



**Stop the War NOW - 1971!**

**LESSONS: FOR AFRO-AMERICAN YOUTH  
FOR ALL YOUTH - TRADE UNION AND  
STUDENT.**



**THE CRISIS OF  
THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY**

**By**

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## For Peace and National Liberation

"They have taken my sight, but they have not taken my vision." The author of the main article herein spoke these words when his eyesight was lost because of medical neglect in a racist U. S. prison. He is Mississippi-born Henry Winston, National Chairman of the Communist Party, U. S. A. He had been imprisoned under an anti-Communist, racist law for his fight against U. S. imperialism with its cold war policies of world aggression and racism.

Mr. Winston's article sheds important light on theoretical and scientific questions pertaining to Afro-American liberation and to the struggle against, and defeat of, U. S. imperialism and racism in the world.

Henry Winston is a renowned and revered Communist, recognized and loved throughout the entire world.

In the struggle to end the war, NOW - 1971, in the struggle to defeat the imperialists and racists, and in the struggle for National, colonial and Afro-American liberation, we believe the Mr. Winston's contributions herein are most valuable to Afro-American students and youth - yes, to all youth.

The Black Liberation Commission  
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## The Crisis of the Black Panther Party\*

What are the causes of the crisis of the Black Panther Party? How could an organization which portrayed itself as the revolutionary vanguard become so quickly isolated from the people? Why were the hopes of so many militant and courageous Black youths who were attracted to the party turned into frustration and even tragedy?

No answer to these questions can be given without taking into account the attacks and frameups launched by the enemy against the party. Yet even these brutal and murderous attacks, conducted both from within and outside the organization, cannot alone explain the crisis of the Black Panther Party.

Huey P. Newton, writing in the *Black Panther* of April 17, attempts to provide an explanation for this crisis, which led to the party's split into factions, one headed by himself, the other by Eldridge Cleaver. (The *Black Panther* is now published by the Newton faction, while a paper called *Right On* is being issued by the Cleaver group.)

In his April 17 article, Newton states: "Under the influence of Eldridge Cleaver the party gave the community no alternative for dealing with us, except by picking up the gun. . . . Therefore, the Black Panther Party defected from the community long before Eldridge Cleaver defected from the party."

In saying this, Newton appears at first glance to have taken a step toward understanding and correcting past mistakes—to have begun the process of disentangling the Black Panther Party from Cleaver's catastrophic influence. However, in this article as a whole, Newton, instead of providing answers, creates still more questions and doubts as to the past, present and future course of the Black Panther Party.

That the uneasiness created by this article is well founded is confirmed by Newton's subsequent writings and speeches, and particularly by his May 29 article in the *Black Panther*. Here he announces that the party is ready to open, in San Francisco, a shoe factory and one to make clothing and golf bags—the first of many factories to be operated by the Black Panthers in ghettos across the nation.

That these are enterprises of "Black capitalism," Newton does not

\* The following is a chapter from a forthcoming book.

deny. In fact, he states: "I am doing an article now called 'To Reanalyze Black Capitalism'. . . . I think this is the kind of thing we're involved in and we'll judge how successful we are by whether we can take the community with us."

It will undoubtedly appear to some that there is a head-on contradiction between Newton's "new" direction and his previous "revolutionary" period. The opposite is true. There is no contradiction between his previous ultra-Leftist role and his present position. In essence, both positions represent accommodation to the status quo—even though the earlier one was more effectively camouflaged with the rhetoric of revolution. The link between both positions is the fact that neither "Black capitalism" nor ultra-revolutionary rhetoric offers the people the path of struggle. That is why the new form of opportunism (like the old form, still pursued by Eldridge Cleaver) presents no perspective for the Black liberation movement.

#### *Hard Reality*

According to Newton, the Black Panther Party had its origin as a response to what he interprets as the people's rejection of non-violent action. When the Black Panthers first picked up the gun, he states in the April 17 article, "we were acting (in 1966) at a time when the people had given up on the philosophy of non-violent direct action and were beginning to deal with sterner stuff. We wanted them to see the virtues of disciplined and organized armed self-defense, rather than spontaneous and disorganized outbreaks and riots."

In this estimate of what was needed as the next step in the Black liberation struggle can be found the source of the Panthers' subsequent difficulties. By offering the alternative of armed self-defense, the Panthers presented the upsurging Black urban youth with a false choice diverting them from mass unity and struggle.

As Congressman Ronald Dellums recently stated, "The average Black person, if you go back to that experience in the ghetto, doesn't wake up in the morning oriented to the bullet or the bomb. He's oriented to hope, and that's when you can move him. . . . It is time now to translate Black is Beautiful into hard political reality."

In 1966 that "hard political reality" called—as it does today—for more militant forms of organized and disciplined mass struggle. The people, including the youth, in their fight to create a movement to end poverty and racism, will respond to such an alternative to the blind alley of spontaneity or the equally hopeless concept of "picking up the gun."

It is clear that the people want to challenge the oppressor on the

grounds *they* choose, not on those chosen by their enemy. They want to engage the enemy where he is most vulnerable—and this ruling class, the most massively armed oppressor in history, is the most vulnerable of all oppressors when the oppressed and exploited move in solidarity into the area of mass struggle. The guns of the racist monopolists will be of no avail when the Blacks and all the oppressed and exploited exercise their strength through self-organization and unity. That is why the people do not relate to the idea that the power to change things comes out of the barrel of a gun.

#### *Strategy—Defensive or Offensive?*

When Newton advocated guns and a defensive strategy as the solution for Black people, he was wrong on both counts: not only did the people refuse to relate to the gun, they also rejected the concept of a defensive strategy. Black people—who have been warding off attacks for 400 years—want and need an offensive strategy to build a great popular movement to end racist oppression.

In his concept of self-defense, Newton endeavored to respond to the oppression of his people. However, this concept excluded the people from their own liberation struggle. It involved the idea of an elite few acting for the masses—in fact, supplanting them.

Thus, even before Cleaver joined the Black Panther Party, Newton had substituted elitism for mass struggle. Cleaver's influence brought the elitist concept to new levels of anarchist, adventurist confusion and provocation—but his ideology was nevertheless inherent in the original concepts on which the Black Panther Party was founded.

At one point, however, it appeared to some that the Black Panthers might be turning away from these original concepts, that they might supplant the Little Red Book and Cleaver's anarchism with Marx and Lenin. This was in the summer of 1969 when the Black Panther Party called for studying the historic report on the united front by Georgi Dimitrov, the Bulgarian Communist leader who transformed himself from the accused into the accuser in a Nazi court. But instead of linking theory with practice, the actions taken by the Black Panther Party turned the concept of the united front into a sectarian caricature of the Marxist-Leninist principles on which it is based. The party's policies and actions continued to be inconsistent with the interests of the class struggle and the Black liberation movement. It became increasingly clear that the Black Panther Party had adopted some of the phraseology of Marxism-Leninism, but not the ideology.

Against this background, internal strife in the Black Panther Party deteriorated into factionalism, and—with neither faction guided by

scientific theory—into an inevitable split. Newton expelled Cleaver and a group of his supporters. Although there are now two separate groups, both unfortunately hold similar anti-Marxist views on the most basic principles of class and national liberation.

### "There Go My People"

It is worth recalling that in the same period when the Black Panthers came on the scene, others were also seeking new directions, notably Martin Luther King.

During the Montgomery bus strike in 1955, King had said, "There go my people. I must catch up with them." More than a decade later and at a new turning point, King was still motivated by these sentiments. Therefore, unlike the Panthers, he did not misread the mood of the people in this new phase, often called the "post-civil rights period."

It had become apparent to King that an offensive strategy of new dimensions had to be built. The new situation required the continued and even expanded participation of church and middle-strata forces, including students and professionals, that had predominated in 1954-66. But King saw that the basis for regaining the offensive was *working class* strength moving in coalition with the middle-class forces. He now directed all his efforts toward involving the working class in a higher level of struggle with the Black liberation movement—and with all the poor and oppressed.

The Communist Party welcomed this historic revolution in Dr. King's leadership, and wholeheartedly supported his efforts to bring about a new strategy and a new alignment of forces. The Communist Party saw this as a profoundly important development, even though Dr. King had not yet demonstrated a *full* understanding that an offensive strategy to end class exploitation, racist oppression and war demands not only the *strength* of the working class, but also the *leadership* of the working class—Black, Brown, Yellow, Red and white—guided by the science of socialism. However, before he was assassinated, King had moved toward an anti-imperialist position.

King was also keenly aware of the dangers that faced the movement. For instance, in his historic address—just two months before his death—at the *Freedomways* memorial meeting for Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, King warned that racism and imperialism could not be fought with anti-Communism. In addition, his words about Du Bois carried an all-important message for today's radical youth:

Above all he did not content himself with hurling invectives for emotional relief and then to retire into smug passive satisfaction.

History had taught him it is not enough for people to be angry. The supreme task is to organize and unite people so that their anger becomes a transforming force. (*Freedomways*, Spring 1968.)

The ruling class did everything in its power to divert and defeat the new direction taken by King. The capitalist mass media went all out to promote the activity and the ideology of those Black and white radicals for whom King was "too non-violent" and the Communist Party "too conservative."

While Newton, Cleaver and Hilliard waved the Little Red Book and talked of picking up the gun, they were joined in these activities by middle-class white radicals who also came forward with "new" interpretations of Marxism. All of this created diversions and confusion on the campus, in the ghettos and in the peace movement.

### *The Image-Makers and "Revolution"*

As part of the ruling-class efforts to divert the radicalization process, the mass media have popularized the caricature of Marxism-Leninism appearing in the writings of Mao, Trotsky, Marcuse, Debray, Cleaver, Newton, Tom Hayden, Stokely Carmichael, Rennie Davis and others. At the same time, they have promoted a "revolutionary" image for many of the new radicals.

These Black and white radicals, including Cleaver and Newton, dismissed what they called "orthodox" Marxism. Taking a different direction from King, they disdained the working class and glorified the super-"revolutionary" tactics of confrontation by an anarchistic elite. In this way, these ultra-"revolutionaries" helped create an atmosphere in which the racist monopolists could falsely portray violence as coming from the Left—and cover up the fact that they themselves are the source of it.

The pseudo-militancy of Newton, Cleaver and Hilliard made their own party and its supporters particularly vulnerable to nation-wide genocidal assaults and frameups. And beyond this, their super-revolutionism made the movements for Black liberation and against war and poverty more vulnerable to mounting repressive attacks.

It is apparent that neither Newton or Cleaver have ever based their tactics on the working class and its revolutionary science, Marxism-Leninism. At the present moment, while Cleaver's opportunism continues along an ultra-Leftist course and Newton's has taken a Right opportunist form (although he attempts to maintain a Leftist image), both base their policies on the lumpenproletariat.

In order to give some semblance of credibility to the "revolutionary" role they assign the lumpen elements, Newton and Cleaver would

have us believe that the Black unemployed, those on welfare, and high school dropouts are all part of the lumpenproletariat. This is an insult to Black men, women and youth. People are not lumpen simply because they are denied jobs, and when Newton and Cleaver make such claims they sound like Black Moynihans.

Today, in the center of imperialism in the era of its decline, there is a massive increase in the army of the unemployed. Alongside this, the number of lumpen elements also increases. However, these groups *do not merge*: each has its distinct characteristics. As Marx wrote in *The Class Struggles in France*, the lumpenproletariat "forms a mass sharply differentiated from the industrial proletariat."

Specifically the lumpen elements are those so demoralized by the system that they are not only jobless, but that to them a job is unthinkable. It is their declassed parasitical status and outlook that sharply distinguish them from the great mass of the unemployed, who are searching for and demanding jobs and the opportunity for a decent life. That is why—in addition to making the distinction that Marx emphasized—it is now even more necessary than in Marx's time to clearly distinguish between the lumpenproletariat and the great mass of unemployed, which includes so many youth (particularly Black and Brown) who have never been regularly employed. And the following statistics from the sixties foreshadow the vastly greater number of youth who will be forced into this position in the seventies:

It is reported that there are now 50 per cent fewer unskilled and semi-skilled jobs than there are high school dropouts. Almost one-third of the 26 million young people entering the labor market in the sixties will be dropouts. But the percentage of the Negro dropouts nationally is 57 per cent, and in New York City, among Negroes 25 years of age or over it is 63 per cent. They are without a future. (Louis A. Ferman, Joyce L. Kornbluh, and Alan Haber, eds., *Poverty in America*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1968, p. 622.)

However it is quite evident that the ruling class is not counting on the prediction that the unemployed will passively accept the idea that "they are without a future." Today, the monopolists fear the fact that the struggle of the unemployed, together with the rank-and-file struggles within the unions, will lay the basis for a new upsurge of the working class and the Black liberation movement. The monopolists are aware that these struggles will eclipse those of the thirties.

One of the ways in which the ruling class is trying to short-

circuit the struggle for jobs and against war and racism is through its barbaric promotion of drugs—in the armed forces (particularly in Vietnam), in the ghettos, among the workers, and among the youth on and off the campuses.

The lumpenproletariat, as Engels noted, includes "elements of all classes." This is particularly evident today as large numbers of students, demoralized by drugs, turn away from struggle and become part of the lumpen sector for the first time in history.

Together with its mass promotion of drugs, the ruling class is promoting anti-working class ideology on a mass scale in new ways. This is why the media have popularized the writings of such individuals as Regis Debray and Herbert Marcuse, whose views have greatly influenced Cleaver, Newton, Hayden, Hoffman, Rubin and other radicals who foster the idea that workers have "a stake in the system." From this starting point Cleaver and Newton have developed the concept that the lumpen sectors, who will resort to anything but work, and not the working class, comprise the vanguard of revolution.

#### *Objective Laws of Development*

Those who point to the lumpenproletariat as the revolutionary vanguard disregard the objective laws of historical development. In pre-capitalist societies, poverty and oppression were even greater than under capitalism. But oppression in itself, no matter how great, does not create the basis for the struggle to abolish oppression.

Because of the specific nature of exploitation under capitalism, the working class, which collectively operates the mass production process of the privately owned monopolies, is transformed into the gravedigger of the system. That is why Marx and Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*: "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class."

No fundamental change—or even a challenge to the monopolists—can occur without the working class. And today the proportion of Black workers in basic industries such as steel, coal, auto, transport and others is transforming the prospects for the class struggle and Black liberation.

These Black workers, who share the oppression of all Black Americans, also share the exploitation experienced by their fellow white workers. But as compared to these white workers, they suffer from racist superexploitation; they have the worst jobs and are still the last hired, the first fired.

The degree of exploitation of Black workers is clearly much greater than that of white workers. Nevertheless, the collective form of exploitation in the decisive mass production industries is suffered by *all* workers. This creates the objective basis for their unity and leadership in the struggle against the monopolist ruling class.

At the same time, history has assigned a doubly significant role to Black workers—as the leaders and backbone of the Black liberation movement, and as a decisive component of the working-class leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle as a whole.

It is the monopolists' fear of Black, white, Brown, Yellow, Red and working-class unity, which forms the basis for still broader people's unity, that is behind racism and anti-Communism—the main ideological weapons of the ruling class.

Leninism, the Marxism of the imperialist epoch, is *the* ideological weapon of the working class. It is the scientific guide that enables the working class to combine its struggle with national liberation movements against imperialism. No other theory has served to free a single working class, a single people, from imperialism anywhere in the world. Beginning with the October revolution, only those guided by Marxism-Leninism have been able to free themselves from class and national oppression and take the road of socialist construction.

#### *"On the Side of the Oppressor"*

Cleaver and Newton have tried to use the writings of Frantz Fanon, whose vantage point was the Algerian and other African liberation movements, to justify their anti-Leninist theory of the role of the lumpen proletariat. They have attempted to apply Fanon's ideas to the U.S., although these ideas lack Marxist clarity in some respects even within the African context for which they were intended. On top of this, Cleaver and Newton have inflated Fanon's positive views on the lumpenproletariat, while completely ignoring his serious reservations about this group.

"Colonialism will also find in the lumpenproletariat a considerable space for maneuvering," Fanon wrote in *The Wretched of the Earth*. There is a danger he warned, that "the lumpenproletariat will throw itself into battle and will take part in the conflict—but this time on the side of the oppressor." He then stated:

In Algeria it is the lumpenproletariat which furnished the harkis and the messalists; in Angola it supplied the road openers who now precede the Portuguese armed columns; in the Congo, we find once more the lumpenproletariat in regional manifestations in Katai

and Katanga, while at Leopoldville, the Congo enemies made use of it to organize "spontaneous" mass meetings against Lumumba. (Evergreen, New York, 1966, p. 109.)

For ways in which the ruling class can manipulate the lumpen elements, we need only refer to the Panthers' own experience with George Sams, who was used to frame Bobby Seale, Ericka Huggins and others. And we should remember that a white lumpen individual was used to assassinate Martin Luther King, while black ones were recruited to murder Malcolm X. And we should also recall the German monopolists' manipulation of Van der Lubbe to frame Georgi Dimitrov, as part of their drive to launch a genocidal war for world domination.

The Cleaver-Newton theory of the lumpen proletariat as vanguard would mean objective surrender to the ruling class—because only the working class can lead the fight against poverty and exploitation. And not only does this theory fail to offer an offensive strategy for liberation; without working-class leadership of the struggle, the lumpen victims themselves will not be provided with even their own barest needs.

It is ironic that, while some Panthers glorify the lumpen-proletariat, at least one Panther leader takes pride in his working-class background and skills. In his book, *Seize the Time*, Bobby Seale states that his father was a master carpenter, and that he himself is a carpenter, a draftsman and "a top-flight sheet-metal mechanic."

We fervently hope that Bobby Seale will vindicate his well-founded pride by using his outstanding ability to help chart a working-class path of struggle for millions of Black youth, in contrast to the course Newton and Cleaver adopted while Seale was in prison.

#### *Incredible Thrust Backward*

Between mid-April and the end of May, 1971, Huey P. Newton became increasingly frank in describing his new course. What he only hinted at in the April 17 *Black Panther*, he made astoundingly clear in the May 29 issue, when he described what he calls a "survival program," i.e., survival through "Black capitalism."

Announcing that the Panthers will now operate factories in ghettos, he went on to say: "We will have no overhead because our collective—we'll exploit our collective by making them work free. We'll do this not just to justify ourselves—like philanthropists, to save someone from going without shoes, even though this is part of the cause of our problems. People make the revolution; we will give the process a forward thrust. If we suffer from genocide, we won't be around to

change things. So in this way our survival program is very practical."

Far from being either "practical" or a "forward thrust," this is an incredibly reactionary thrust *backward*. By comparison with Newton's "survival program," Booker T. Washington's philosophy sounds positively revolutionary!

Newton, however, tries to justify his retreat into the past with the following explanation: "We can jump too far ahead and say that the system absolutely cannot give us anything, which is not true, the system can correct itself to a certain extent. What we are interested in is for it to correct itself as much as it can do and after that if it doesn't do everything that the people think is necessary then we'll think about reorganizing things."

Well, this is a pretty late date to advise the oppressed and exploited to call off their struggles and wait to see if "the system can correct itself"! Why should the people surrender to still more racism and oppression in order to learn what they already know—that the system "can correct itself" only through wars, increased racism, poverty and exploitation.

While in the past Newton did indeed jump ahead of the people's needs, he has now leaped far behind them. He misread the mood of the people and mistook their real needs when he talked of "picking up the gun" from 1966 through early 1971. Now he is again misreading their mood and ignoring their real needs, when in effect he tells them to surrender to racist oppression and accept a "survival" concept based on his anti-working class theories and glorification of the lumpenproletariat.

Newton offers the people mini-enclaves of Black capitalism in the form of ghetto sweatshops across the country. But what Black people want is an *end* to the ghettos. During slavery, the underground railroad established way stations to meet the basic survival needs of Blacks escaping from the South. In today's context, a defensive "survival" strategy cannot possibly serve the people, for whom way stations cannot provide an escape. The vast scope of Black Americans' needs today can be met only by an offensive strategy.

Black Americans have a first and equal claim on the *total* economy of the country—which they helped build with 400 years of slave and near-slave labor—for billions for jobs, housing, medical care, education, etc. They want the *total* economy turned around to meet the people's needs, instead of operating for the wars and the profits of a handful of corporate monopolists.

When in 1968 Martin Luther King warned radicals that super-militancy often ends in accommodation, he seems to have prophesied

Huey P. Newton's latest move. After "hurling" super-revolutionary rhetoric for six years, it appears that Newton will now "retire into small passive satisfaction" while Black people are given the prospect of working in the ghetto under racist sweatshop conditions.

In *Seize the Time*, Bobby Seale attacked Ron Karenga for operating "little jive businesses" in the Black community. "Ron Karenga," wrote Seale, "had no intention before and has no intention now of working in opposition to the power structure to change the system for the needs of Black America." (Random House, New York, 1970, p. 273.)

We truly hope that Seale will recall these words because they aptly describe Newton's "survival program." No matter how Newton may later attempt to portray his new enterprises—as collectives, cooperatives, etc.—he cannot disguise the fact that they offer Black people no hope.

#### *Accommodation—or Struggle*

Neither Newton's nor Cleaver's concept of a "survival program" is in the interests of the people. While Cleaver expresses the ultra-Leftist face of opportunism—"urban guerilla warfare now"—Newton's opportunism takes a different form.

Describing his "survival program," Newton says: "We serve [the people's] needs so they can survive oppression. Then, when they are ready to pick up the gun, serious things will happen." (*Black Panther*, April, 1971). In other words, Newton would have us believe that accommodation today will lead to revolution tomorrow!

Both the "survival program" Newton-style ("wait until the masses are ready to pick up the gun") and the "survival program" Cleaver-style ("pick up the gun now!") objectively amount to the same thing: desertion of the people's struggles.

The cause of liberation cannot be served by a negative idea—"survival" pending a future day when "serious things will happen." What is needed is a *struggle* program for the immediate interests of the people and for their ultimate liberation from capitalist, racist oppression.

Marx and Engels taught that the salvation of the exploited requires an ever-expanding unity in struggle even so much as to retard the downward spiral of exploitation and oppression. This concept is even more acutely relevant today. By contrast the idea of a "survival program" evokes passivity and demoralizes the people. To justify his "survival" concept, which would divert the Black liberation movement from an offensive anti-monopoly strategy, Huey P. Newton has devel-

oped a classless approach to capitalist democracy. It is amazing to read his description of democracy in the May 29 issue of the *Black Panther*. This is the way he puts it: "Democracy in America (bourgeois democracy) means nothing more than the domination of the majority over the minority."

It is indeed strange to find one who regards himself as a dialectical materialist speaking of bourgeois democracy as "the domination of the majority over the minority." In the sphere of social science, dialectical materialism relates not to struggle in general but to the struggle of classes.

Because he does not relate dialectics to the class struggle, Newton fails to explain that his is a society in which state monopoly capitalism rules; that there is a class of exploiters exercising state power to defend its class interests; that there is national oppression maintained by this class.

In the same article, Newton also states that the majority has "decreed" that the minority "fight and die in wars." He dares make this claim at a time when even the polls show that considerably more than 70 per cent of the people want immediate withdrawal of troops from Vietnam.

It is certainly not the majority but the ruling-class minority that has "decreed" the imperialist aggression in Indochina and in the Middle East, and which threatens thermonuclear war against peaceful states and peoples—and first of all against the socialist camp, which supports anti-imperialist liberation struggles throughout the world. In the 1930's the threat of war came from Nazi Germany; today it comes from the U.S. monopolists—and Newton would have us believe that the majority has "decreed" it!

But not only do the polls show that there is an anti-war majority. They also show that within this anti-war majority there is another majority—one with the potential to bring an end to the war in Indochina and, moreover, to imperialism itself.

This majority within the majority is made up of the overwhelming percentage of white workers and the still greater percentage of Black Americans who oppose the war. For the first time in U.S. history, the people, though not effectively organized, are in motion against the genocidal aggression of U.S. imperialism.

How then can Huey Newton, who considers himself a revolutionary, speak of democracy in the U.S. as the rule of a majority (white masses) over the minority (Black masses)? How can he deny and cover up the rule of a tiny minority of monopolists who worsen the condition of the people, who fan racial strife between Black and

white, Black and Chicano, Black and Puerto Rican, Black and Indian, and of course between whites and all who are Black, Brown, Red or Yellow?

So-called revolutionary rhetoric cannot hide this monstrous error which omits the class nature of society—which denies capitalism as the source of racism, and the monopolists' use of racism, along with anti-Communism, to exploit and oppress the masses. Such rhetoric is a disservice to all of those, irrespective of color, who are fighting for peace, democracy and the well-being of the people.

Huey P. Newton engages in demogogy when he claims that there is a struggle between a majority of whites and a minority of Blacks. He lumps the white monopolists (a minority) with the white working class majority (and sections of the middle strata).

He fails to identify the monopolists (a white minority), and he does this in a way unbecoming to a revolutionary: by lumping the exploited majority of white workers with the oppressing minority of white monopolists. Revolutionaries must understand that this is the traditional method of accommodating to the imperialist enemy of change.

#### "The Building of the Machine"

In the June 5 *Black Panther*, Huey P. Newton reveals the full nature of his projected Black capitalist course. "In the past," writes Newton, "the Black Panther Party took a counter-revolutionary position with our blanket condemnation of Black capitalism." Now, however, Newton sees a revolutionary role for Black capitalism.

He outlines a program in which Black Panther clothing and shoe factories and medical programs will be assisted by "contributions" from Black capitalists. In exchange, the Panthers will call upon the community to patronize the businesses of these Black capitalists.

"Black capitalists," states Newton, will have "the potential to contribute to the building of the *machine* which will serve the true interests of the people and end all oppression." (Emphasis added.) One can get an idea of the kind of "machine" Newton intends to build from the following admission: In the past, he writes, "we received money for our survival programs from the big white capitalists."

Perhaps this admission also casts light on some of the reasons why Newton complained, in his April 17 article, that "our hook-up with white radicals did not give us access to the white community because they did not guide the white community." It now becomes clear that he prefers instead to have "access" to white capitalists—whom



he identifies not as the exploiters of Black and white workers, but as the "guides" of the "white community."

Newton cannot, however, camouflage the fact that his "access" to white corporate capital means that he is continuing to serve the monopolists at the expense of Black Americans and all working people. We venture to predict that his new form of accommodation to the white capitalist "guides" will be exposed far more rapidly than his previous super-revolutionary services to the same forces.

Black people are in a unique position. On top of more than 200 years of chattel slavery, operated by the slave-owner partners of emergent capitalism, they have had over 100 years of capitalist exploitation, racism, war and poverty.

And now Newton echoes the monopolists responsible for the oppression and exploitation of Black people who are saying that the problems of the system will be solved if only a few more Black people become capitalists. The capitalists who say this are, of course, the same ones who have set up every type of barrier against those Blacks who have tried to establish small businesses over the years.

And it is particularly ironic that the "invitation" to Black people to become capitalists should come from the very same corporate monopolists who have already destroyed most of the nation's small businesses. Those that remain, whether white- or Black-owned, can operate only under the impossible conditions of monopoly domination.

Not only have the mass production industries come under the control of corporate monopoly. Through their control of the banks, chains, franchising operations, insurance and real estate companies, etc., these same monopolists dominate *all* sectors of the economy, including that in the Black community.

Now, in an effort to recruit a sector of Blacks to support the ruling class against their own people, the monopolists have offered a tiny minority the illusion of Black capitalism. This is another variation of the tokenism rejected by the Black masses.

Yet we must keep in mind that the Black bourgeoisie is oppressed by the same monopolists who exploit and oppress the Black people as a whole. It is within this context that Communists—who are opposed to capitalist exploitation, whether by white- or Black-owned business—support the anti-monopolist demands of Black capitalists.

Access to the handful of giant corporations and banks which control the nation's economy promotes the myth of "Black capitalism" as a crude attempt to convince Black people that anyone can still "make it" in the U.S. The monopolists do this in order to divert the Black liberation movement from its real course. At a time when one-

third of the workers in the great mass production industries are Black, the future of the liberation movement lies in united struggle with all the oppressed and exploited against the common enemy, the monopolists.

In outlining the Panthers' Black capitalist course, Newton states that the party's new programs "satisfy the deep needs of the community but they are not solutions to our problems. That is why we call them survival programs, meaning survival pending revolution." He then goes on to develop his concept of the revolutionary role of Black capitalists:

We now see the Black capitalist as having a similar relationship to the Black community as the national bourgeoisie have to the people in national wars of decolonization. In wars of decolonization the national bourgeoisie supports the freedom struggles of the people because they recognize that it is in their own selfish interest. Then when the foreign exploiter has been kicked out, the national bourgeoisie takes his place and continues the exploitation. However, the national bourgeoisie is a weaker group, even though they are exploiters. Therefore, the people are in a better position to wipe the national bourgeoisie away after they have assisted the people in wiping out the foreign exploiters. (*Black Panther*, June 5, 1971.)

With this brazen misappropriation and misuse of Marxist terminology, Newton tries to put a revolutionary stamp on his scheme to build a machine that will serve the "foreign" U.S. monopolists at the expense of the marginal Black capitalists and all Black people—including the most victimized of capitalism's victims, the lumpenproletariat.

In accordance with Newton's theory of the revolutionary role of the lumpen elements, the lumpen victims will be rewarded with free handouts from the party. In return, they will form a machine that, to understate the matter, can serve no good purpose in the Black liberation movement.

At the same time, Newton proposes that all strata of Black Americans remain within the ghetto enclaves "pending" revolution. He is asking that they give up the only struggle that can benefit all Black Americans, including the middle classes: a united struggle with all exploited and oppressed people to win the only "territory" upon which Black people can gain their liberation in the United States—that is, the entire country and its economy.

In the former colonies of Africa and other countries, it was the foreign settler who lived in enclaves within the oppressed peoples'

lands. In the U.S., the white corporate oppressors have forced Black people into the enclaves where Newton suggests they remain—until the revolution in which the Black minority frees itself by fighting the white majority. This is the bind alley into which Newton urges Black people. But Black Americans can be liberated only through a joint struggle with all the oppressed and exploited against the white corporate minority.

In Asia, Africa and Latin America, the anti-imperialist phase of the revolutionary process opens the way to the transition to socialism. In the United States, the revolutionary process demands the building of a great anti-monopoly movement—led by contingents of Black, white, Brown, Red and Yellow workers—to break monopolist control of the government. It is the only path offering a perspective for the Black liberation movement—but some “revolutionaries” refuse to recognize this.

Some look for short cuts (“instant” revolution), while others devise “survival” programs pending the day when revolution comes magically into being. In actuality, both concepts are anti-revolutionary diversions from the *centrality* of the anti-monopoly strategy in this stage of the revolutionary process.

#### *The Future Determines Its Own Tactics*

To help preserve his “revolutionary” image while introducing his “survival program,” Newton makes use of the “when they are ready to pick up the gun” concept. But, shorn of its rhetoric, this is the equivalent of saying, “Since the masses are not yet ready to pick up the gun, we will table the question of picking up the gun until the masses are ready to put it on the agenda.” This is simply another way of creating passivity and compounding frustration.

The “when they are ready to pick up the gun” idea has also been expressed by others on the Left. Even some advanced Marxists have reflected views that represent an accommodation to rather than a struggle against this concept. But such views are in contradiction to the program of the Communist Party, to the Marxist-Leninist principles on which the Party is based.

In his April 17 article, Newton stated that Cleaver’s concept of “instant” revolution was a “fantasy.” But the idea of “picking up the gun when the masses are ready” is no less a fantasy; tomorrow’s tactics cannot be determined today. Future struggles, which will be influenced by the outcome of today’s, will determine the tactics that go on tomorrow’s agenda.

Focusing on the gun in the future leads to frustration in the pres-

ent. It carries the implication that any method short of the gun is inadequate, or futile, amounting to no more than a holding operation until the real thing happens—merely a question of firing blanks until at long last reaching the point of “picking up the gun.”

This same idea is also expressed in a slightly different form by other individuals on the Left. According to one such view, “the possibilities of peaceful struggle have not yet been exhausted.” This formulation implies that while armed struggle is not “yet” on the agenda, a revolutionary strategy must be based on the assumption that it will inevitably be placed there.

This view operates on the fatalistic notion that no matter what changes occur in the relationship of forces on a national and world scale, the working class and its allies will inevitably exhaust their capacity to prevent the ruling class from imposing armed struggle on the revolutionary process. This view, like its variants, differs from Cleaver’s concepts of armed struggle only in emphasis and timing, since it too presupposes the inevitability of armed struggle as the only form of revolution, of transition to liberation and socialism.

“Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the *mass* struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become more acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied forms of defense and attack. . . .

In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely *historical* examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national, cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle, come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in turn. (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 213-214.)

Marx, Engels and Lenin fought against ideas that foreclosed the possibility of varying forms of revolutionary struggle in the transition to socialism. They rejected both the Right opportunist illusion that the transition would inevitably be peaceful, and the “Left” opportunism that proclaimed armed struggle as the only path to socialism for every country.

Today’s Right opportunists also predict that armed struggle will not be necessary, while the “Left” opportunists predict that it will be inevitable. Marxism-Leninism opposes both the *will* and the *won’t*

of these two faces of opportunism, both of which tend to disarm the mass struggle.

While opposing "Left" concepts of the inevitability of armed struggle, Communist strategy simultaneously opposes Right opportunist illusions that transition to socialism is possible without the sharpest class struggles combined with the struggles of all the oppressed to curb and defeat the power of racist monopoly.

As Lenin wrote, "To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XI, p. 214.)

#### The "Most Extraordinary Privilege"

"Super-revolutionaries" are quick to shout "revisionist" at those who are guided by Lenin's views regarding different paths to socialism.

By contrast, Le Duan, Ho Chi Minh's close comrade and successor, who has been at the center of more than 30 years of armed struggle against imperialism, emphasizes that "Lenin, like Marx, was much concerned about the possibility of peacefully seizing power by the working class."

Even before the October revolution, states Le Duan, Lenin believed that "Communists should do everything to strive for [peaceful transition] as long as a real possibility existed, even through the chances are one in a hundred."

Specifically, after state power had been transferred to the bourgeoisie by the February, 1917 revolution, Lenin saw the possibility of a peaceful transfer of power to the working class. "Lenin," says Le Duan, "proposed the tactics of the peaceful development of the revolution. . . . When conditions changed, after July, and there was no longer the peaceful possibility, Lenin changed tactics and prepared for armed revolution."

Now that the October Revolution has led to a world system of socialist countries headed by the Soviet Union, forming the primary contradiction to imperialism, the possibilities for differing forms of revolutionary transition to socialism are increasing. This also means that forms of revolutionary transition that were rare in Lenin's time may become more frequent in the present epoch.

At the heart of the ultra-Leftists' errors is a lack of understanding of how the socialist countries have altered the prospects for class and national liberation within the prison of imperialism. They maintain,

for example, that the Cuban experience represents the only valid type of transition to socialism. As Fidel Castro points out, these ultra-Leftists are a part of a "whole series of negators of Lenin [who] have emerged since the October Revolution." Amplifying this view, Castro states:

Today there are, as we know, theoretical super-revolutionaries, super-Leftists, veritable "supermen" if you will, who can destroy imperialism in a jiffy with their tongues. There are many super-revolutionaries lacking all notions of reality about the problems and difficulties of a revolution. They are prompted by sentiments carefully fostered by imperialism and are full of fierce hatred. It is as if they refused to forgive the Soviet Union its existence, and this from "Left"-wing positions. They would like a Soviet Union shaped according to their strange model, according to their ridiculous ideals. Yet a country is primarily a reality, one made up of numerous other realities.

The exponents of these trends forget the incredible initial difficulties of the revolutionary process in the Soviet Union, the incredible problems arising from the blockade, isolation and fascist aggression. They pretend not to know anything about all this and regard the existence of the Soviet Union as almost a crime, and this from "Left"-wing positions, which is an act of absolute dishonesty.

They forget the problems of Cuba, of Vietnam, of the Arab world. They forget that wherever imperialism is striking its blows it comes up against a country which sends the people the arms they need to defend themselves.

We recall Playa Giron these days. We well remember the anti-aircraft artillery, the tanks and guns and mortars and other weapons that enabled us to smash the mercenaries.

This means that the existence of the Soviet state is objectively one of the most extraordinary privileges of the revolutionary movement. (*Granma*, May 3, 1970.)

Shortly after the October revolution, Lincoln Steffens, the U.S. journalist, visited the Soviet Union and said, "I have seen the future and it works." And now, as Castro has shown, this revolution not only "works" for the Soviet people, it works for all oppressed humanity. It is the single most important force in the world working in support of liberation everywhere—a "most extraordinary privilege" constantly creating "extraordinary" changes in the revolutionary process on a world scale. It creates new opportunities for class and national liberation struggles that cannot be contained within the preconceived molds of pseudo-theorists, or by the desperate acts of neo-colonialist imperialism.

While the pseudo-theorists cling to the single idea of "picking up the gun," the Chilean Popular Unity coalition, with a solid working-class base led by the Communist Party, pursues an opposite tactic—aimed *not* at "picking up the gun," but at *preventing* the internal oligarchy and its imperialist patrons from doing so. This tactic combines maximum internal strength with anti-imperialist unity on a world scale.

If, however, the oligarchy together with U.S. imperialism should at some point manage to "pick up the gun," the advantage would nevertheless remain with those who have adapted Leninist tactics to each stage of the struggle.

The imperialists have always been the first to pick up the gun—including in Vietnam. If they repeat this pattern in Chile, victory—as in Vietnam—will nevertheless belong to those who recognize that power comes not out of the barrel of a gun but out of the unity of the masses in struggle against imperialism which picks up the gun against the people.

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The struggle of the Afro-American parallels in many ways the struggles of colonial peoples all over the world to rid themselves of exploiters and slave-masters. Dr Martin Luther King was murdered in Tennessee for the same reasons Patrice Lumumba was murdered in the Congo: and by the same forces. The African black man and the American black man are fighting the common enemy, international imperialism, whether in the form of Portuguese and South African racist troops in Southern Africa or the police forces of the United States. In Vietnam and Indo-China the same struggle goes on against the same enemy for the same reasons.

*"Every artist, every scientist, must decide now where he stands. He has no alternative. There is no standing above the conflict on Olympian heights. . . The battlefield is everywhere, there is no sheltered rear . . . Fascism fights to destroy the culture which Society has created; created through pain and suffering, through desperate toil, but with unconquerable will and lofty vision . . . What matters a man's profession or vocation? Fascism is no respecter of persons. It makes no distinction between combatants and non-combatants . . . The artist must take sides; he must elect to fight for freedom or for slavery. I have made my choice. I have no alternative. The history of the capitalist era is characterised by the degradation of my people; despoiled of their lands, their women ravished, their culture destroyed . . . I say the true artist cannot hold himself aloof. The legacy of culture from our predecessors is in danger. It is the foundation upon which we build a still more lofty edifice. It belongs not only to us, not only to the present generation — it belongs to posterity and must be defended to the death."*

These words of Paul Robeson hold good today as they did then.

Very recently Nixon, President of the USA, in his so-called "World Report", claimed that he and his government are against apartheid and racism in South Africa. This is a lie. In the first place the ruling class of the USA cannot be against racism in South Africa and at the same time condone and encourage it in the United States. Secondly, the United States of America is the second biggest foreign investor in South Africa and millions of dollars in profits are being sucked from the marrow and blood of African exploitation in South Africa.

We South Africans know full well who are our friends and allies in the United States. They are people like Paul Robeson who has raised his voice in song and worked in the interest of solidarity with the South African people. They are people like the late Martin Luther King, W.E. B. Du Bois, and today Angela Davis and all the Afro-Americans and genuine democrats fighting for the cause of justice, freedom and humanity in their country.

by Alex la Guma in The African Communist

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