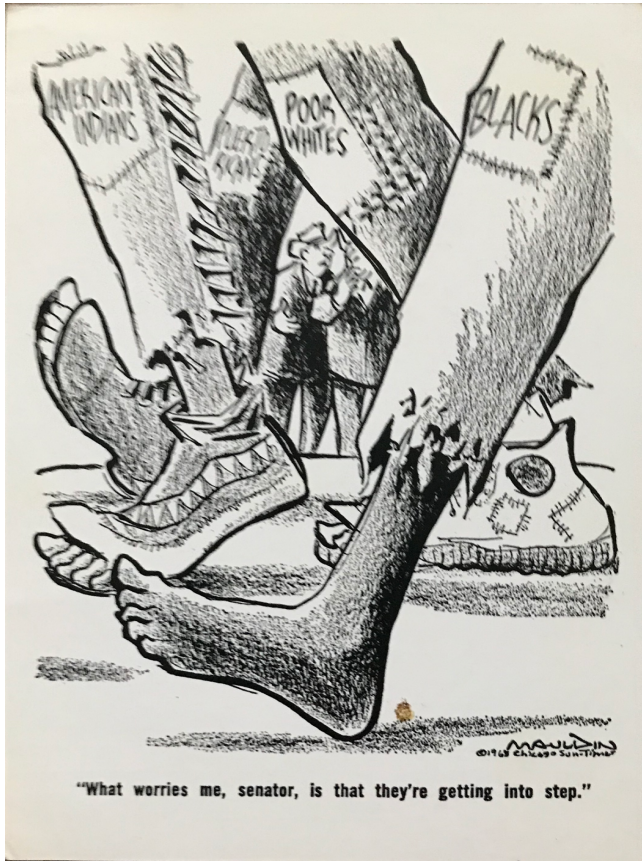


Rough Draft – 1/5/2021

# Uniting the Poor! and the *Communist Manifesto*\*

(\*See Notes and 3 Appendixes)



## Introduction

*“You know, whenever Pharaoh wanted to prolong the period of slavery in Egypt, he had a favorite, favorite formula for doing it. What was that? He kept the slaves fighting among themselves. But whenever the slaves get together, something happens in Pharaoh's court, and he cannot hold the slaves in slavery. When the slaves get together, that's the beginning of getting out of slavery.” - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “I’ve Been to the Mountain Top” (1968)*

*“In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organization.”*

*-- V. I. Lenin, **One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward** (1904)*

*One speaks of generals without an army, but in reality it is easier to form an army than to form generals. So much is this true that an already existing army is destroyed if it loses its generals, while the existence of a united group of generals who agree among themselves and have common aims soon creates an army even where none exists.*

**-- Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks (1930s)***

*The masses in any given place are generally composed of three parts, the relatively active, the intermediate and the relatively backward. The leaders must therefore be skilled in uniting the small number of active elements around the leadership and must rely on them to raise the level of the intermediate elements and to win over the backward elements. A leading group that is genuinely united and linked with the masses can be formed only gradually in the process of mass struggle, and not in isolation from it*

**-- Mao Tse-tung, *Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership (1943)***

This paper compares the main conclusions of the pamphlet, *Five Ingredients in the Poor Organizing the Poor (Appendix 1)* with those of the Marxist classic, the booklet, *Communist Manifesto* written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in 1848. The comparison is being done in the present context in which the United States and the entire globe are undergoing an unprecedented and the most comprehensive technological revolution in human history. This micro-electronic technology revolution is colliding with and undermining the very nature of the capitalist economic system. This technology revolution is fundamentally different from the two major industrial revolutions of the steam engine and electricity globalizing the two basic antagonistic classes of the capitalist society analyzed in the *Manifesto*. In comparison the pamphlet, *Five Ingredients* was based on an analysis continuing the fundamental characterizations of the capitalist economic system made by the *Manifesto* to the new qualitative and quantitative developments of today. In other words, the pamphlet is a beginning response to the newly emerging social and political consequences of the unprecedented and globally comprehensive micro-electronic technological revolution. This new period of departure in world history has also been called the new “Digital Age” of the “Information revolution.”

The *Communist Manifesto* summed up the history of societies stating that after the pre-written history of primitive tribal communal societies it was a “history of class struggles.” It pointed out how in the era of capitalism the struggles of many classes were broking down into simply two hostile camps, one consisting of the Bourgeois class, the capitalist ruling class and the other of the Proletarian class, which is the revolutionary dispossessed or property-less class.

“By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labor. By proletariat,

the class of modern wage laborers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor power in order to live.”

–**Note of the *Communist Manifesto***

These two hostile camps of capitalism as of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century mainly encompassed Western Europe and North America. This early analysis also accurately predicted the continuing breaking down of the structural foundation of capitalist economic society into two antagonistic classes each an enemy of the other. In doing this, the *Communist Manifesto*, which remains today one of the world’s leading and best-selling booklet, still stands as a preeminent and instructive application of Sun Tzu’s over 2500 years’ historically confirmed dictum. Today in 2020 both camps have become globalized. The arising life and death struggles of this poor and homeless mass worldwide is being thrown against the organized violence of the state apparatuses, which protect the capitalist profit-making and poverty-producing system.

## **Poor And Dispossessed – The Revolutionary Social Class Force Today**

“The dispossessed of this nation -- the poor, both white and Negro -- live in a cruelly unjust society. **They must organize a revolution against the injustice**, not against the lives of the persons who are their fellow citizens, but against the structures through which the society is refusing to take means which have been called for, and which are at hand, to lift the load of poverty. There are millions of poor people in this country who have very little, or even nothing, to lose. If they can be helped to take action together, they will do so with a freedom and a power that will be a new and unsettling force in our complacent national life... ” we will be recruiting three thousand of the poorest citizens from ten different urban and rural areas to initiate and lead a sustained, massive, direct-action movement in Washington. Those who choose to join this initial three thousand, this nonviolent army, this "freedom church" of the poor, will work with us for three months to develop nonviolent action skills."

–**The Trumpet of Conscience (1967)**

In its analysis of how capitalist society is breaking down into two basic antagonistic classes, the *Communist Manifesto* identifies the most revolutionary class force. That is that socio-economic force destined to abolish the entire capitalist private property system itself, that is, who the *Manifesto* calls “the gravediggers of capitalism,” the proletariat or the exploited and oppressed class of the property-less. It states,

“But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons — the modern working class — the proletarians...”

“Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product...

“All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air...

“... The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by the revolutionary combination, due to association... What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.”

V.I. Lenin, in his essay, “Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism” goes on to affirm this strategic conclusion pointing out that,

“People always have been the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics, and they always will be until they have learnt to seek out the interests of some class or other behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises. Champions of reforms and improvements will always be fooled by the defenders of the old order until they realize that every old institution, however barbarous and rotten it may appear to be, is kept going by the forces of certain ruling classes. And there is only one way of smashing the resistance of those classes, and that is to find, in the very society, which surrounds us, the forces, which can—and, owing to their social position, must—constitute the power capable of sweeping away the old and creating the new, and to enlighten and organize those forces for the struggle.”

The 19th century industrial technological revolution gave rise to two basic and antagonistic industrial classes abolishing the old classes and strata of the feudal Middle Ages. The *Communist Manifesto* scientifically summed these revolutionary developments showing how modern society was breaking down into two camps of two hostile classes, the industrial based bourgeoisie and industrial proletariat. At that time these advanced developments were limited to western Europe and North America. Today the latter 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries micro-electronics technological revolution, which increasing colliding with and chronically destabilizing the modern capitalistic society itself encompassing the entire globe.

This is resulting in major shifts in the capitalist economy today, which involve fundamental changes in the composition of its workforce. These shifts are

causing an unheard of accumulation, concentration, and centralization of wealth and big capital that is increasingly global and mobile. And they are replacing the industrial proletariat with the increasing employment of computers and robots. In other words, we are witnessing the continuing growth of a de-industrialized, increasingly impoverished and economically excluded section of today's proletariat. The social consequences are dislocating, deadly, and socially explosive.

The poor today are unlike that of yesterday, that is, the poor of ancient slavery and feudalism nor that of early industrial pauperism. The costs and productivity of the labor-power of today's poor and property-less are having to increasingly compete with the rapidly decreasing production costs and efficiency of labor-replacing computers and robotics. Thus this new and growing section of the world's workforce is being transformed from a surplus reserve industrial army to an increasingly superfluous industrial waste. Subject to growing permanent unemployment and underemployment the present global capitalism has placed a structural death sentence on the plight of the poor today. In other words the newly impoverished masses are being placed in an economic and social position where it has to kill the capitalist system before that system kills it. This new structural position is constituting the poor and dispossessed as a new revolutionary social force or as again Dr. King once defined them, as the potentially powerful "new and unsettling force."

The *Five Ingredients in the Poor Organizing the Poor* begins to describe the newly emerging forms of struggle and organization this embattled bottom layer of the world's population. The principles it described in this pamphlet drawn from mass experiences of the social and political struggles of the class of the poor and dispossessed in world history. In particular it studied how these principles were revealed and reaffirmed in the national organizing drives of the National Union of the Homeless (1985 – 1995). The *Communist Manifesto* summed up the history of class struggles, the main lessons of which continue to find defining relevance today. For instance, the ultimate goal of the two strategic principles the 5 Ingredients of the poor organizing the poor aims at abolishing the poverty and profit-producing system of capitalism. This is the essential point made by the *Communist Manifesto*. It states,

“...modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products, that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property...”

“The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic

revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

Working Men of All Countries, Unite!”

The *Five Ingredients* pamphlet utilized the profound insights of the *Communist Manifesto* to guide and help derive the main political and organizational lessons from the national organizing drives of the National Union of the Homeless. From these lessons it identified 5 strategic ingredients to be considered when actually organizing the poor and dispossessed to politically unite them against the ruling class.

The ruling class’s control of the money economy and the state apparatus represent the major areas of their present formidable strength. The Chinese sage and philosopher Sun Tzu’s time-tested principles of strategy and tactics, that is, ‘avoiding your enemy’s strength uniting and concentrating your attack on his weaknesses’ is operative in all forms of conflict including class struggle.



SUN TZU

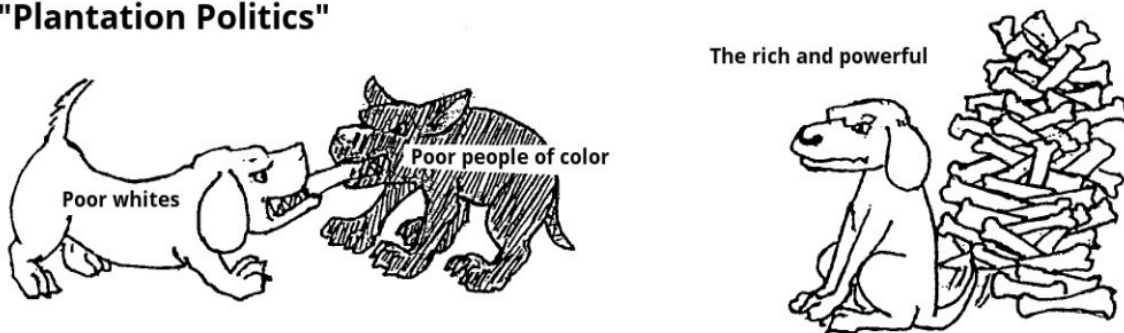
The new technological revolution is placing the poor and dispossessed section of the working class, the bottom economic layer of society, at the Achilles’ heel of all the major socio-economic ills of the capitalist society. This places them at the weakest points of the political influence of the ruling class.

Uniting the poor and property-less makes them politically dangerous social force capable of awakening and rallying the rest of the broad masses to abolish poverty. Awakening and rallying the rest of the broad masses mean most of all winning the middle-income strata, the so-called “middle class.” This is the real strategic threat the united actions of the poor and dispossessed posed for the ruling class. This is because the middle strata are the main social base of the US state apparatus. It constitutes the officer corps of the military, police, intelligence services, the prison-judicial system, and the commanding heights of particularly

those elements of the economy that supports those state agencies. In other words, a mass organizing drive to unite the bottom economic layer as a class weakens the US State, the organized force of violence, the main protector of the poverty-producing system of capitalism.

Therefore the pamphlet, the *5 Ingredients in the Poor Organizing the Poor*, drawing economic and political insights from the *Communist Manifesto*, is concerned with one of, if not the most important strategic problem of the maintenance of the capitalist system of economic exploitation and political oppression. That is the fact of that the “bottom” of this society, i.e., the poor and property-less, remains the most disunited and disorganized section of the population.

### "Plantation Politics"



This major political fact is no accident as it is the mainstay of the capitalist ruling class and it enables them as the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated, to “cruel[ly] manipulate the poor” thru manipulating divisions along particularly the color lines. This fact is the cornerstone of the political strategy of the Wall Street rulers and political and ideological representatives domestic and global strategy and tactical policies.

Essentially, the *Five Ingredients* are organizing principles for implementing two strategic principles: 1) Building a broad mass movement to end poverty led by the poor as an organized class force united across color lines and other lines of division, and 2) “You only get what you are organized to take.”

### Nonviolent and Violent tactics

“Know your Enemy, know yourself and in one hundred battles you will never be defeated...” “To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”

-- Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Sun Tzu is the Chinese strategic and philosophic sage who it is said wrote *The Art of War* over 2,500 years ago. The essential point he is making in this time-tested

and time-honored book is that to outfight your enemy you must outsmart him. This maxim must be kept in mind when considering the most appropriate tactics in carrying out your strategy to win. The problem of nonviolent and violent tactics in the history of class conflicts in the United States is a case in point.

The population of the United States is about 330 million. Gun ownership is more than the US total population, which is over 400 million guns. The ideology of the US population that possessed these violent weapons is that of the US ruling class. The political strategists and tacticians of the ruling class or Wall Street have throughout the years utilized the second amendment of US Constitution to direct and manage the ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of society. For the most part they have encouraged, funded and utilized some of the most armed elements of population in the form of extra-legal groups as the KKK, militias, and other racist and right-wing associations and cults. This they have done to use them as militant reserves to at times work in concert with the organized violent agencies of the US State apparatus to protect and maintain the economic status quo or the capitalist economic system.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s both legal and extralegal forms of force and violence threatened and confronted the National Union of the Homeless's 10 years organizing drives. These attacks were orchestrated by different agencies of the US State government. This included the weaponizing of illicit drugs. The Homeless Union called it a conscious policy of a form of "chemical warfare against the poor. It contributed greatly to the isolation and demise of the National Union of the Homeless. Once again the destruction of another mass organization of the poor demonstrated the current overwhelming strength of the US State, which is the capitalists organized as the ruling class.

Therefore the poor and dispossessed class must concentrate on their class enemy's weak point with various forms and combination of forms that are nonviolent, educational, and persuasive. The *5 Ingredients of the poor organizing poor* and the *Communist Manifesto's* analysis of at least the earlier protracted phases of the class struggle between the capital and labor are nonviolent except in certain cases of self-defense. Consequently, to be provoked into violent forms of activity during the earlier phases is to play into the hands or fly into the strength of the ruling class is suicidal or self-defeating.

## **Dr. King's 1967-68 Poor People's Campaign and the Original "Rainbow Coalition"**

"...One unfortunate thing about [the slogan] Black Power is that it gives priority to race precisely at a time when the impact of automation and other forces have made the economic question fundamental for blacks and whites alike. In this context a slogan 'Power for Poor People' would be much more appropriate than the slogan 'Black Power.'"

-- *Where Do We Go From Here?* (1967)



“History ha[s]...taught... 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.”

**--Honoring Dr. Du Bois (1968)**

Following the demise of the National Union of the Homeless in the mid-1990s, the Political Education Committee of the KWRU entered into a period of comparative studies of the Rev. Dr. MLK’s 1967-8 PPC, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, and the National Union of the Homeless. We derived from those studies concrete and specific lessons and considerations for the mass political organizing of the poor and dispossessed as a united revolutionary class force. The main conclusion drawn from those lessons and considerations was the need to properly utilize the tactical principles of the 6 Panther Ps to put into play the operational principles of the 5 Ingredients in uniting the poor and dispossessed as the leading class force. The 5 Ingredients were the implementation of 2 strategic principles: 1) Building a broad mass movement to end poverty led by the poor as an organized class force united across color lines and other lines of division, and 2) “You Only Get What You Are Organized to Take!”

A major lesson should be noted and that is that the Panther P for Program (or mission statement) of poor organizing must give expression to the main demands and strategic objectives of the 6Ps. Those demands and objectives should be summed up as the implementation of the 5 Ingredients of the political organizing of the poor and dispossessed as united class force. It expresses the connection between the tactical principles of the Ps and the strategic principles of the 5 Ingredients. The Program of the Panther Ps is essentially about putting into operation the 5 Ingredients. These Ingredients have proved to be practically necessary for the complete abolition of the profit-making and poverty-producing system of capitalism.

Part of this comparative study was a more in-depth examination of the words and work of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the last years of his life. This examination started with his launching of the 1967-68 Poor People’s Campaign and ending with his assassination conspired on every level by the US Government. Dr. King’s leadership in the Civil Rights Movement and his receiving of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize gave national and international legitimacy to his words and work. Added to this legitimacy his repeated rhetorical references of certain sayings and practical uses of certain slogans were tested in the struggles of the masses and received their acceptance. In our study of his views, activities, and assassination in relation to the Poor People’s Campaign we discerned that many of the key lessons or principles behind the launching and loses of the campaign found expression in the 10 years National Organizing Drive of the Homeless Union. We also found that they continue to have relevance today. Such strategic principles as: the unity of actions of the poor and dispossessed being a “new and unsettling force” of mass complacency, “Power to Poor People” versus “Black Power,” the ‘revolution of values’ and the use of the

core values of the United States' population as expressed in its Founding Creed of the God-given Right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness, etc.

Added to this study of the Poor People's Campaign was the lessons learned from the creation and destruction of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and its original multi-racial Rainbow Coalition. We drew comparisons and common lessons between these experiences and the rise and demise of the National Union of the Homeless. We concluded from these comparative studies some very important principles about the problems of politics and organization in the strategic struggle to unite the poor and dispossessed as a revolutionary class force in capitalist society.

### **“Victory” of the Dignity and Fairness for the Homeless Housing Program and Real Victories**

“Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers.”

-- **Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto***

In 1988 the National Union of the Homeless in conjunction with a number of other organizations carried out a nationally synchronized Take Off the Boards Campaign, a campaign of public housing takeovers in 73 cities. It was able to leverage the pressure of this campaign to successfully attain a major concession victory from the city of Philadelphia. The concession was a multi-million dollars housing program run by homeless families. It moved over 250 homeless families out of the city shelters' system into housing. Over time powerful corporate and political forces moved on this unprecedented project taking it over and placing it under the control of the City's Department of Housing.

This concessionary victory was turned into an albatross of the Homeless Union contributing to its ultimate demise. In other words, this granting of the concession served to divert us away from using the tactical victory to further unite and strengthen our organization. The power of political influence of the poor and dispossessed grows from building their unity and organization. This experience taught us a hard lesson about what are the real victories of the poor and homeless in their struggles to organize and unite themselves as an entire class. That is that tactical victories can either lead to strategic defeats or victories. In this case, winning a demand or concession for affordable housing led to our losing what most important strategically, our organization. This was primarily because our inexperienced and inadequately educated and trained leaders proved not up to task of countering the planned maneuvers of the class forces arrayed against us.

An important part of the Homeless Union led Dignity Housing program was the establishment of the Dignity Tenants Leadership Development Institute, which it renamed in honor of the late leader and fighter of the national Welfare Rights

and Anti-Hunger struggles, Annie Smart. The Annie Smart Leadership Development Institute eventually transformed itself into the Political Education Committee of the newly formed Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KWRU), a chapter of the National Welfare Rights Union. During this transitional period and the early work of the KWRU Political Education involved a whole ongoing study of the different campaigns and fights **(Appendix 2)** carried out by the National Union of the Homeless during its rise and demise.

The ongoing studies included the lessons drawn from the stages of struggles that culminated in the poor actually united and organized themselves and defeated the rich. The Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban revolutions were the successful processes we studied. We also looked at how Chilean and Ghanaian revolutions succumbed to counter-revolutions. The lessons from the defeat of US reconstruction, the destruction of Dr. King's Poor People's Campaign, and the rise and demise of such militant organizations of the poor as the Black Panther Party. The combination of these studies resulted in the pamphlets, *The Five Ingredients* and *The 6 Panther Ps.* **(Appendix 3)**

Three of the main conclusions were 1) the poor and homeless can think, speak, fight, organize for themselves, and can also lead not only themselves but an entire social movement for fundamental change. 2) You only get what you're organized to take! And 3) the basic principles of the *Communist Manifesto* were affirmed by these experiences of the struggles of the poor and dispossessed. That the basic estimate of the situation it made in 1848 of the society breaking down into two hostile camps, that is of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, of big capital and the poor and dispossessed has now become globalized. The *Communist Manifesto* spoke then of an industrial revolution based on the steam engine causing the cleavage of society into the two hostile camps. Since then a second industrial revolution based on electro-mechanic technology caused another major productive shift in the capitalist economy. Today these developments in science and technology have given way to an unprecedented, most comprehensive, and global micro-electronic information revolution.

We are also suggesting further study and discussion of the comparison of pamphlets, *The Five Ingredients* and the *Communist Manifesto* in relation to the legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s launching of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign. The main purpose here is to help us get and maintain an ongoing accurate estimate of poor and dispossessed as a class and our class enemy and therefore the most appropriate forms of struggle and organization to defeat that enemy.

## **Study and Discussion Guide:**

**A. Discuss how and whether or not the main principles of the booklet, *Communist Manifesto*, find expression in the major lessons of the rise and demise of the National Union of the Homeless. The major lessons of the Homeless Union being those enumerated in the**

**pamphlet, *The Five Ingredients: The Poor Organizing the Poor*. Compare following concepts of the two summary pamphlets:**

*Communist Manifesto* (CM - 1848) and the **two strategic principles** of the *Five Ingredients* (5 Is - 1999):

1) Building a broad mass movement to end poverty led by the poor as an organized class force.

**(CM)** “The history of all hitherto existing society... is the history of class struggles...”

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

“The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.” (\*

“For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeois and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of over-production...”

“But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons — the modern working class — the proletarians.”

“Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.”

2) “You only get what you are organized to take!” **(5 Is)**

“Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers...”

“...The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. [Proletarians] of All Countries, Unite!” \*\*

**B. Compare the antagonistically opposed Proletarian Socialism of the Chapters 1) and 2) with the Bourgeois and Petty Bourgeois Socialisms of Chapter 3. \*\*\***

**C. The 5 Ingredients compared with excerpts from the Communist Manifesto:**

**First Ingredient:** *Teams of Indigenous Organizers*

**Second Ingredient:** *Bases of Operations*

Note: The teams of indigenous organizers utilize the 6 Panther Ps – Program, Protests, Projects of survival, Press work, and Plans to continuously base build, that is, to build the mass membership organizations of the poor as bases of operation

**(CM)** “...with the development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more... The increasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon, the workers begin to form combinations (Trades’ Unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts...

“Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers.”

**Third Ingredient:** *Lines of Communication*

**Fourth Ingredient:** *Mutual Support Networks*

**(CM)** “...the ever expanding union of the workers... is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry, and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralize the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletariat, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

“This organization of the proletarians into a class, and, consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between

the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier..." (CM)

**Fifth Ingredient:** *Core of Political Leaders*, or in other words, a Network of Revolutionaries

**(CM)** "The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development, which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

"The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, *practically*, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, *theoretically*, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

"The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat..."

"...the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property..."

"The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement..."

"In short, the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things."

"In all these movements, they bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time..."

**C. Compare the importance placed by the two pamphlets on the social and political consequences of the historical technological shifts in the capitalist economy by way of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s historical and strategic insights.**

"There can be no gainsaying of the fact that a great revolution is taking place in the world today. In a sense it is a triple revolution; that is a

technological revolution, with the impact of automation and cybernation; then there is a revolution of weaponry, with the emergence of atomic and nuclear weapon of warfare. Then there is a human rights revolution, with the freedom explosion that is taking place all over the world. Yes, we do live in a period where changes are taking place and there is still the voice crying the vista of time saying, 'Behold, I make all things new, former things are passed away'... Now whenever anything new comes into history it brings with it new challenges ... and new opportunities..."

**--Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., *Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution* (sermon delivered at the National Cathedral [Episcopal] in Washington D.C. on March 31, 1968)**

**(5 Is)** The most important and fundamental fact of life today is the electronic economic revolution. This great revolution is ripping apart and throwing into permanent crisis every aspect of society. Corporations today are compelled by competition to "downsize" by employing labor-replacing devices of electronic technology to cut production costs and maximize profits. Human labor is made increasingly unnecessary, and homeless...

Clearly, the socio-economic position of the newly impoverished demands new forms of organization and struggle based on taking what they need. These forms become increasingly political as they are compelled to violate unjust property laws that uphold the interests of the rich and powerful.

**(CM)** The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society... Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned...

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground...

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

**II. Compare the two pamphlets' discussions of the key problems of the leading revolutionary class force and of the unity and organization of that force. Again, compare them through the prism of Dr. King's perspective and purpose of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign.**

"The dispossessed of this nation -- the poor, both white and Negro -- live in a cruelly unjust society. They must organize a revolution against the injustice, not against the lives of the persons who are their fellow citizens, but against the structures through which the society is refusing to take means which have been called for, and which are at hand, to lift the load of poverty. There are millions of poor people in this country who have very little, or even nothing, to lose. If they can be helped to take action together, they will do so with a freedom and a power that will be a new and unsettling force in our complacent national life... " we will be recruiting three thousand of the poorest citizens from ten different urban and rural areas to initiate and lead a sustained, massive, direct-action movement in Washington. Those who choose to join this initial three thousand, this nonviolent army, this "freedom church" of the poor, will work with us for three months to develop nonviolent action skills."

**--Dr. King, *The Trumpet of Conscience* (1967)**

**(5 Is)** Our experience in grappling with this new economic and political situation has revealed two strategic, political principles from which five key organizing principles are derived. The two strategic principles are: 1) The poor and property-less as a united and organized social force must be at the forefront of the struggle to abolish poverty; and 2) You only get what you're organized to take.

The first principle regarding the leadership of poverty victims as a social class basically answers the requirements of today and is consistent with history:

"The history of this country is replete with examples of social problems being brought to a successful conclusion only when led by those Americans most victimized by the problems. British colonialism was defeated under the leadership of those who were victimized by colonialism. American slavery was abolished with the heroic efforts of slaves and former slaves in the forefront of the struggle. The fight for women's suffrage was successful fully led by women. The same was true of the 1930's strikes for union rights and the 1960's movement for civil rights. Those who benefit, if only so slightly, from the economic status quo cannot successfully vanguard social change no matter how good their intentions. Those in pain know when their pain is relieved." **(National Up & Out of Poverty Now Bill of Rights)**

The second principle recognizes that the political empowerment necessary to bring about social change grows out of the development, consolidation, and expansion of unity and organization.



**(CM)** The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat...

...the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property...

...The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working Men of All Countries, Unite!

## **Notes:**

\* The 1848 *Communist Manifesto* is the BASIC TEXT for the Poor Organizing the Poor Course at the University of the Poor

- It first chapter, “Bourgeoisie and Proletariat,” deals with objective or unconscious factors condition the ebbs and flow of the social movement and conflicts between these antagonistic classes. They are the factors that operate independent of the conscious will, desire, and policies of the combatants. However, they must be taken into account if political strategy and tactics are to be most effective and efficient. From the standpoint of the oppressed and revolutionary proletariat, taking into account their developments and conflicts with the Bourgeoisie is done primarily by the use of Marxist theory and ongoing concrete analyses by their leaders.
- The second and third chapters, “Proletariat and the Communists,” and “Socialist and Communist Literature,” deals with the subjective or conscious factors is directly determined by the regulating will, desire, and policies formulated and pursued by strategic and tactical plan and planning of Generalship or Leadership. The unconscious development of the objective factors history is making necessary and inevitable the movement and change of capitalist society to scientific socialism, proletarian Socialism or Abolition of private property Socialism. Given these economic and historical factors, Chapter 2) explains how the conscious leadership of strategy and tactics doesn’t determine these historical developments but can either hasten or hinder them. Chapter 3) is about the reformist character or counter-revolutionary roles of such false “Socialism” such as Bourgeois socialism, Reactionary socialism including Petty Bourgeois socialism, and Utopian Socialism. It explain how such false and opportunist notions contribute to Bourgeois strategy and tactics that serve to hinder or counter the “line of march” of proletariat strategy to Proletarian and scientific socialism.
- And finally the fourth chapter, 4) “Position of the Communists in Relation to the Various Existing Opposition Parties” is about conscious subjective approach of political strategy and tactics to the objective factors of the class conflicts as of the mid-1800s.

## Appendix 1:

### Cause and Effects – ‘Leaves, Branches, and Roots’

“... the general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the value of labor more or less to its minimum limit. Such being the tendency of things in this system, is this saying that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation. I think I have shown that their struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system, that in 99 cases out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labor, and that the necessity of debating their price with the capitalist is inherent to their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities. By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement.

“At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, ‘Abolition of the wages system!’”

**--Value, Prices, and Profit by K. Marx 1865**

“I sit on a person’s back and persuade myself and him that I will do everything necessary to alleviate his condition except get off his back.”

**-- Leo Tolstoy**

“...we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a "thing-oriented" society to a "person-oriented" society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered... True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that

an edifice, which produces beggars needs restructuring. A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth.  
--“Beyond Vietnam” (April 1967) by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## **Appendix 2** [edited definition of *Bases*]

# **The Methods of Building Leadership and Organizing: Five Ingredients in the Poor Organizing the Poor**

**By Willie Baptist and Phil Wider**

(Originally Published by the Annie Smart Leadership Development Institute, 1999)

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The most important and fundamental fact of life today is the electronic economic revolution. This great revolution is ripping apart and throwing into permanent crisis every aspect of society. Corporations today are compelled by competition to “downsize” by employing labor-replacing devices of electronic technology to cut production costs and maximize profits. Human labor is made increasingly unnecessary, and homeless. This development is creating the [newly impoverished]. As people are hurled permanently outside of the workforce, adequate paying jobs cease to be their source of economic survival. Under these conditions, forms of organization and struggle based on collective bargaining and negotiated peace settlements between the rich and poor become impossible. There can be no collective bargaining between the employer and the permanently unemployed. There can be no negotiated peace settlements between city hall and the downtown business interests on one hand, and the forgotten, impoverished communities on the other.

Clearly, the socio-economic position of the newly impoverished demands new forms of organization and struggle based on taking what they need. These forms become increasingly political as they are compelled to violate unjust property laws that uphold the interests of the rich and powerful.

Currently, we can see those cast outside the money-based system already moving to take what they need to survive. One prominent example is the recent explosion of illegal squatting taking place in empty homes across the United States. Another such example was the Los Angeles rebellion of 1992. Anyone living on welfare knows that at the end of the month you run out of basic necessities. The rebellion erupted on April 29th and tied up the distribution of food stamps and welfare stamps. Tens of thousands were placed in a still more desperate situation. Many illegally took what they needed — baby food, diapers, shoes, clothing, etc.

## **II. STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES**

Our experience in grappling with this new economic and political situation has revealed two strategic, political principles from which five key organizing principles are derived.

The two strategic principles are: 1) Poverty victims must be at the forefront of the struggle to end poverty; and 2) You only get what you're organized to take.

The first principle regarding the leadership of poverty victims as a social class basically answers the requirements of today and is consistent with history:

“The history of this country is replete with examples of social problems being brought to a successful conclusion only when led by those Americans most victimized by the problems. British colonialism was defeated under the leadership of those who were victimized by colonialism. American slavery was abolished with the heroic efforts of slaves and former slaves in the forefront of the struggle. The fight for women's suffrage was successful fully led by women. The same was true of the 1930's strikes for union rights and the 1960's movement for civil rights. Those who benefit, if only so slightly, from the economic status quo cannot successfully vanguard social change no matter how good their intentions. Those in pain know when their pain is relieved.” (National Up & Out of Poverty Now Bill of Rights)

The second principle recognizes that the political empowerment necessary to bring about social change grows out of the development, consolidation, and expansion of unity and organization. Any immediate gains conceded during the struggle against poverty are superficial without organization to ensure their maintenance and to sustain the struggle to eliminate the conditions causing p o v e r t y in the first place. Diane Johnson, a National Welfare Rights Union Executive Board member, gives us insight on this principle:

“In the late 80's we had a situation where 35 families were living in a three apartment building complex (the Commodore Apartments in Philadelphia) that was unfit for human habitation. I started organizing with the other tenants and we pulled together a tenant council organization and we began to put demands upon the city of Philadelphia. We needed affordable, decent housing. Their answer was to give us affordable decent housing, but they also separated the 35 families...everybody did eventually get housing, but we were so scattered apart that we couldn't keep up communication and transportation became a problem. Poor people don't have the monies to come and travel all over the city to meetings and stuff like that. The (governmental officials) understood that better than us. In the end we got houses, but lost our organization.”

Today, many of those thirty-five families have lost those houses. Those that remain continue to live in squalor and poverty.

### **III. FIVE KEY INGREDIENTS**

How are we to carry out these principles? The lessons learned from the National Up & Out of Poverty Now! Coalition provides some basic answers to this question. We have paid dearly for these lessons with many defeats, jailings, and deaths in the streets. There are five main interdependent ingredients of organizing. They are:

1. **Teams** - *teams of indigenous organizers*

2. **Bases** - *bases of operations*

**3. Networks** - *mutual support networks*

**4. Voices** - *lines of communication*

**5. Cores** - *connected cores of leaders* trained in political consciousness and strategy

There is no chronological order in the implementation of the five ingredients. Rather, when the five ingredients have been developed and played like the keys of a piano, we have had organizing successes. When one or more have been left out, the entire effort has been undermined. Below we will examine the five ingredients illustrating them through experiences of various organizations of the National Up and Out of Poverty Now! Coalition.

### ***Teams***

Building *teams of indigenous organizers* mostly from the ranks of the poverty victims.

Purpose:(1) Identify issues around which people are prepared to organize. (2) Mobilize human and material resources to build sustained organization around those issues.

There are many problems that are not issues. Issues are problems that groups of people are prepared to act on. The team of organizers lives, works and agitates among these people to determine which problems are issues. For example, during the Union of the Homeless organizing drive in Chicago we were confronted by the influence of the petty-professional advocates of the local Coalition for the Homeless. They declared that lack of housing was the immediate issue to mobilize around. They pushed for homeless people to get behind their lobbying efforts for housing and shelter legislation. The Union of the Homeless organizing teams from the shelters stated that though housing was a problem, the specific issue that most agitated homeless people at that time was the indignity of waiting in line for five sheets of toilet paper.

The need for an adequately trained, local indigenous team of organizers was dearly shown during the founding of the New York City Homeless Union. New York City has the deepest, hardened corps of poverty pimps and political demagogues anywhere. This corps was deeply threatened by the development of an independent organization of the poor. When over 1,200 homeless people were mobilized for the Union's founding convention, the corps knew they had to disrupt it. At one point they prematurely moved and were out maneuvered by the experienced National organizing team.

After the convention, buses left 400 people stranded and the poverty pimps tried to undermine the leadership of the newly elected Union officers. They demagogically agitated on behalf of the stranded. With a crowd behind them, they confronted the newly elected officers with the transportation problem, assuming that they could not find a solution. Fortunately, experienced members of the National team responded with a militant solution to the problem. With banners in hand, the 400 marched to the subway station shouting slogans and illegally jumped the turnstiles. This paralyzed the police and they boarded the train and vanished victoriously into the night.

However, once the experienced national team left New York the poverty pimps once

again moved. This time, the inadequately trained local team was unable to repel them. In a matter of months, the largest local of the Homeless Union was torn to pieces.

## ***Bases***

Establishing *bases of operation*.

[“Base building” is the construction of mass membership organizations of the poor and dispossessed through their fight on many fronts or issues of struggle. Each of these mass membership organizations would constitute themselves as *bases of operation*, “fortresses” or power bases of the class struggle of the poor and dispossessed. Bases of operation are where teams of organizers can continue “base building,” that is, expanding and strengthening the power bases by the recruiting, educating and training of more leaders and members of the organizations of the poor.]

[These power bases of influence among the impoverished are where guided by the mission of their program the team of indigenous organizer planned the recruitment and mobilization of forces for protest operations; set up survival projects to meet some of the immediate economic and cultural needs of the poor; carry out ongoing political education and internal and external press communications. In other words, teams of organizers utilize the 6 Panther Ps – Program, Protests, Projects of survival, Press work, and Plans to continuously base build, that is, to build the mass membership organizations of the poor as bases of operation.]

[An example of building bases of operation is] the response to the welfare cuts in Michigan Up & Out of Poverty Now! [and Michigan Welfare Rights Organization] launched Operation Michigan Storm setting up tent cities in four points throughout the state (including one in the state capitol). They gathered tents, blankets, and food for thousands. As people's checks were cut and were unable to provide these things for themselves, many gravitated to the tent cities. By partially meeting their immediate needs, organizers were kept in constant contact with the victims of these cuts and were able to organize more effectively than any other grouping in the state.

In trade union organizing the factory served as the fixed base of operation. With homeless and other poor people locked outside of the factory, the bases of operation established among them tend to be more varied in type, place and time of existence.

## ***Networks***

Setting up *mutual support networks*.

Purpose: (1) Break political isolation and garner human and material resources

Isolation equals vulnerability. The development of mutual support networks that include the religious community, legal supporters, cultural fighters, the movement of labor, women, and students, etc. is necessary to break the isolation of the poor. In the last period, the relationship between the poor and the other segments of the population has been unequal. Today, as the economy worsens, polarizations are occurring in all of these

segments. This is setting the basis for mutually beneficial relationships with that side of the polarities that are also under attack. This is the real path towards the unity of the entire class of the have nots.

Consider the following example: In 1985, the Philadelphia/Delaware Valley Union of the Homeless engaged in a campaign against below minimum wage abuses by local temporary employment agencies. Without the man power to maintain a constant picket, the campaign began to fade. However, District I of the United Electrical Workers recognized the importance of this issue to their members. The UE workers poured onto the picket lines helping to maintain a constant vigilant presence. Today, the Homeless Union and the UE workers are still maintaining their relationship.

## **Voices**

Establishing internal and external *lines of communication*.

Purpose: (1) Create a communications infrastructure that allows leaders to share information, coordinate and plan efforts. (2) Break the isolation outside of the movement by informing others of our plight and our fight with the intention of garnering human and material resources.

During the national organizing drive, the Homeless Union failed to establish proper lines of communication. Instead, it relied simply on the major media to do this for it. Initially, when homelessness was a relatively new phenomenon and the media was scrambling to cover it, this tactic was sufficient. Once this honeymoon period ended, the coverage either stopped or was skewed and the drive suffered. Newly born chapters were unable to communicate with each other, and therefore, unable to coordinate efforts. Thus, the organizing suffered. In addition, with less coverage, external support in the form of financial donations and volunteers began to cease.

Toward the end of the drive, the Homeless Union joined with the National Welfare Rights Union and the National Anti-Hunger Coalition and founded the National Survival Summit/Up &Out of Poverty Now! Coalition. It was during this period, that the People's Tribune, a national revolutionary press, began to bridge some of the gap of communication. It showed the great potential of a political press serving as a clearinghouse knitting together the scattered acts of street agitation into a national network of communication and political education.

We must fulfill that potential. We cannot rely on their media. We must create our own effective external and internal lines of communication. These could take the form of poor people's newspapers, newsletters, other forms of literature, videos and audio tapes, art, round tables of leaders, speaking tours, computer hook ups, fax networks, etc.

## **Cores**

Constructing throughout the five ingredients a network of connected *cores of leaders* trained in political consciousness and strategy.

Purpose:(1) Ensure the development of political consciousness (2) Impart strategic considerations (3) Tie together the five ingredients of organization and unity

Nationally connected cores of leaders understand the whole war to end poverty: their weapons, forces and strategy, and our weapons, forces and strategy. Thus they are able, through political education and training, to ensure that strategic considerations are being carried out in each arena of work. Organizing among the homeless is one battle in the war against poverty. Organizing welfare recipients is another battle. Organizing the hungry is yet another. There are many others. Cores of strategic leaders operating within each of these battlefields ensure a coordinated direction to end poverty.

Deciding upon tent cities during the Michigan welfare cuts was one such consideration. An analysis of the situation by the core leading up to the cuts revealed several things: 1) that the economic forces aligned behind the welfare cuts were far too powerful to stop, making it clear that the cuts will go through and 2) people on welfare will not be able to provide for themselves shortly. Based on this analysis, Michigan Up & Out of Poverty Now! decided to set up tent cities, as bases of operation, to begin to identify and educate a team of organizers, and to start up a network of supportive organizations who assisted in consolidating resources for tent cities, such as blankets, food and tent shelter. The effective-ness of the core in Operation Michigan Storm was directly related to their ability to successfully "bake the cake" of the 5 key ingredients thereby ensuring the political development and organization of the struggle.

## **Appendix 3**

### **The 6 Panther Ps: Tools for the Poor Organizing the Poor in the Fight to End Poverty Now!**

**By Willie Baptist and Phil Wider  
(Originally published in 2000 by the Annie Smart Leadership  
Development Institute, Kensington Welfare Rights Union)**

[Include paragraph w/context of the paper – why it was written and how it was used, why it is relevant today – either here or in preface. Also consider Carole’s suggestion of a stronger conclusion.]

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

When most Americans think of the Black Panther Party, they imagine a black gun-toting radical group out to kill white people. This was the image created and promoted by the media, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and its Counter Intelligence Program (COINTEPRO). By promoting this image, they could isolate, infiltrate, and destroy the Panthers.

In response to this misinformation campaign, Black Panther Party Chairman, Bobby Seale, stated:



“The Examiner made a report...in last Sunday’s paper that we were anti-white. That we hold no bones ... about being anti-white. This is a bold face lie! We don’t hate nobody because of their color. We hate oppression. We hate murder of black people in our communities. We hate the gross unemployment that exists in our communities. We hate black men ... taken off into the military service to be fighting for a racist decadent America promising us ‘freedom’.”

The fact is that the Panthers fought fearlessly and worked tirelessly for the economic security of all people. More than any other organization of the times, they championed the demand, “All Power to the People!” Yet, they were condemned as a threat to national security.

Their effective *Free Breakfast for Children Program* was later copied by various state legislators. These survival projects, along with other projects such as the *Free Health Clinics*, and *Free Rides Programs* for the poor to visit friends and relatives in prison endeared the Panthers with the needy. Yet COINTELPRO condemned these projects as dangerous, “nefarious” activities, and local FBI agents were directed to break them up. Their bold and creative protest against economic and police injustice and for their legal and human rights captured the imagination of the youth. For these activities, they were declared “criminal” and “terrorists.”

True history has proven that the anti-Panther conspiratorial practices of the FBI were illegal, inhuman, and unjust. Time history has also spoken against an economic and political system of a society that leave whole groupings of its people prey to the deadly violence of poverty and police repression. When the true history of this period is finally written, the Black Panther Party will be given its proper and just place.

## **II. PANTHER’S HISTORY TEACHES**

No social movement can succeed without learning from history. Today’s newly emerging movement to end poverty in this land of plenty can and must learn many lessons from the historical experience of the Black Panther Party of the later 1960s. There must have been something that the Panthers did effectively to capture the imagination of the poor and command the attention and attacks of illegal governmental authorities.

In studying the history of the Panthers, we must come to understand the similarities and the differences between conditions then and conditions now. There are two fundamental economic conditions we need to understand about then: 1) the shift in southern agriculture from manual labor to mechanization, and 2) the beginnings of a shift in the urban economy from mechanization to electronics. The result of these shifts was a tremendous number of poor, unemployed, black youth concentrated in urban centers. They became the social

base of the Black Panther Party. Everything it did, from protests to projects of survival, was based on these facts.

Today, the fundamental economic condition we need to understand is the continuing, expanding, and increasing shift from mechanization to electronics in all aspects of the economy. The result of this shift is the vast growth of structural unemployment and poverty of not just black urban youth, but of people of every color, every age, and every geographic area. These people are the social base of the new movement to end poverty.

Though there are parallels, we must recognize that the situation today is far more complex. Therefore, we must assess our objectives and find in the Panther's history those concepts that would help us to reach them today.

We have found in their history, the "6 Ps" around which the Panthers were organized. They are:

- (1) Program
- (2) Protests
- (3) Projects of Survival
- (4) Press Work
- (5) Political Education
- (6) Plans not Personalities

The work of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party, led by Fred Hampton, shows a most advanced expression of the "6 Ps". These "6 Panther Ps" should be studied so that they can be applied to our current situation.

### **III. 6 Ps AS TOOLS AND STUDY GUIDES**

#### **(1) Program**

The purpose of the Panthers was described in their *Ten Point Platform* program. This program expressed the burning social, economic, and political needs of the section of the population in which they were based. For example, Point #2 – "We want full employment for our people..."; Point #4 – "We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings..."; and Point #7 – "We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of black people..." all expressed their aims to end the desperate poverty and police repression suffered by the people they represented.

People are motivated to act because they are affected by problems that become issues. They seek out others similarly affected to address those issues. This is the basis of an organization. A program summarizes those issues, puts forth a solution demonstrates a plan to implement that solution. A program, therefore, unifies an organization around a common direction toward the solution, guiding

all its activities. Thus it is a necessary political tool for the poor organizing the poor.

## **(2) Protests**

The Black Panther Party was not about “business as usual”. Their brave and pointed protest activities against political and economic atrocities are well documented. For example, after the careful registering of community sentiments and careful analysis and research of the conditions and laws supposedly governing police behavior and the rights of people, the Panthers conducted their famous and dramatic patrols of the police.

These and other protests caught the attention of the people and stirred their consciousness. These periodic protests helped greatly to swell the ranks of their membership and increase their impact on public opinion. Only a fighting organization organizes fighters. Well-thought out and continued protests are a necessary tool for the poor organizing the poor.

## **(3) Projects of Survival**

The *Free Breakfast Program*, *Free Health Clinics*, and other such projects carried out by the Panthers kept their members in constant contact with the community and deepened their love and understanding of the people. While helping to satisfy some immediate needs, the projects helped to politically discipline and develop Panther members. These activities also served as effective forms of protest and political education in themselves, by exposing the insanity and inhumanity of a system that produces extreme want in the midst of extreme wealth.

An organization in constant motion “gathers no moss”; it gathers members and influence. Protest activities start and stop, ebb and flow, while survival projects are steady operations. This keeps members in constant contact with each other and engaged as active members of the organization.

Poor people are necessarily occupied, minute-by-minute, with immediate questions of economic, political, and cultural survival. Survival projects partially meet these immediate needs. Participation of poor people in these projects brings them in regular contact with the organizers, enabling the organizers to regularly carry out the work of political education and struggle.

## **(4) Press Work**

The Panthers’ newspaper, THE BLACK PANTHER, was widely known and appreciated, and became a tool of organization, communication, and education. Estimates of its distribution range as high as 100,000 plus readers. Because of the nature of the activities that the Panthers carried on, they could neither trust nor rely on mainstream media to communicate their message. Therefore, THE

BLACK PANTHER was used to communicate their message, and was religiously and regularly distributed far and wide.

The use of our own poor people's presses is especially crucial today in organizing the struggle against poverty. Presently there exists an all out media blackout and censorship of the nature of our plight and fight. A movement without a voice is an isolated, fragmented, and defeated movement.

## **(5) Political Education**

The Black Panther Party constantly involved its members in political education of themselves and the public at large. The Panthers used every activity and opportunity to carry out political education and the meaning of its projects and protests.

Achieving the political purpose of organizing, sustaining and disciplining the movement, and developing leaders are impossible without effective and ongoing political education.

## **(6) Plans not Personalities**

The history of the Panthers must be studied in terms of their shortcomings as well as their accomplishments. A major shortcoming of the Panthers was a strong dependency on the personalities of a few and not on plans – plans for political education, plans for developing survival projects, plans for carrying out protests, plans for press work and distribution, and most importantly, the shortcoming was in the lack of an integration of these plans into overall plans to carry out the organization's program.

The FBI's COINTLPRO took advantage of this weakness to tear apart the Panthers by pitting the internal factional groupings formed on the basis of personal loyalties against each other. The FBI did this through infiltrating spies and agent-provateurs and by conducting campaigns of lies and false information.

"Cutting off the head of the snake" is an old doctrine for destroying a movement. A movement overly depended on the personality of a leader is an easy prey of its enemy. A commitment to planning and plans allows for the development of collectives of leaders. A movement with many leaders who unify or collectivize their leadership through plans is a broad, powerful, and deeply disciplined movement. Such a conscious movement is not easily infiltrated, divided, and defeated.

Today everyone talks about the need for "collective leadership," but such talk remains lip service without well thought out plans to ensure its development in deed. These plans should include considerations of the "6 Panther Ps."

## Other Readings:

### 1. Karl Marx. *Capital* Volume One: Chapters 32 & 33 **Chapter Thirty-Two: Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation**

What does the primitive accumulation of capital, i.e., its historical genesis, resolve itself into? In so far as it is not immediate transformation of slaves and serfs into wage laborers, and therefore a mere change of form, it only means the expropriation of the immediate producers, i.e., the dissolution of private property based on the labor of its owner. Private property, as the antithesis to social, collective property, exists only where the means of labor and the external conditions of labor belong to private individuals. But according as these private individuals are laborers or not laborers, private property has a different character. The numberless shades, that it at first sight presents, correspond to the intermediate stages lying between these two extremes. The private property of the laborer in his means of production is the foundation of petty industry, whether agricultural, manufacturing, or both; petty industry, again, is an essential condition for the development of social production and of the free individuality of the laborer himself. Of course, this petty mode of production exists also under slavery, serfdom, and other states of dependence. But it flourishes, it lets loose its whole energy, it attains its adequate classical form, only where the laborer is the private owner of his own means of labor set in action by himself: the peasant of the land which he cultivates, the artisan of the tool which he handles as a virtuoso. This mode of production presupposes parceling of the soil and scattering of the other means of production. As it excludes the concentration of these means of production, so also it excludes cooperation, division of labor within each separate process of production, the control over, and the productive application of the forces of Nature by society, and the free development of the social productive powers. It is compatible only with a system of production, and a society, moving within narrow and more or less primitive bounds. To perpetuate it would be, as Pecqueur rightly says, "to decree universal mediocrity". At a certain stage of development, it brings forth the material agencies for its own dissolution. From that moment new forces and new passions spring up in the bosom of society; but the old social organization fetters them and keeps them down. It must be annihilated; it is annihilated. Its annihilation, the transformation of the individualized and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones, of the pigmy property of the many into the huge property of the few, the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence, and from the means of labor, this fearful and painful expropriation of the mass of the people forms the prelude to the history of capital. It comprises a series of forcible methods, of which we have passed in review only those that have been epoch-making as methods of the primitive accumulation of capital. The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless Vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the

most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self-earned private property, that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent laboring individual with the conditions of his labor, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labor of others, i.e., on wage labor. [1]

As soon as this process of transformation has sufficiently decomposed the old society from top to bottom, as soon as the laborers are turned into proletarians, their means of labor into capital, as soon as the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet, then the further socialization of labor and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited and, therefore, common means of production, as well as the further expropriation of private proprietors, takes a new form. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the laborer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many laborers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralization of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the cooperative form of the labor process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labor into instruments of labor only usable in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as means of production of combined, socialized labor, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolies all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labor of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation. This does not re-establish private property for the producer, but gives him individual property based on the acquisition of the capitalist era: i.e., on cooperation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production.

The transformation of scattered private property, arising from individual labor, into capitalist private property is, naturally, a process, incomparably more

protracted, violent, and difficult, than the transformation of capitalistic private property, already practically resting on socialized production, into socialized property. In the former case, we had the expropriation of the mass of the people by a few usurpers; in the latter, we have the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of the people. [2]

## Footnotes

1. “Nous sommes dans une condition tout-à-fait nouvelle de la société... nous tendons à séparer toute espèce de propriété d’avec toute espèce de travail.” [We are in a situation which is entirely new for society ... we are striving to separate every kind of property from every kind of labor] (Sismondi: “Nouveaux Principes d’Econ. Polit.” t.II, p.434.)

2. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, are its own gravediggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.... Of all the classes that stand face-to-face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes perish and disappear in the face of Modern Industry, the proletariat is its special and essential product.... The lower middle classes, the small manufacturers, the shopkeepers, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class... they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, London, 1848, pp. 9, 11.

## 2. PARTY FORMATIONS, WARS, BATTLES and POLITICAL CONFLICTS

(Excerpts compiled by *wb*)

V. I. Lenin

### Guerrilla Warfare

Let us begin from the beginning. What are the fundamental demands, which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of forms of struggle? In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognizes the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not “concoct” them, but only generalizes, organizes, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes, which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, 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 acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defense and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only, recognizing as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation, changes. In this respect Marxism learns, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim what ever to teach the masses forms of struggle invented by “systematizers” in the seclusion of their studies. We know—said Kautsky, for instance, when examining the forms of social revolution—that the coming crisis will introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.

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 their turn. 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.

These are the two principal theoretical propositions by which we must be guided.

Karl Marx | 1865

## **Value, Prices, and Profit - Excerpt**

“... the general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the value of labor more or less to its minimum limit. Such being the tendency of things in this system, is this saying that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation. I think I have shown that their struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system, that in 99 cases out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labor, and that the necessity of debating their price with the capitalist is inherent to their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities. By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement.

“At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social



forms necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wages system!'"

V. I. Lenin

## **Working Class Unity**

December, 1913

The working class needs unity. But unity can be effected only by a united organisation whose decisions are conscientiously carried out by all class-conscious workers.

Discussing the problem, expressing and hearing different opinions, ascertaining the views of the majority of the organized Marxists, expressing these views in the form of decisions adopted by delegates and carrying them out conscientiously—this is what reasonable people all over the world call unity. Such a unity is infinitely precious, and infinitely important to the working class. Disunited, the workers are nothing. United, they are everything.

from *Karl Marx* by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, 1914

## **Tactics of the Class Struggle of the Proletariat**

After examining, as early as 1844-45, one of the main shortcomings in the earlier materialism—namely, its inability to understand the conditions or appreciate the importance of practical revolutionary activity—Marx, along with his theoretical work, devoted unremitting attention, throughout his lifetime, to the tactical problems of the proletariat's class struggle [*The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it*]. An immense amount of material bearing on this is contained in all the works of Marx, particularly in the four volumes of his correspondence with Engels, published in 1913. This material is still far from having been brought together, collected, examined and studied. We shall therefore have to confine ourselves here to the most general and brief remarks, emphasizing that Marx justly considered that, without this aspect, materialism is incomplete, one-sided, and lifeless. The fundamental task of proletarian tactics was defined by Marx in strict conformity with all the postulates of his materialist-dialectical *Weltanschauung* ["worldview"]. **Only an objective consideration of the sum total of the relations between absolutely all the classes in a given society, and consequently a consideration of the objective stage of development reached by that society and of the relations between it and other societies, can serve as a basis for the correct tactics of an advanced class.** At the same time, **all classes and all countries are regarded, not statically, but dynamically —i.e., not in a state of immobility—but in motion (whose laws are determined by the economic conditions of existence of each class). Motion, in its turn, is regarded from the standpoint, not only of the past, but also of the future, and that not in the vulgar sense as it is understood by the "evolutionists", who see only slow changes, but dialectically: "...in developments of such magnitude 20 years are no more than a day,"** Marx wrote to Engels,

**“thought later on there may come days in which 20 years are embodied”** (*Briefwechsel*, Vol. 3, p. 127). [2]

At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of this objectively inevitable dialectics of human history, on the one hand, utilizing the periods of political stagnation or of sluggish, so-called “peaceful” development in order to develop the class-consciousness, strength and militancy of the advanced class, and, on the other hand, directing all the work of this utilization towards the “ultimate aim” of that class’s advance, towards creating in it the ability to find practical solutions for great tasks in the great days, in which “20 years are embodied”.

V. I. Lenin

## **The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement**

Published: Published in December 1900 in *Iskra*, No. 1.

Russian Social-Democracy has repeatedly declared the immediate political task of a Russian working-class party to be the overthrow of the autocracy, the achievement of political liberty. This was enunciated over fifteen years ago by the representatives of Russian Social-Democracy— the members of the Emancipation of Labor group. It was affirmed two and a half years ago by the representatives of the Russian Social-Democratic organizations that, in the spring of 1898, founded the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party. Despite these repeated declarations, however, the question of the political tasks of Social-Democracy in Russia is prominent again today. Many representatives of our movement express doubt as to the correctness of the above-mentioned solution of the question. It is claimed that the economic struggle is of predominant importance; the political tasks of the proletariat are pushed into the background, narrowed down, and restricted, and it is even said that to speak of forming an independent working-class party in Russia is merely to repeat somebody else’s words, that the workers should carry on only the economic struggle and leave politics to the intelligentsia in alliance with the liberals. The latest profession of the new faith (the notorious *Credo*) amounts to a declaration that the Russian proletariat has not yet come of age and to a complete rejection of the Social-Democratic program. *Rabochaya Mysl* (particularly in its Separate Supplement) takes practically the same attitude. Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a period of vacillation and doubt bordering on self-negation. On the one hand, the working-class movement is being sundered from socialism, the workers are being helped to carry on the economic struggle, but nothing, or next to nothing, is done to explain to them the socialist aims and the political tasks of the movement as a whole. On the other hand, socialism is being sundered from the labor movement; Russian socialists are again beginning to talk more and more about the struggle against the government having to be carried on entirely by the intelligentsia because the workers confine themselves to the economic struggle.

In our opinion the ground has been prepared for this sad state of affairs by three circumstances. First, in their early activity, Russian Social-Democrats restricted themselves merely to work in propaganda circles. When we took up agitation among the masses we were not always able to restrain ourselves from going to the other extreme. Secondly, in our early activity we often had to struggle for our right to existence against the Narodnaya Volya adherents, who understood by “politics” an activity isolated from the working-class movement and who reduced politics purely to conspiratorial struggle.

In rejecting this sort of politics, the Social Democrats went to the extreme of pushing politics entirely into the background. Thirdly, working in the isolation of small local workers' circles, the Social-Democrats did not devote sufficient attention to the necessity of organizing a revolutionary party which would combine all the activities of the local groups and make it possible to organize the revolutionary work on correct lines. The predominance of isolated work is naturally connected with the predominance of the economic struggle.

These circumstances resulted in concentration on one side of the movement only. The "economist" trend (that is, if we can speak of it as a "trend") has attempted to elevate this narrowness to the rank of a special theory and has tried to utilize for this purpose the fashionable Bernsteinism and the fashionable "criticism of Marxism," which peddles old bourgeois ideas under a new label. These attempts alone have given rise to the danger of a weakening of connection between the Russian working-class movement and Russian Social-Democracy, the vanguard in the struggle for political liberty. The most urgent task of our movement is to strengthen this connection.

Social Democracy is the combination of the working-class movement and socialism. Its task is not to serve the working-class movement passively at each of its separate stages, but to represent the interests of the movement as a whole, to point out to this movement its ultimate aim and its political tasks, and to safeguard its political and ideological independence. Isolated from Social Democracy, the working-class movement becomes petty and inevitably becomes bourgeois. In waging only the economic struggle, the working class loses its political independence; it becomes the tail of other parties and betrays the great principle: "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves." [1] In every country there has been a period in which the working-class movement existed apart from socialism, each going its own way; and in every country this isolation has weakened both socialism and the working-class movement. Only the fusion of socialism with the working-class movement has in all countries created a durable basis for both. But in every country this combination of socialism and the working-class movement was evolved historically, in unique ways, in accordance with the prevailing conditions of time and place. In Russia, the necessity for combining socialism and the working-class movement was in theory long ago proclaimed, but it is only now being carried into practice. It is a very difficult process and there is, therefore, nothing surprising in the fact that it is accompanied by vacillations and doubts.

What lesson can be learned from the past?

The entire history of Russian socialism has led to the condition in which the most urgent task is the struggle against the autocratic government and the achievement of political liberty. Our socialist movement concentrated itself, so to speak, upon the struggle against the autocracy. On the other hand, history has shown that the isolation of socialist thought from the vanguard of the working classes is greater in Russia than in other countries, and that if this state of affairs continues, the revolutionary movement in Russia is doomed to impotence. From this condition emerges the task, which the Russian Social-Democracy is called upon to fulfil—to imbue the masses of the proletariat with the ideas of socialism and political consciousness, and to organize a revolutionary party inseparably connected with the spontaneous working-class movement. Russian Social-Democracy has done much in this direction, but much more still remains to be done. With the growth of the movement, the field of activity for Social-Democrats becomes

wider; the work becomes more varied, and an increasing number of activists in the movement will concentrate their efforts upon the fulfillment of various special tasks, which the daily needs of propaganda and agitation bring to the fore. This phenomenon is quite natural and is inevitable, but it causes us to be particularly concerned with preventing these special activities and methods of struggle from becoming ends in themselves and with preventing preparatory work from being regarded as the main and sole activity.

Our principal and fundamental task is to facilitate the political development and the political organization of the working class. Those who push this task into the back ground, who refuse to subordinate to it all the special tasks and particular methods of struggle, are following a false path and causing serious harm to the movement. And it is being pushed into the background, firstly, by those who call upon revolutionaries to employ only the forces of isolated conspiratorial circles cut off from the working-class movement in the struggle against the government. It is being pushed into the background, secondly, by those who restrict the content and scope of political propaganda, agitation, and organization; who think it fit and proper to treat the workers to “politics” only at exceptional moments in their lives, only on festive occasions; who too solicitously substitute demands for partial concessions from the autocracy for the political struggle against the autocracy; and who do not go to sufficient lengths to ensure that these demands for partial concessions are raised to the status of a systematic, implacable struggle of a revolutionary, working-class party against the autocracy.

“Organize!” *Rabochaya Mysl* keeps repeating to the workers in all keys, and all the adherents of the “economist” trend echo the cry. We, of course, wholly endorse this appeal, but we will not fail to add: organize, but not only in mutual benefit societies, strike funds, and workers’ circles; organize also in a political party; organize for the determined struggle against the autocratic government and against the whole of capitalist society. Without such organization the proletariat will never rise to the class-conscious struggle; without such organization the working-class movement is doomed to impotency. With the aid of nothing but funds and study circles and mutual benefit societies the working class will never be able to fulfill its great historical mission—to emancipate itself and the whole of the Russian people from political and economic slavery. Not a single class in history has achieved power without producing its political leaders, its prominent representatives able to organize a movement and lead it. And the Russian working class has already shown that it can produce such men and women. The struggle which has developed so widely during the past five or six years has revealed the great potential revolutionary power of the working class; it has shown that the most ruthless government persecution does not diminish, but, on the contrary, increases the number of workers who strive towards socialism, towards political consciousness, and towards the political struggle. The congress, which our comrades held in 1898 correctly defined our tasks and did not merely repeat other people’s words, did not merely express the enthusiasm of “intellectuals.”... We must set to work resolutely to fulfil these tasks, placing the question of the Party’s program, organization, and tactics on the order of the day. We have already set forth our views on the fundamental postulates of our program, and, of course, this is not the place to develop them in detail. We propose to devote a series of articles in forthcoming issues to questions of organization, which are among the most burning problems confronting us. In this respect we lag considerably behind the old workers in the Russian revolutionary movement. We must frankly admit this defect and exert all our efforts to devise methods of greater secrecy in our work, to propagate systematically the proper methods of work, the proper methods of deluding the gendar-

mes and of evading the snares of the police. We must train people who will devote the whole of their lives, not only their spare evenings, to the revolution; we must build up an organization large enough to permit the introduction of a strict division of labor in the various forms of our work. Finally, with regard to questions of tactics, we shall confine ourselves to the following: Social-Democracy does not tie its hands, it does not restrict its activities to some one preconceived plan or method of political struggle; it recognizes all methods of struggle, provided they correspond to the forces at the disposal of the Party and facilitate the achievement of the best results possible under the given conditions. If we have a strongly organized party, a single strike may turn into a political demonstration, into a political victory over the government. If we have a strongly organised party, a revolt in a single locality may grow into a victorious revolution. We must bear in mind that the struggles with the government for partial demands and the gain of certain concessions are merely light skirmishes with the enemy, encounters between outposts, whereas the decisive battle is still to come. Before us, in all its strength, towers the enemy fortress, which is raining shot and shell upon us, mowing down our best fighters. We must capture this fortress, and we will capture it, if we unite all the forces of the awakening proletariat with all the forces of the Russian revolutionaries into one party which will attract all that is vital and' honest in Russia. Only then will the great prophecy of the Russian worker-revolutionary, Pyotr Alexeyev, be fulfilled: "The muscular arm of the working mil lions will be lifted, and the yoke of despotism, guarded by the soldiers' bayonets, will be smashed to atoms!"[2]

## Notes

[1] See Note 125.

[2] Pyotr Alexeyev—a worker-revolutionary in the seventies of the last century whose speech, made before a tsarist court on March 10 (22), 1877, in St. Petersburg, was first printed in London in the irregularly appearing collection *Vperyod! (Forward!)*. The speech was afterwards repeatedly published illegally and was very popular among Russian workers.

## Prison Notebooks

By Antonio Gramsci

One speaks of generals without an army, but in reality it is easier to form an army than to form generals. So much is this true that an already existing army is destroyed if it loses its generals, while the existence of a united group of generals who agree among themselves and have common aims soon creates an army even where none exists.

---**Antonio Gramsci**, from an ethnic or Sardinian nationalist to a Marxist (similar to the trajectory of my and many others' theoretical and political development).

## The Political Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists (Synopsis)

By J. V. Stalin | July, 1921

The question whether a proletarian party is needed or not, and of the role of the latter. The Party constitutes the officer corps and general staff of the proletariat, who direct the struggle of the latter in all its forms and in all spheres without exception, and combine

the diverse forms of the struggle into one whole. To say that a Communist Party is not needed is equivalent to saying that the proletariat must fight without a general staff, without a leading core, who make a special study of the conditions of the struggle and work out the methods of fighting; it is equivalent to saying that it is better to fight without a general staff than with one, which is stupid.

***...The Party as the highest form of class organization of the proletariat.***

(from FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM by J.V. Stalin)

The Party is the organized detachment of the working class. But the Party is not the only organization of the working class. The proletariat has also a number of other organizations, without which it cannot wage a successful struggle against capital: trade unions, co-operatives, factory organizations, parliamentary groups, non-Party women's associations, the press, cultural and educational organizations, youth leagues, revolutionary fighting organizations (in times of open revolutionary action), Soviets of deputies as the form of state organization (if the proletariat is in power), etc. The overwhelming majority of these organizations are non-Party, and only some of them adhere directly to the Party, or constitute offshoots from it. All these organizations, under certain conditions, are absolutely necessary for the working class, for without them it would be impossible to consolidate the class positions of the proletariat in the diverse spheres of struggle; for without them it would be impossible to steel the proletariat as the force whose mission it is to replace the bourgeois order by the socialist order. But how can single leadership be exercised with such an abundance of organizations? What guarantee is there that this multiplicity of organizations will not lead to divergence in leadership? It may be said that each of these organizations carries on its work in its own special field, and that therefore these organizations cannot hinder one another. That, of course, is true. But it is also true that all these organizations should work in one direction for they serve *one* class, the class of the proletarians. The question then arises: who is to determine the line, the general direction, along which the work of all these organizations is to be conducted? Where is the central organization which is not only able, because it has the necessary experience, to work out such a general line, but, in addition, is in a position, because it has sufficient prestige, to induce all these organizations to carry out this line, so as to attain unity of leadership and to make hitches impossible?

That organization is the Party of the proletariat.

The Party possesses all the necessary qualifications for this because, in the first place, it is the rallying center of the finest elements in the working class, who have direct connections with the non-Party organizations of the proletariat and very frequently lead them; because, secondly, the Party, as the rallying center of the finest members of the working class, is the best school for training leaders of the working class, capable of directing every form of organization of their class; because, thirdly, the Party, as the best school for training leaders of the working class, is, by reason of its experience and prestige, the only organization capable of centralizing the leadership of the struggle of the proletariat, thus transforming each and every non-Party organization of the working class into an auxiliary body and transmission belt linking the Party with the class.

The Party is the highest form of class organization of the proletariat.

This does not mean, of course, that non-Party organizations, trade unions, co-operatives, etc., should be officially subordinated to the Party leadership. It only means that the members of the Party who belong to these organizations and are doubtlessly influential in them should do all they can to persuade these non-Party organizations to draw nearer to the Party of the proletariat in their work and voluntarily accept its political leadership.

That is why Lenin says that the Party is "the *highest form* of proletarian class association," whose political leadership must extend to every other form of organization of the proletariat. (see Vol. XXV, p. 194)

That is why the opportunist theory of the "independence" and "neutrality" of the non-Party organizations, which breeds *independent* members of parliament and journalists *isolated* from the Party, *narrow-minded* trade union leaders and *philistine* co-operative officials, is wholly incompatible with the theory and practice of Leninism.

### **From The Prospects of the Communist Party of Germany [CPG] and the Question of Bolshevization**

*J. V. Stalin Interview with Herzog, Member of the G.C.P.*

Pravda, No. 27, February 3, 1925

**Third question.** You said that the C.P.G. must have the majority of the workers behind it. Too little attention has been paid to this aim hitherto. What, in your opinion, must be done to convert the C.P.G. into such an energetic party, with a progressively increasing recruiting power?

**Answer.** Some comrades think that strengthening the Party and Bolshevizing it mean expelling all dissenters from it. That is wrong, of course. **Social Democracy can be exposed and reduced to an insignificant minority in the working class only in the course of the day-to-day struggle for the concrete needs of the working class. The Social Democrats must be pilloried not on the basis of planetary questions, but on the basis of the day-to-day struggle of the working class for improving its material and political conditions; in this, questions concerning wages, hours, housing conditions, insurance, taxation, unemployment, high cost of living, and so forth, must play a most important if not the decisive role. To hit the Social Democrats day after day on the basis of these questions, exposing their treachery—such is the task.**

**But that task would not be fully carried out if those everyday practical questions were not linked up with the fundamental questions of Germany's international and internal situation, and if, in all its work, the Party failed to deal with all those everyday questions from the standpoint of revolution and the conquest of power by the proletariat.**

**But such a policy can be conducted only by a party, which is headed by cadres of leaders sufficiently experienced to be able to take advantage**

**of every single blunder of Social Democracy in order to strengthen the Party, and possessing sufficient theoretical training not to lose sight of the prospects of revolutionary development because of partial successes.**

It is this, chiefly, that explains why the question of the leading cadres of the Communist Parties in general, including those of the Communist Party of Germany, is one of the vital questions of Bolshevization.

To achieve Bolshevization it is necessary to bring about at least certain fundamental conditions, without which no Bolshevization of the Communist Parties will be possible.

**1) The Party must regard itself not as an appendage of the parliamentary electoral machinery, as the Social-Democratic Party in fact does, and not as a gratuitous supplement to the trade unions, as certain Anarcho-Syndicalist elements sometimes claim it should be, but as the highest form\* of class association of the proletariat, the function of which is to lead all the other forms of proletarian organizations, from the trade unions to the Party's group in parliament.**

**2) The Party, and especially its leading elements, must thoroughly master the revolutionary theory of Marxism, which is inseparably connected with revolutionary practice.**

**3) The Party must draw up slogans and directives not on the basis of stock formulas and historical analogies, but as the result of a careful analysis of the concrete internal and international conditions of the revolutionary movement, and it must, without fail, take into account the experience of revolutions in all countries.**

**4) The Party must test the correctness of these slogans and directives in the crucible of the revolutionary struggle of the masses.**

**5) The entire work of the Party, particularly if Social-Democratic traditions have not yet been eradicated in it, must be reorganized on new, revolutionary lines, so that every step, every action, taken by the Party should naturally serve to revolutionize the masses, to train and educate the broad masses of the working class in the revolutionary spirit.**

**6) In its work the Party must be able to combine the strictest adherence to principle (not to be confused with sectarianism!) with the maximum of ties and contacts with the masses (not to be confused with *khvostism!*); without this, the Party will be unable not only to teach the masses but also to learn from them, it will be unable not**



**only to lead the masses and raise them to its own level but also to heed their voice and anticipate their urgent needs.**

**7) In its work the Party must be able to combine an uncompromising revolutionary spirit (not to be confused with revolutionary adventurism!) with the maximum of flexibility and maneuvering ability (not to be confused with opportunism!); without this, the Party will be unable to master all the forms of struggle and organization, will be unable to link the daily interests of the proletariat with the fundamental interests of the proletarian revolution, and to combine in its work the legal with the illegal struggle.**

**8) The Party must not cover up its mistakes, it must not fear criticism; it must improve and educate its cadres by learning from its own mistakes.**

**9) The Party must be able to recruit for its main leading group the best elements of the advanced fighters who are sufficiently devoted to the cause to be genuine spokesmen of the aspirations of the revolutionary proletariat, and who are sufficiently experienced to become real leaders of the proletarian revolution, capable of applying the tactics and strategy of Leninism.**

**10) The Party must systematically improve the social composition of its organizations and rid itself of corrupting opportunist elements with a view to achieving the utmost solidarity.**

**11) The Party must achieve iron proletarian discipline based on ideological solidarity, clarity concerning the aims of the movement, unity of practical action and an understanding of the Party's tasks by the mass of the Party membership.**

**12) The Party must systematically verify the execution of its decisions and directives; without this, these decisions and directives are in danger of becoming empty promises, which can only rob the Party of the confidence of the broad proletarian masses.**

In the absence of these and similar conditions, Bolshevization is just an empty sound.