City, the trend is indicated by the fact that open enrollment victories, won in the big student struggles at the end of the 1960s more than tripled the number of Black and Puerto Rican college students. The average number of years spent in school is one of the biggest differences between today's youth and the generation of their parents. In 1940 the average youth leaving school had not completed the ninth grade. Today the figure is 12.3 grades and rising.

Each student is of course deeply marked by his or her class origins. The family unit in which they are raised gives a child his or her first class identity. Students are affected by the attitudes of the social class to which they belong, or to which they believe their education will lead them. But students as a social grouping *per se* have no direct specific relationship to production. In relation to their role in the economic structure, students function neither as workers, capitalists, nor petty bourgeoisie. They are preparing to assume one of these economic roles. The overwhelming majority of students today are on their way to becoming wage or salaried workers of some kind; and they anticipate a

future in which they will be able to live only by offering their labor power for sale.

Thanks to the vast increase in the number of students, the percentage of workers with some college education is up; the percentage of college students who will become wage and salaried workers is up; the percentage who are working on jobs while going to college is up. The relative homogenization of social and ideological values of youth is increased by the length of time they spend together in high schools and college institutions.

While there can be a decline in the percentage of students as a proportion of the population because of conjunctural factors—especially economic downturns—there will be no fundamental reversal of the trend or the changes that have already taken place. The overall requirements of capitalist production and accumulation preclude this.

Given the large concentrations, social composition, intellectual stimuli, the anti-authoritarian attitude of many youth, and the relative freedom of student life, the majority of students can be highly sensitive to social and political issues. In large numbers they can be radicalized by and respond to major developments in the class struggle on a national and international scale. The concerns of the majority of students are part of this larger picture, and almost invariably related to it. The tendency of the majority of them today is to ally themselves with progressive social struggles taking place at home and abroad whose goals and values they can understand and appreciate.

The new political importance and potential of students, resulting from the massive post-World War II expansion of the educational system, was admirably demonstrated by the key role the student movement played in developing and maintaining a mass opposition to the imperialist war in Vietnam. This experience drove home the correctness of the estimate of the SWP that systematic political work among students, organized through a revolutionary socialist youth organization, is a permanent political responsibility and opportunity.

The “red university” strategy, on which the Trotskyist youth organization, the Young Socialist Alliance, has been built, is not a narrow “student power” orientation, but an overall strategy intended to help turn the universities into organizing centers at the service of the working class and its allies—including the students—in their struggles. They are bases from which to win large numbers of campus youth to Trotskyism and to the revolutionary workers movement.

In the period since the signing of the Paris Peace Accords and the withdrawal of U.S. combat personnel from Vietnam there has been a downturn in the intensity of student political activities. But it would be a mistake to confuse a period of relative quiescence with either a basic turn to the right or a long phase of political apathy on the campuses.

The campuses have become permanent centers of dissatisfaction and protest. But as throughout the rest of society, the coming crises will have a *polarizing* effect on the campuses. Many students will lose confidence in the capitalist system and the institutions and future of American bourgeois democracy. This polarization will turn the campuses into an important battleground of competition for political cadres between the reactionary right and radical left, as well as among the various working-class tendencies. There will be no return to the long political quiescence of the late 1940s and 1950s.

F. The GIs

The ranks of the armed forces must also be counted as one of the more important allies of the working class. Young, overwhelmingly working class in composition, and with a high percentage drawn from the oppressed nationalities, the soldiers today are

deeply affected by all the changes taking place in their generation and their class. Because of their assigned role as cannon fodder for the interests of private property and imperialist oppression and aggrandizement around the world, their attitudes are of great importance.

Unlike World War II when there was general—if at bottom reluctant—support for the “war against fascism,” the Vietnam adventure from the very beginning generated profound suspicion concerning the motives and policies of the rulers, and growing opposition to being used as cannon fodder in Washington’s schemes to police the world.

The antiwar radicalization and deepening disaffection within the army itself—reflecting the attitudes prevalent in the rest of American society—was one of the important factors that blocked U.S. imperialism from pursuing the war of aggression in Vietnam. The emergence of the antiwar GI as a conspicuous and widely popular figure marked a change in thinking of historic import.

The American army, owing to its composition and to today’s political climate, is less and less suited to play its assigned role as a world police force. The American imperialists know full well that they must have such an instrument because planes, bombs, and the dragooned troops of a puppet regime are often not sufficient, as Vietnam has again demonstrated. But Washington does not have too many options. The legacy of the Vietnam war and the accompanying radicalization outside and inside the army is one of the new minus factors the ruling class must include in its calculations.

The radicalization within the army itself inevitably focuses on the struggle to maintain and extend the democratic rights of the soldiers. The concept of the citizen soldier as one who gives up none of his elementary freedoms and rights upon entering the armed forces is deeply embedded in American history from the time of the militia forces of the revolutionary war to the present. Such concepts, which originated in the popular support for the political goals of the militia forces, are anathema to a military caste formed in the Prussian pattern. But they are so closely associated with the fundamental rights the American people believe to be theirs, that the ruling class has not dared to risk a head-on confrontation on this matter during a period of rising mass antiwar sentiment.

The ruling class’ decision to eliminate the draft in hopes of creating a more reliable instrument for implementing its imperialist aims creates two new problems for them. The rising percentage of Black troops in the combat divisions leads to a composition of this repressive force that makes it less reliable for use against the colonial revolution or in the suppression of ghetto uprisings and labor battles at home. Secondly, modern wars cannot be fought without conscription; and attempts to reintroduce the draft in the future, as the ruling class will be obliged to do in new imperialist adventures, will inevitably call forth a quicker and greater antidraft sentiment than appeared during the Vietnam war.

VI. PROSPECTS OF AMERICAN BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

Bourgeois democracy in America has had an uninterrupted 200-year history. During that time, extensions of democratic rights—beginning with white male property owners—have been gradually won despite reactionary attempts to reverse the process. The gains were made at great cost. To win even elementary rights for nonproperty owners, nonwhites, workers, Blacks, women, and youth, a second revolution and immense efforts in the class struggle over a prolonged period were required.

But these gains in rights are only one aspect of bourgeois democracy in America. As a form of class rule that only rich capitalist ruling classes can afford, American democracy has

always rested on brutal force and crushing exploitation. First and foremost was slavery. There were also other forms of forced servitude, the expropriation and virtual extermination of the native American population, the conquest and incorporation of half of Mexico, the superexploitation of immigrant labor, spoliation of vast natural resources, and the advance into the Caribbean, Latin America and the Philippines.

As imperialism emerged in the late nineteenth century, the continuation of bourgeois democracy in America increasingly required the massive superexploitation of other countries, the vast international "slave holdings" of American capitalism.

The economic crisis of the world capitalist system in the 1930s ended the prosperity and ate into the reserves on which the dollar democracy rested. Democracy in the weaker imperialist countries (Italy, Germany, Spain) went under first. But the political future of the United States, if the capitalists and not the workers were to have the last say, was foreshadowed in the march of reaction and fascism in Europe.

Post-World War II democracy in America was based on the uncontested domination of U.S. imperialism, which had vanquished its rivals (both "Axis" and "Allies") and brought whole new sections of the world under its yoke. Much of the former empires of the British, Dutch, French, Italian, German, Belgian, and Japanese ruling classes fell. U.S. imperialism took over the colonial slaves of its competitors. To keep them in bondage financial, political, and military support—American foreign "aid"—were extended to the most brutally repressive and totalitarian "independent" regimes throughout the former colonial world.

The advances of the socialist revolution following World War II were countered with the institutionalization of the cold war at home. The reactionary domestic political climate was intended to support a world anti-Communist "rollback" strategy.

The first phase of the cold war involved utilizing the monopoly of the atomic bomb to put heavy pressure on the Soviet Union. In preparation for war, careful attention was paid to the home front. Efforts were intensified to whip the liberals into line behind the cold war and to strike at the militancy and independence of the CIO. By the end of the 1940s the witch-hunt had largely succeeded in housebreaking the CIO bureaucracy and intimidating the ranks of labor. With the "loss of China," the cold war was deepened in the United States. A protracted period of conservatism and labor quiescence set in.

McCarthyism, which was the extension of the cold-war antilabor policies and loyalty purges initiated by Truman, had an incipient fascist logic of its own that eventually proved counterproductive to the ruling class. The reactionary Wisconsin demagogue had his wings clipped. But it was the great capitalist expansionary boom of the 1950s and 1960s that provided the economic base for eliminating, for the time being, any serious threat of a fascist advance within the United States. In the post-Korean war period the "normal" methods of bourgeois democratic rule proved adequate.

The qualitative disparity between the economic, financial, and military power of the United States and that of its competitors insured American imperialism's dominance. There seemed to be no limits—military, economic or political—to Washington's arrogant actions as world cop, although the military stalemate in Korea, and the less than fervent patriotic sacrifices of labor in that intervention on the mainland of Asia, gave warning signals of what was to come.

The rulers were convinced they could provide both guns and butter. The capitalist economy, touted to be free of depressions, brought a feeling of relative security to broad layers of the working class to whom the Great Depression was still a vivid personal memory. It also fashioned a "silent generation" of youth in the 1950s. For that entire decade the only significant social

struggle was that of Black people, which went unsupported by other large forces.

The decisive turning point came in the second half of the 1960s, following Johnson's decision in 1965 to escalate armed intervention in Vietnam. Primed earlier by the small "ban the bomb" movement and the Cuban Revolution, and spurred on by the Black struggle and the student radicalization, Johnson's escalation gave rise to an unprecedented antiwar movement. For the first time in American history an imperialist war became the catalyst for mass political opposition to the policies of the regime.

The war also helped precipitate a fundamental shift in the evolution of world capitalist relations, hastening the end of the great American postwar boom and the pretension that, unlike fascist Germany, America could not give up butter to stockpile guns.

The Vietnam radicalization originated in a growing appreciation of the hypocrisy of the claim that the White House was establishing democracy abroad. The forced evacuation of villages and the My Lais of the Kennedy-Johnson years, the napalming of children, the Nixon-Kissinger carpet bombings, the Tiger Cages, the invasion of Cambodia—these crimes stirred mounting revulsion from 1965 through Nixon's second inaugural in 1973.

This sentiment was accompanied by the growing conviction that there must be some connection between the actions of American imperialism abroad and the methods applied against domestic critics. The police assaults on the Black civil-rights fighters in the South, the habitual police brutality against the inhabitants of the Black ghettos in the North and South, the murderous suppression of the ghetto rebellions, the police rampage against the demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic party convention in Chicago, capped by the Kent State and Jackson State massacres during the May 1970 Cambodian invasion, drove home the point that the real face of American democracy was something quite different from the pleasant countenance millions of Americans had been taught to revere.

President after president from Truman to Nixon pretended to speak in candid terms to the American people, only to be exposed as liars and self-serving hypocrites. The "Newspeak" of capitalist politics became clearer.

All this developed before there was widespread knowledge, or even suspicion, of the degree of secret government infiltration, surveillance, provocation and disruption of the Black, antiwar and radical movements. It was unthinkable to the majority of the American people that such practices were applied not only to the "radical" or "minority" social protest movements but to the labor movement and even the "loyal opposition" within the two-party system.

When such things began to come to light in the Watergate affair, a chain reaction was set off that has not yet ended. The Watergate experience marked the opening of a stage in which people are more perceptive and critical in judging the nature of the institutions of bourgeois democracy, the nature of the executive powers, the system of checks and balances, the role of Congress, secret diplomacy, etc.

The main significance of Watergate does not lie in the revelations—which were new to millions in the United States—about the application of imperialist policies abroad. The main significance is the alteration in public consciousness, the widespread feeling that foreign and domestic policy may be but two sides of the same coin.

Imperial arrogance, contempt for human values, unspeakable brutality, disregard for the fundamental democratic rights the American masses believe in, police-state methods of political spying, provocation, and assassination—these are not only the policies of American capitalism abroad; they are the policies of American capitalism at home.

The Watergate crisis and the attempted coverups—along with the FBI, IRS, CIA, secret-diplomacy offshoots—have underscored the most important single ideological gain of the initial radicalization, a loss of confidence in the veracity of the capitalist leaders of the United States. Its complement is doubt about their intention to administer a government or to decide domestic and foreign policy in the *interests* of the broad majority.

The confidence of the American working people in their own ability to see things as they are, and their feeling that there is no remedy but to take action in *their own interests* have grown as their trust in the “elected officials” has diminished.

The radicalization of the last decade can be measured in the escalation of the struggle for fundamental freedoms. This includes legal and democratic rights. But motivating the struggle is a basic stand in favor of what Malcolm X called *human rights*. This was the aspiration in the struggles against the legal superstructure of Jim Crow—the *right* to be treated as a human being, not a second-class citizen or one of inferior birth. It motivated the “freedom now” generation and was the concept Malcolm X sought to popularize by carrying the struggle of Black Americans to the United Nations. It inspired the Black workers struggles in the South where the sign “I am a man” was sometimes the only one carried on a picket line.

This concept of the right to inalienable human rights has likewise motivated almost all the social movements of the 1960s and early 1970s—struggles by women, prisoners, soldiers, veterans, oppressed nationalities, “illegal” residents, gays, and the aged.

Concurrent with this struggle to extend and redefine basic rights and to prevent acquired rights from being eroded, millions of Americans sense that American capitalism is heading in an antidemocratic direction.

Such forebodings are well founded. The four classical conditions for the maintenance of imperialist democracy—sustained economic prosperity, a satisfied or docile working class, contentment among major sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and other potential allies of the working class; and a successful foreign policy—all are being eroded.

The belief of the American people that they are entitled to basic democratic rights has a creative dynamic, even though they have illusions in bourgeois democracy. In the course of further struggles, the expectations flowing from these beliefs will strengthen the radicalization and politicalization of the American working class.

VII. LABOR'S STRATEGIC LINE OF MARCH

The Marxist model for constructing a revolutionary program in the imperialist epoch is the founding document of the Fourth International. Drafted by Trotsky, it is entitled *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*.

This “Transitional Program” was adopted by the Socialist Workers party and presented for approval to the founding congress of the Fourth International at a time when world capitalism had been undergoing a deep economic and social crisis for nearly a decade. The new economic downturn of 1937 had further deepened class polarization in America. Both fascist currents and labor party sentiments were on the rise in this country. The New Deal was becoming the “War Deal” and the clouds of World War II were gathering rapidly, threatening unheard of slaughter and destruction.

Neither the Stalinists nor Social Democrats, nor the assorted ultraleft, sectarian, and centrist groupings were capable of presenting a program adequate to the needs of the masses searching for a way out of the crisis. In Trotsky's estimation, solidly planting the Fourth International on a correct programmatic foundation was a key requirement.

Today's situation offers some important parallels, both objectively and in the tasks of revolutionists. After almost a quarter century of expansionary development, world capitalism has entered a period of economic stagnation—with the threat of debilitating inflation, shortages, famine, unemployment, bank failures, business crashes, world depression, sudden political shifts and severe crises. National cyclical economic crises tend to be deeper and more synchronized internationally.

This will inevitably lead to a sharpening of the American class struggle in all its forms and to deepening class polarization. Millions of workers will search for the road to independent political action and will more and more turn to class-struggle methods. On the other hand, rightist demagogues and fascist movements pretending to offer “radical” solutions to the capitalist crises will come forward as candidates for power.

The sharpening of interimperialist competition and conflict, the pressure for a redivision of markets on a world scale, the persistent tendency toward wars directed at halting the colonial revolution—with China and the Soviet Union as the ultimate targets—are all on the agenda. And each military adventure by the White House carries with it the threat of escalating into a nuclear showdown.

The confusion and disorientation generated by the Stalinists, Social Democrats, and the new assortment of ultralefts, centrists, and opportunists demonstrate that the need for clarity on program and perspectives remains decisive.

As in 1938, we can see unfolding on a world scale a prerevolutionary period of education, organization and agitation. After a long period of relative quiescence, the workers in the advanced capitalist countries, beginning with the weaker of the European imperialist powers, are once again beginning to move. Sections of the masses more and more tend to enter into action, and are open to revolutionary alternatives, as they seek a way out of the impasse.

Everywhere revolutionary cadres constitute a small nucleus grappling with two central problems:

- How to help the masses, through their own experiences of struggle, to cross the bridge from general dissatisfaction and demands that stem from their immediate problems, to revolutionary socialist solutions.

- How, in this process, to gather fresh forces and accumulate and train the cadres who, in the course of their experiences in the class struggle, can build a mass revolutionary party capable of leading millions of working people to victory.

Subjectively, the key to the solution of these problems is the correct and flexible utilization of the method of the Transitional Program, giving clear answers to the problems faced by the working class and its allies in their struggles.

Objectively, the conversion of the current radicalization into something more revolutionary in any given country will be determined by class forces beyond our control.

In this situation we must strive to use whatever time we have to accumulate cadres and experience. We must strive to reduce whatever relative advantage the Stalinists or Social Democratic currents have over us in size and position in sectors of the labor movement, organizations of the oppressed nationalities, and other sectors of the mass movement.

Six things must be borne in mind in relation to the method of our program, the transitional method:

1. We begin from the *objective* contradictions of the capitalist system and the direction in which these are moving. On that basis we derive our demands, and we formulate them in terms that are, as much as possible, understandable to the masses at their given level of consciousness and readiness for action.

2. We champion the progressive demands and support the struggles of the oppressed masses themselves, regardless of their origin and level. We try to utilize the illusions people have in

bourgeois democracy and its institutions to expose the capitalist system itself.

3. We recognize the pervasiveness of the deep divisions within the American working class bred by imperialism and class society, and we press for revolutionary unity based on support for the demands of the most oppressed. We press the working class to give clear and concrete answers to the problems faced by its allies. And we unconditionally reject any concept that the oppressed should "wait" for the labor movement to support them before entering into struggle.

4. We do not begin by demanding that the masses understand what "the system" is or that they reject any particular aspects of it. Instead we chart a course, raise demands and propose actions aimed at shifting the burden of all the inequities and breakdowns of capitalism from the shoulders of the working people onto the employers and their government where it properly belongs.

5. We raise demands that encroach on the "rights" of capitalist property and any prerogatives that the government and its agencies reserve to themselves. We extend the fight for democracy into the organization of the economy and the process of making decisions over the standard of living of the working class. This is the dynamic leading to control by the workers over the institutions and policies that determine the character of their work and life, the dynamic of direct democracy through councils or committees of actions, and the dynamic leading to a workers government.

6. Our method is one of class-struggle action leading to deeper and clearer class consciousness. We promote the utilization of proletarian methods of struggle where the workers can make their weight count advantageously in direct mass actions in the streets and in the workplaces. In this perspective united-front type tactics are central. Our goal of independent political action by the working class means no subordination to the needs of bourgeois parties, figures or institutions. It means the workers must build their own political instrument, a party of the working class capable of leading their struggles to their natural conclusion, the establishment of a workers government.

It cannot be stressed too much that to meet this revolutionary perspective the American workers will have to learn to think socially and act politically. They must see the big social and political questions facing all the exploited and oppressed of the United States as issues of direct concern to them. To act politically means they must break the stranglehold of the bourgeois two-party system to which they are tied and through which they vainly try to find political solutions to the problems posed by the capitalist breakdown.

Without a labor party based on the organized power of the unions that can express and generalize the social, political and economic interests of labor and its allies, it is easier for the bosses and their direct servitors to thwart, diffuse and coopt steps in the direction of independent class struggle.

Defensive struggles against the bosses and their government will generate the nuclei for a class-struggle wing in the unions. Striving to defend themselves against the squeeze on jobs, real income, social welfare and on-the-job conditions, the workers will come into direct confrontation with the entrenched labor bureaucracy and its class-collaborationist perspective. A class-struggle left wing will begin along these lines—a wing that stands for the transformation of the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle whose power will be used in the interests of the whole working class, organized and unorganized, and its allies.

It is along this line of march that the role of independent political action will become clear to millions and the politicalization of American labor will take place, eventually placing on the agenda the decisive question of which class shall govern—the workers or the employers.

The precise slogans and demands that will be raised, and the order in which they will appear, will depend on the development

of the crises faced by American imperialism and the intensity of the pressures generated by the spontaneous struggles of the oppressed and exploited.

A. Against the Imperialist War Machine

The task of hobbling and disarming the American imperialist world cops with their vast arsenal of nuclear weapons is a special responsibility of the American workers. No other force can do the job. The survival of humanity rests on their ability to accomplish this task in time. Immediate, unilateral, unconditional nuclear disarmament of U.S. imperialism is a central demand.

The enormous size of Wall Street's war budget is difficult to grasp. The billions in resources consumed by the war budget must be reallocated to help meet the basic needs of the workers and their allies. The first step in that direction should be a 100 percent tax on all profits made from armaments production. Take the profits out of war.

We reject the insidious lie that the workers have no choice but to rely on massive "defense" industry contracts or else suffer large-scale unemployment. The war industry plants must be nationalized and put under the control of workers committees charged with retooling for the production of useful goods.

The U.S. military machine is the key piece in all the imperialist alliances. Our call is: out now—an end to NATO, an end to all the imperialist pacts. Link up with the struggles against NATO in other countries. End all the military and diplomatic alliances that are directed against the colonial masses and the workers states. Hands off the workers struggles unfolding in the imperialist countries—no intervention, open or secret, in Portugal.

Labor should insist on the dissolution of all special paramilitary or "advisory" bodies set up to police situations where the use of U.S. troops would be embarrassing to Washington but which often serve as a preliminary step for open aggression. End the CIA-type military and police training programs around the world.

No support to reactionary butcher regimes, the puppets of imperialism. End all the fake "food for peace" programs and other so-called humanitarian props to these regimes around the globe.

The American workers have a special responsibility towards the colonial revolution because of U.S. imperialism's role as the foremost slave master in the world. The slogan expressing our fundamental line is: HANDS OFF! No intervention anywhere. The half million GIs stationed abroad must be brought home now.

We pay special attention to the fight against racism, xenophobia, and all forms of chauvinism, which are a powerful ideological prop of imperialist foreign policy and supply implicit justification for colonial aggression. In this respect the fight against racism at home is closely linked with the fight against imperialist aggression.

In the spirit of international class solidarity we champion the rights of foreign students and workers in the United States and uphold their freedom to travel, immigrate, study, work, live, and engage in political activity wherever they wish.

It is the youth, especially its most oppressed and exploited sections, who are called upon to fight imperialism's wars. In the long run the Pentagon cannot raise an army large enough to meet Wall Street's needs without conscription. Opposition to counterrevolutionary wars is at the heart of our opposition to the capitalist draft.

We take the offensive in regard to democracy within the armed forces. Soldiers have the right to know and to discuss the true aims of the government, to form political associations, to publish their own leaflets and papers.

We fight for the right of the citizen soldier to exercise every democratic right guaranteed to other Americans, including the right to run for office.

Old enough to be squeezed into the "volunteer" army—old enough to vote and hold office.

End secret diplomacy and backstage deals. Publish all secret international correspondence. The people have a right to know all commitments made by the government.

Take the warmaking powers out of the hands of Congress. Let the people vote directly on war.

B. In Defense of the Working Class

The starting point of workers struggles is the defense of their standard of living and conditions of work.

1. In the death-agony of capitalism, a decent job is the most fundamental right of every worker.

In a depression, the first requisite in addition to unemployment insurance is a massive program of public works. Another called-for emergency measure is reduction of the work week, with no reduction in take-home pay, in order to spread the work among those who need jobs.

The trade unions and other mass organizations of the workers and oppressed must take responsibility for organizing workers with jobs, those without jobs, and those with only "part-time" jobs. They should prevent the employers from creating a pariah category of unemployed whom the employed do not regard as fellow workers. Those out of work must be viewed as part of "us," not as "them."

To protect themselves against inflation, which is a permanent scourge today, the working class needs a sliding scale of wages—an escalator clause—with prompt and full compensation for every rise in the cost of living. A consumer price index drawn up under the supervision of the workers and consumers—not the bosses—is required. The escalator clause must be extended to cover all social-welfare payments, such as unemployment benefits and social security.

The workers and their families will have to fight to keep social-welfare programs up to standard. During periods of unemployment, health insurance coverage should be maintained by the government. Mortgages and installment payments on homes, cars, appliances, and furnishings should likewise be underwritten by the government. Child-care facilities must be kept open and expanded.

Unemployment compensation should be at full union scale, and with no time limit.

The threat of being laid off and denied an income because of the bosses' control over hiring and firing is the source of all pernicious "job discipline." The bosses must be prevented from using rising unemployment to reverse gains the working class has won.

The seniority system won through previous battles by the workers movement is one tool in limiting the bosses from picking and choosing whom they will fire at will, starting with the most militant workers. It, like the hiring hall and closed shop, established a degree of workers control over hiring and firing. In a similar way the workers will have to prevent the bosses' use of "preferential firing" to reverse the gains recently made through preferential hiring and affirmative action quotas. Layoffs cannot be allowed to reduce the proportions of minority and women workers.

The trade-union movement should also firmly reject all attempts by the monopolists to solve their own profit problems at the expense of workers abroad. Protectionist measures professedly aimed at "keeping jobs in the U.S." have the central object of permitting U.S. corporations to charge higher prices and reap greater profits in the face of foreign competition. They are no less inflationary than the devaluation of the dollar, which deprives workers of the possibility of purchasing less expensive foreign-made goods. Protectionism, tariffs, devaluations, are all aimed at workers in the last analysis, whether here or abroad.

2. On the job the workers must protect themselves from the attempts of the bosses to make them pay for the capitalists' growing problems by extracting a higher rate of surplus value through speedup, automation, and chipping away at health and safety standards.

Struggles will grow for protection against speedup and layoffs, for safety and health conditions, regulation of and veto power over work rules, and health codes to protect workers against industrial hazards—*asbestos fibers, coal dust, or chemical and radiation poisoning.*

The workers must have veto power on questions of safety. They must insist that production be shut down at once on demand of the workers and at no loss in pay whenever safety of personnel is at stake. All safety controls and the speed of the production line must be set by the workers themselves. Acceptable levels of chemical pollution, control over purification of waste products, and similar standards must be established by the workers after full access to technical information and consultation with experts of their own choice.

Workers committees must be empowered to decide directly, in consultation with citizens committees responsible to the community, on projects to establish plants or use industrial processes that may adversely affect the environment of cities and regions. Such decisions have to be made on the basis of full and accurate information about the ecological and health effects involved, and with no concern for profits such as motivates the lobbyists and government representatives of big business. Only labor can fight to put science to work as the liberator of humanity, not its destroyer.

Just as they must reject the false dilemma of having to choose between unemployment or making instruments of mass murder, workers must reject the lies of the bosses that they cannot afford to stay in business unless pollution controls are lifted and safety standards lowered. The workers and the community cannot afford pollution, shutdowns, or bosses who put profits above all other consideration. Any plant closed down by such bosses must be nationalized and reopened under the control of workers committees with complete access to all the financial and technical information required for retooling or meeting the requisite standards on pollution and safety.

3. "Open the books for inspection by the workers" is a necessary provision to protect the public against the shortages, sudden breakdowns and rampant inflation endemic in the decline of capitalism and to counter any claims of the bosses that they cannot satisfy the needs of the workers. When monopolies like the utilities, the post service, the agribusinesses, the railroads and the aerospace industries cry "bankruptcy," charge exorbitant rates or prices, or refuse services to those who cannot pay, they should be nationalized and run under control of the workers and worker-consumer committees.

In order to make their decisions on a sound basis, the workers committees will have to proceed in cooperation with similar committees throughout their industry on a national scale, and other industries in their region. The facts must be shared nationally and internationally, and the public kept fully informed.

To acquire the needed information and resources of credit and planning, the entire banking system—now the accounting and credit system of the capitalist class—will have to be expropriated and opened up to the committees of workers, and placed under their control as well. Only by winning that struggle can the workers begin planning and organizing the economy so as to prevent breakdowns, chaos, and the lowering of the standard of living of the entire working class and its allies. And along this line of march, beginning with individual industry and sectors, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie will be posed.

Even partial steps along this course, imposed by a rising mass movement that is rapidly gaining in social and political

consciousness and led by a growing class-struggle wing of organized labor, will meet with stiff resistance from the bosses. To them it is a sacrosanct prerogative to run their business as they see fit—to keep the details of their operations secret from those they exploit, to throw thousands onto the unemployment lines, to charge extortionate prices, to move “their” factories to where the workers are less organized and less experienced in fighting for their rights, to destroy the earth’s ecosystem if this will assure high profits today, to use legislatures and “public” agencies to advance their schemes to make a fast buck.

An increase in class polarization will go hand in hand with deepening class struggle. Fascism, along with war, was the ultimate “solution” imposed by the ruling class to the last world capitalist crisis.

To protect their struggles and gains against murderous attacks by goons, cops and fascist bands, the workers will have to organize and train their own forces and use them in the most effective way. Starting with defense of picket lines and the right to strike, the protection of their demonstrations or those of their allies, and proceeding to workers defense guards, workers militias and the requisite arming of the working class, the working masses will learn from their own experiences what measures to take. The lessons of history, incorporated into the general strategy of the workers movement, will prove invaluable on this life-and-death question.

C. Human Rights, Not Property Rights

As the capitalist system declines, bourgeois democracy does not gain in vigor but grows progressively weaker. A fundamental feature of the program of the workers vanguard is to defend and strive to extend democratic rights against every attempt by reaction to encroach upon them or to roll them back.

The workers must fight to protect themselves against the bosses attacks upon the right to organize; the right to strike, including the right to strike against the government; the right to vote on contracts; the right to settle all issues in a dispute without any government interference, or government meddling in union affairs. Above all the workers must fight against wage controls proposed or imposed by the government under whatever name or guise.

The workers have everything to gain from taking the offensive whenever possible in behalf of those social and economic rights that they more and more consider their due—decent housing, decent jobs, education, transportation, health, social security, freedom from government harassment, etc. In the course of struggle they will learn the necessity of fighting to extend human rights for all the allies of the proletariat. Every such gain reinforces the strength and unity of the working class as a whole.

The struggle to maintain rights already won and to extend them to new areas—economic rights, social rights, rights on the job, rights to a direct say on issues of war and peace—has marked every aspect of the radicalization. They are exemplified in the struggles for abortion rights and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA); the eighteen-year-old vote; civil rights for less than “legal” age high-school students; human rights for soldiers, veterans, gays, the aged, and children; justice and fair treatment of prisoners; language rights; rights of noncitizens.

Still other rights have been redefined in the course of struggle—attempts to impose prior restraint laws on publications have been fought with some success, literary and artistic censorship restricted, and capital punishment curtailed.

There is growing recognition of the right to preferential treatment—quotas, affirmative action in industry, education, politics and society—to correct the inequality of opportunity established by centuries of discrimination because of race, nationality or sex. Millions of working people see that without

this there can be no true equality or equal opportunity for those historically oppressed and discriminated against by class society.

None of these advances have been won without hard struggle and each gain has to be defended against attempts to dilute or reverse it.

The vision of the social and economic rights people should have is being considerably widened. They include the idea that all citizens have a right to enough food, to decent housing, medical care, education, and well-made products; that tenants and urban residents have rights; and even that future generations have rights—the right to an environment capable of healthfully sustaining human life.

The fight to extend democratic rights into industry means establishing various forms of direct democracy as opposed to parliamentary democracy. It means finding ways and means for the workers and their allies themselves to make the fundamental decisions that affect their lives instead of letting the bosses and their political representatives do that for them.

As demands for *personal* privacy have increased, so have demands to *limit government and industry’s* “rights” to secrecy. Not only is there a feeling that our lives are our own business but that “their” business is our business, too.

The exposures of government secrecy in domestic and foreign policy have led to greater acceptance of the idea that the people have a right to *know* what the government is up to, what deals have been made behind closed doors, what commitments contrary to the interests of average working Americans have been made. Such mechanisms of direct democracy as referendums on major policy issues like the war, child-care, and environmental questions have become increasingly popular, as the assumed prerogatives of the bourgeoisie to rule through institutions elected under their rules are challenged.

We persistently struggle to extend the frontiers of what the workers consider to be their inalienable economic, social and political rights that no government has the right to take away from them.

And in all these efforts we advocate proletarian methods of struggle based on the mobilization of the collective strength of the workers and their allies independent of the needs or desires of the rulers and their institutions.

VIII. THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The breakdowns and cyclical ups and downs of the American economy are rooted in the contradictions of world capitalist production and trade. The very ascent of American capitalism to world supremacy has paved the way for a cataclysmic explosion on its home grounds.

In America, a country that has never been carpet-bombed, invaded, occupied, or made to pay war indemnities, capitalism for all its achievements has not been able to assure liberty, justice and a decent standard of living for all of its people. As the mightiest and wealthiest capitalist power celebrates the 200th birthday of its revolutionary origin, growing numbers of Americans are beginning to ask, “If not here, then where?” If capitalism can’t make good in the United States, maybe something is decidedly wrong with it.

The end of the long postwar boom, and the rise of unrest in the United States once again calls attention to the fact that the victory of the European revolution is not a necessary prerequisite for the development of a revolutionary situation in the United States.

Just as the first workers and peasants revolution could succeed in Russia, where the operation of the law of uneven and combined development thrust the most backward of the major capitalist countries in Europe to the forefront of the world revolution, so those same laws can produce severe shocks in the coming period.

within the heartland of the most advanced imperialist power.

But even the most devastating breakdowns of American capitalism cannot automatically produce a victory for the socialist revolution. As Lenin pointed out, there is no absolutely hopeless situation for capitalism. However deep the crisis, if enough commodities can be destroyed and the standard of living of the working class can be driven low enough, capitalism can recover for the moment. While powerful *world* forces are laying the powder kegs under American imperialism, only forces *inside* the United States can take power away from the American capitalists and disarm them. And in the nuclear age this is more decisive for humanity's salvation than even the sharpest alternative forecast by Trotsky; the alternative between the eclipse of civilization or a worldwide scientifically planned economy.

Various developments in the United States can leap ahead of those in other parts of the world in a rather brief period. In the last decades this happened with the rise of the struggles of oppressed nationalities, the antiwar movement, the youth radicalization, the women's liberation movement, and similar struggles for human rights. At the same time the advanced decay of American capitalism poses problems to these movements that cannot be solved short of a socialist revolution. At a certain point revolutionary trends within the American working class can develop at a truly American speed and tempo.

Questions of perspective, program and cadre building cannot be postponed with the expectation that they will be resolved by the colossal objective forces of a revolutionary upsurge. On the contrary, even a small propaganda nucleus that intends to become a mass party must be armed with a clear revolutionary perspective that puts the construction of the revolutionary party in first place.

A. The Social Democrats and Stalinists

There has been a striking change in the relationship of forces between the Socialist Workers party and its opponents since the 1930s.

The American Social Democracy retains a base in the labor bureaucracy where its influence is stronger than its small and fragmented organizations would indicate. The role of the Social Democracy is circumscribed by its perspective of trying to improve capitalism through petty reforms and its political orientation of participating in the Democratic party. But we can anticipate that Social Democratic formations will play a more active and open role in the coming period.

Within the Social Democratic framework differences exist between the reactionary, racists, anticommunist, diehard conservatives of the Meany-Shanker-Rustin wing and the anticommunist, liberal, reformists of the Harrington-Gotbaum-Reuther wing. The two wings differ especially over tactics in the Democratic party machine. The differences involve such questions as how to manipulate the weight of the labor movement in order to win some concessions and how to teach the labor bureaucrats to adapt more adroitly to radically changing expectations and attitudes. Deepening social crises and rising class struggles will lead to differentiations and splits within the Social Democratic circles, with some moving further to the right and some important forces moving to the left as centrist currents.

The shift in the relation of forces on the left is most strikingly registered in respect to the Stalinists. In 1945 they claimed 100,000 members. They dominated several major industrial unions and had a periphery of hundreds of thousands of fellow travelers, intellectuals, Black sympathizers, and so on.

American Stalinism began losing its leading position in the American left from that point on. Their war-time line of speedup and a no-strike pledge, their postwar line of support for the perspective of American-Soviet maintenance of the status quo and

of class peace, yielded its first fruits when the ruling class turned on their war-time servitors in the cold-war witch-hunt. The Stalinists looked around for popular support and found they had none. The only permanent factor in their policies—subordination of the class struggle in the U.S. to the diplomatic needs of Moscow—won a bitter reward from the workers they had misled.

The crushing of the Hungarian revolution and Khrushchev's admission of some of Stalin's crimes further weakened the CP. The inability of the Stalinists to launch a viable youth organization and to recruit broadly out of the radicalization of the 1960s while the Trotskyist movement was making steady gains further altered the relationship of forces in our favor.

Unlike the situation in the 1930s our relative strength puts us in position to challenge them for leadership in the struggles of the working class and its allies. But it is important to underline that the pro-Moscow Communist party remains our single most important and strongest opponent on the left.

The pro-Peking Stalinists have neither the cadres, periphery, nor material base of the pro-Moscow party. They are divided into numerous groupings with deep differences, especially on domestic politics. But the Chinese revolution, which they claim to represent, gives them an international banner that attracts a following, often among youth inclined to ultraleftism. In the climate of deepening radicalization they are growing. For some time to come, our party will be competing with the various Maoist currents for cadres and influence among the radical youth and oppressed nationalities. It is important to note that the ultraleft mood that arose in the late 1960s was world-wide. It has not yet run its course although it has diminished.

B. The Socialist Workers Party

The two-party system of American capitalism remains the greatest shock absorber of social protest. The single biggest anomaly in the American political scene is the absence of a political party of the working class and the lack of a tradition of independent working-class political organizations in the American labor movement. To transcend this political backwardness remains the single greatest leap to be taken in the politicalization of the American working class.

There is, of course, an advantageous side to the political inexperience of the American working class. The revolutionary workers vanguard confronts no powerful traditional reformist party to which the working class remains stubbornly loyal. The workers are not weighed down with the conservatizing force of the political routinism ingrained in the European proletariat by the mass Social Democratic and Stalinist parties. Although the American union bureaucracy is far stronger than in the 1930s and acts as a surrogate for a mass reformist party, it remains a less formidable obstacle to socialist revolution than the reformist workers parties in the advanced capitalist countries of Europe.

The political education of the American working class does not necessarily have to pass through a reformist labor party or come under the domination of Stalinist or Social Democratic misleadership. Explosive developments, propelling events at extraordinary speed, could bring about a rapid transition to revolutionary class consciousness. A mass revolutionary socialist party could emerge during such a revolutionary upsurge—but only if its cadres are prepared beforehand with a clear perspective and program and only if they are conscious that a revolutionary party is the historical key to victory.

As Trotsky explained in the Transitional Program, "The building of national revolutionary parties as sections of the Fourth International is the central task of the transitional epoch."

At the heart of the Socialist Workers party's revolutionary program and perspective is its proletarian orientation. Only a party that has deep roots in the working class, that is composed

primarily of workers and enjoys the respect and confidence of the workers, can lead the American working class to power.

The proletarian orientation means concerted, systematic work to root the party in all sectors of the mass movement and to recruit the most capable cadres to the party. It means work in labor organizations, in industry and among the unemployed, in the political organizations of the oppressed minorities, in the struggles for women's liberation, and in the student movement. Over the last eighteen years our collaboration with the Young Socialist Alliance, the revolutionary Marxist youth organization, has been established as the main form through which this revolutionary work in the student movement is carried out.

Our proletarian orientation means functioning as a homogeneous campaign party capable of choosing realistic objectives and concentrating our striking power and resources with maximum effectiveness. It means professionalizing our work and adjusting ourselves to the demands and direction of the mass movement in order to help lead that movement forward.

The need to integrate the party into all aspects of the mass movement shapes every activity we undertake. The deepening crises of the American capitalist system and its reactionary interventions abroad do not imply any esoteric new tasks or "tactics" for building the party. They only reinforce the need to deepen the proletarian orientation and to take advantage of the new opportunities opening on all sides.

The perspective of increasing class struggle and class polarization indicates more than ever the need for a disciplined combat party of the working class.

The revolutionary party that seeks to lead the socialist revolution is a voluntary organization. Without a common bond of mutual confidence, experience and loyalty to the program and goals on which it is founded, it will never accomplish the immense tasks before it. Thus, for us the concept of loyalty to the party we are building, pride and confidence in our collective efforts—what Trotsky referred to as party patriotism—is simply the proletarian orientation and revolutionary perspective applied to the construction of the instrument necessary to realize our program.

The "Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution," drafted by Trotsky in May 1940, outlines the following basic conditions for the victory of the proletarian revolution:

"(1) the bourgeois impasse and the resulting confusion of the ruling class; (2) the sharp dissatisfaction and the striving towards decisive changes in the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie, without whose support the big bourgeoisie cannot maintain itself; (3) the consciousness of the intolerable situation and readiness for revolutionary actions in the ranks of the proletariat; (4) a clear program and a firm leadership of the proletarian vanguard."

The manifesto points out that the main reason for the defeat of so many revolutions is that these four conditions rarely attain the necessary degree of maturity at one and the same time.

In the period now opening, we can clearly see the forces building on a world scale that will bring these conditions to maturity in the United States. But the decisive question, the one over which we will have a decisive say, is that of forging a revolutionary party in time.