

RACISM AND REACTION

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IN THE UNITED STATES: TWO MARXIAN STUDIES

**THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF
PRISONS IN THE UNITED
STATES**

by Bettina Aptheker

**RACISM AND THE DANGER
OF FASCISM IN THE UNITED
STATES**

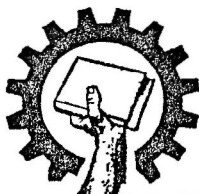
by Herbert Aptheker

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THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF PRISONS IN THE UNITED STATES*

by Bettina Aptheker

Officially, it is maintained that there are no prisons in the United States. There are Departments of Correction, and there are "correctional facilities" equipped with "educational programs," "vocational training" and the necessary "psychiatric therapy." There are also no prisoners in the United States; there are only "inmates." There are most certainly no *political* prisoners in the United States; only "terrorists" and those who "perpetrate criminal violence"—which is known in the international arena as "criminal communist aggression."

The semantic somersaults of the prison and State bureaucracy serve a calculated and specific ideological function. Once we penetrate this linguistic shield we have the key to understanding the social and political functions of the prison system.

The dominant theoretical assumption among social and behavioral scientists in the United States today is that the social order is functionally stable and fundamentally just.

This is a very basic premise because it means that the theory *must* then assume the moral depravity of the prisoner. There can be no other logical explanation for his incarceration. It is precisely this alleged depravity that legitimates custody. As

*This is the text of a paper delivered, in part, at a symposium on Prison Conditions and Political Defense held at the Berkeley campus of the University of California, January 28, 1971. The symposium was sponsored by the Campus Committee to Free Angela Davis, the Campus Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild and the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MECHA).

George Jackson put it: "The textbooks on criminology like to advance the idea that the prisoners are mentally defective. There is only the merest suggestion that the system itself is at fault . . ."* Indeed, the assistant warden at San Quentin, who is by profession a clinical psychologist, tells us in a recent interview that prisoners suffer from "retarded emotional growth." The warden continues: "The first goal of the prison is to isolate people the community doesn't want at large. Safe confinement is the goal. The second obligation is a reasonably good housekeeping job, the old humanitarian treatment concept."** That is, once the prisoner is adequately confined and isolated, he may be treated for his emotional and psychological maladies—which he is assumed to suffer by virtue of the fact that he is a prisoner. We have a completely circular method of reasoning. It is a closed-circuit system from which there is no apparent escape.

The alleged criminal characteristics of the prisoner must, in accord with this logical sequence, arise from *within* the prisoner himself—the prisoner is "crime-prone," just as some people are supposed to be "accident-prone." In the nineteenth century, leading theorists put forth the idea that the criminal had certain *physical* characteristics which shaped his destiny of crime, e.g., slanty eyes and a broad forehead. The alleged depravity and criminality of the poor—because they are poor—is an even older theme in class society, e.g., the ancient idea of the "dangerous poor"; and the oft-repeated phrase of the Founding Fathers, "the rich, the well-born and (therefore) the able." Now our leading penologists and criminologists are much more subtle and sophisticated. They have a veneer of humanitarian instinct, but it quickly falls away, revealing the racist, anti-human core.

Now, it is argued, the criminal may look like anybody else;

*George Jackson, *Soledad Brother*, Bantam Books, New York, 1970, p. 29.

**See the especially good article by Jessica Mitford, "Kind and Usual Punishment: The California Prisons," *The Atlantic*, March 1971.

but he has acquired certain *psychological* characteristics which dictate his pattern of criminal behavior. To "unacquire" these characteristics, a leading behavioral scientist, James V. McConnell, explains that: "We have but two means of educating people or rats or flatworms—we can either reward them or punish them. . . ."* The treatment for what McConnell calls "brainwashing the criminals," to ultimately restructure their entire personality, is an alternating sequence of reward and punishment (including especially so-called Shock Treatment) until the prisoner has "learned" what the society defines as non-criminal behavior.

The source of criminality, then, is psychological rather than social. The solution to the problem is obvious: quarantine the afflicted individuals; then subject them to treatment. Hence we have *correctional* facilities rather than prisons; and we have inmates (as in an asylum for the insane) rather than prisoners.

As Herbert Marcuse has so aptly described it: "The language of the prevailing Law and Order, validated by the courts and by the police, is not only the voice but also the deed of suppression. This language not only defines and condemns the Enemy, it also *creates* him; and this creation is not the Enemy as he really is but rather as he must be in order to perform his function for the Establishment. . . ."*

In this instance the Enemy is the criminal or the prisoner. The single most important thing to understand in all of this is that the behaviorist view of the criminal *has nothing to do with breaking the law*. Let us explain this with some well-known statistics.***

*James V. McConnell, "Brainwashing The Criminals," *Psychology Today*, April 1970, Vol. 3, No. 11.

**Herbert Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1970, p. 74.

****Time* magazine, "U.S. Prisons: Schools for Crime," January 18, 1971.

First, it is a matter of common knowledge that only a small number of law violations is detected and reported. Further, even of reported violations, only a small percentage actually result in police investigations and arrest.

Second, 90% of all criminal defendants in the United States today *plead guilty without a trial* because they cannot afford a lawyer, and hope for judicial leniency.

Third, 52% of all people in jail (this means county and city jails as opposed to state and federal prisons) have not been convicted of any crime; they simply cannot afford bail. Many will spend months and even years in jail, awaiting trial.

Fourth, between 30% and 50% of the prisoners in various cities and states are Black and Brown, while Black people, for example, constitute only 15% of the total population. In the State prisons in California there are 28,000 prisoners, 45% of whom are classified as "non-white."

It should be perfectly clear that thousands upon thousands of people presently in jail and prison have broken no laws whatsoever.

The conclusion from all of this is apparent. Professor Theodore Sarbin of the University of California criminology department put it very well: ". . . membership in the class of people known as 'law-breakers' is *not* distributed according to economic or social status, but membership in the class 'criminals' is distributed according to social or economic status. . . ."*

Example: the ten executives of the General Electric Company convicted in 1961 of price-fixing involving tens of millions of dollars are law-breakers, and some of them actually served some months in prison. Still, the society does not consider them criminals.

*Theodore R. Sarbin, "The Myth of the Criminal Type," Monday Evening Papers No. 18, Center for Advanced Studies, Wesleyan University, 1969.

By way of contrast, a Chicano or Black youth alleged to have stolen \$10.00 from a grocery store is not only considered a criminal by the society, but this assumption allows the police to act with impunity. They may shoot him down in the street. Chances are it will be ruled justifiable homicide in a coroner's inquest.

What, then, is the political function of the criminal and the prisoner as they are created and described by the bourgeois penologists and criminologists?

Consider penology as one aspect of the theory and practice of containment on the domestic front; that is, consider penology as the confinement and treatment of people who are *actually or potentially* disruptive of the social system.

In an increasing number of ways the entire judicial and penal system, involving the police, the courts, the prisons and the parole boards, has become a mechanism through which the ruling powers seek to maintain their physical and psychological control, or the threat of control, over millions of working people, especially young people, and most especially Black and Brown young people. The spectre of the prisons, the behavioral psychologists, the Adult Authority, the judicial treadmill, haunts the community.

Examine for a moment the operations of the Adult Authority. In California roughly 97% of the male prisoners are eventually released from prison—all of them via parole. A man is sentenced to a term in prison. In addition to whatever time he actually serves in prison, he is released on parole for five, even ten or more years. The conditions of his parole are appalling. For example, he can be stopped and searched at any time; his house can be entered without a warrant; he needs the permission of his parole officer to borrow money, to marry, to drive a car, to change his job, to leave the country, and so forth. If parole is revoked the prisoner is returned to custody without trial to complete his full sentence. Members of the Adult Authority are

appointed by the Governor. They are answerable to no one. This, combined with California law which allows "indeterminate sentences" for felony convictions—one year to life imprisonment—gives the parole board incredible powers.

This entire complex is a system of tyranny under which an ever-increasing number of working people—especially again Black and Brown people—are forced to live. As such, it is a prelude to fascism. Indeed, Professor Herbert Packer of the Stanford Law School is exactly right in his conclusion that ". . . the inevitable end of the behavioral view is preventive detention. . . ."*

For, once you accept the behaviorist view of the criminal as morally depraved or mentally defective, it is perfectly logical to preventively detain *all* persons who manifest such tendencies and are therefore *potential* criminals. Thus, in April 1970 a leading physician and close associate of President Nixon proposed that the government begin the mass testing of 6 to 8 year old children to determine if they have criminal-behavior tendencies. He then suggested "treatment camps" for the severely disturbed child and the young hard-core criminal.

Even more consequential in terms of their potential political impact are the proposals of Edward C. Banfield, a professor of Urban Government at Harvard, and the chairman of President Nixon's task force on the Model Cities Program. Professor Banfield has just written a book entitled: *The Unheavenly City: The Nature and Future of Our Urban Crisis*. Banfield's analysis of the urban crisis exactly coincides with the behaviorists' view of the criminal. That is, the cause of the urban crisis lies with the existence of what Banfield calls the "lower classes" who are poverty-prone. These lower classes are of course working people, and Black and Brown people in particular. They are,

*Herbert L. Packer, "Crimes of Progress," *New York Review of Books*, October 23, 1969.

Banfield would have us believe, morally depraved and mentally defective. For example, Banfield describes people of the lower classes (quoting from different passages in his book) as: "feeble . . . suspicious and hostile, aggressive yet dependent . . . no attachment to community, neighbors or friends . . . lives in the slum and sees little or no reason to complain . . . does not care how dirty and dilapidated his housing is . . . nor does he mind the inadequacy of such public facilities as schools, parks and libraries . . . features that make the slum repellent to others actually please him . . . prefers near-destitution without work to abundance with it . . . the morality of lower-class culture is pre-conventional, which means that the individual's actions are influenced not by conscience but only by a sense of what he can get away with. . . ."*

Banfield's description of the lower class is in fact a description of the criminal. And it is precisely at this moment when the description of the lower class and the description of the criminal *coincide* that we have a central aspect of the ideological basis for fascism and genocide. This is exactly Banfield's program.

Summarizing the most salient points in the Professor's program we find these proposals: that the government avoid all rhetoric holding out high expectations for resolving the urban crisis or any of its aspects; that it try to reduce unemployment by eliminating all minimum-wage laws and by repealing all laws which give trade unions "monopolistic powers," e.g., the closed shop; that the government abolish all child labor laws and cut compulsory education from 12 to 9 years; that it change poverty definitions from those which encompass relative standards of living to a "fixed standard" and that it encourage or require all

*Edward C. Banfield, *The Unheavenly City: The Nature and Future of Our Urban Crisis*, Little Brown, Boston 1970, pp. 53, 62, 112, 122, 163 and 211 respectively. See the review/essay of this book by Herbert Aptheker, "Banfield: The Nixon Model Planner," *Political Affairs*, December 1970.

persons who fall into this fixed poverty standard to live in an institution or semi-institution; that the government institute vigorous birth control measures for the incompetent poor and send their children to public nurseries; that the government intensify police control and specifically permit the police to "stop and frisk" and to make misdemeanor arrests on probable cause; that the government speed up trials and the punishment process; and that the government "abridge to an appropriate degree the freedom of those who in the opinion of a court are extremely likely to commit violent crimes . . ."*

This is a *fascist* program. It is a *genocidal* program.

Aspects of it are already to be found in Nixon's Organized Crime Control Bill signed into law in October (1970). For example, this bill provides for a special category of "criminals" known as "special dangerous offenders." Such a person is defined, in part, as an offender who has been convicted of two or more offenses of a kind punishable by death or imprisonment for more than one year; one of which offenses occurred within the past five years and for one of which he has been imprisoned. As the *New Republic's* columnist, TRB, noted: "That's a curious juxtaposition—'punishable by death—or imprisonment for more than one year.' Quite a range, eh?" The "special dangerous offender" can be imprisoned for 20 years at the discretion of the judge, regardless of the prescribed punishment for the original offense for which he was brought to trial.

Here then lies the final significance of a mass political movement to expose the prisons and free the prisoners. The issue is not only reform, but also to mount a struggle to abolish the present functions and foundations of the prison system, an effort which can finally succeed only with the abolition of capitalism. For, as Engels observed more than a century ago, the prison system under capitalism is overwhelmingly a repressive insti-

**Ibid.*, pp. 245-246.

tution, an appendage of its state apparatus employed to maintain exploitative and oppressive social conditions. Of course, what reforms can be won in day to day battle on the legal and political front will be important concessions. But the point is to attack the whole foundation—all the assumptions—involved in maintaining a rehabilitative prison system which must assume the moral and mental defectiveness of its victims, in the midst of a morally bankrupt, racist, defective and generally deteriorating social order. To do this now is to launch a front-line offensive against the increasingly fascist thrust of the present Administrations in Washington and Sacramento.* For the movement to fight to abolish the present functions of the prison system attacks a basic ideological pillar of fascism at its root.

It is on the basis of these realities that we in the radical and revolutionary movements must broaden and develop our concept of the political prisoner. For the prison system and its various appendages such as the Adult Authority are increasingly used as political instruments of mass intimidation, subversion, manipulation and terror against working people and the Black and Brown communities, *as a whole*.

In this regard we may consider four groupings of prisoners who are prisoners by virtue of their political views and activities or are specially victimized on the basis of class, racial and national oppression. First, of course, there are those who become effective political leaders in their communities, and therefore become the victims of politically-inspired police frameups. They are not imprisoned for any violations of law; but for their political beliefs. Such political prisoners include Bobby Seale, Ericka Huggins, Reies Tijerina and Angela Davis. There is a second, though similar category of political prisoners; that is, those who have committed various acts of civil disobedience, or refused,

*See, Susan Castro, "Line of Defense Against Fascism," *World Magazine*, June 6, 1970, p. M-10.

for example, to be inducted into the Armed Forces. They are in technical violation of various laws; but their violations were clearly political acts, and they are political prisoners. Such political prisoners would include the Berrigan Brothers, and many thousands of draft resisters.

Third, there are many thousands of originally non-political people who are the victims of class, racial and national oppression. Arrested for an assortment of alleged crimes, and lacking adequate legal or political redress, they are imprisoned for long years, in violation of fundamental civil and human rights, though they are innocent of any crime. Indeed, W. E. B. Du Bois, himself a victim of a political frame-up in 1952, observed these conditions in the prisons and courts and urged that the movement turn its attention to end these injustices:

What turns me cold in all this experience is the certainty that thousands of innocent victims are in jail today because they had neither money, experience nor friends to help them. . . . God only knows how many who were as innocent as I and my colleagues are in hell. They daily stagger out of prison doors embittered, vengeful, hopeless, ruined. And of this army of the wronged, the proportion of Negroes is frightful. We protect and defend sensational cases where Negroes are involved. But the great mass of arrested or accused black folk have no defense. There is desperate need of nationwide organizations to oppose this national racket of railroading to jails and chain gangs, the poor, friendless and black.*

Finally there are many in prison who have committed various offenses, but who, in the course of their imprisonment, and due to the social conditions they experience, begin to develop a

*W. E. B. Du Bois, *Autobiography* (Edited by Herbert Aptheker), International Publishers, New York, 1968, p. 390.

political consciousness. As soon as they give expression to their political views they become victims of politically-inspired actions against them by the prison administration and the parole boards. They too may become victims of politically-inspired frameups within the prison. There are today many who were either never guilty of any crime at all; or were guilty of some offense, and later developed a political consciousness. These include the Soledad Brothers Three and Seven, Ruchell Magee, the Folsom Strikers, and so forth.

The intensification of the oppressive functions of the prison system and the emergence of the liberation movements on a new level in the Sixties create the basis for a change in the political consciousness of people in the communities. More and more people have begun to understand the practical consequences of the prison/police/judicial apparatus. It is this fact which offers us new opportunities to secure greater and greater mass opposition to the frameups and jailings of all political prisoners.

Further, it is precisely this intensification in the socially-oppressive function of the prison system, and the stunning rise of the liberation movements, that create the basis for a political consciousness among the prisoners *as a whole* leading to individual acts of resistance and other forms of struggle, including such effective forms as mass political work stoppages by the prisoners. The greatest achievement of this movement is its growing awareness of the *class* nature of the prison system. In this way it has been able to unite Black, Brown and white prisoners around specific demands such as we saw in the magnificent Manifesto of the Folsom Prisoners.

The development of a mass movement to free all political prisoners represents the emergence of another front—another aspect—of the growing coalition of all oppressed and exploited peoples against the rule of finance capital.

If we begin to grapple with some of these developments; if we begin to see the relationship between the prison system and

fascist ideology and program; if we begin to see that we must develop our concept of the political prisoner; and if we begin to see the relationship between containment at home and counter-insurgency and aggression abroad—then we will have opened up whole new avenues for legal and political defense involving many thousands of people which will in fact constitute an important part of a people's offensive against the Nixon-Agnew-Reagan axis.

Seize the Time!

RACISM AND THE DANGER OF FASCISM IN THE UNITED STATES*

by Herbert Aptheker

I deeply appreciate the honor of speaking here this evening. For me the honor is multiplied since J. Edgar Hoover has denounced this meeting's initiator—the Black Panther Party—as “without question the greatest threat to the internal security of the country.”

If J. Edgar Hoover condemns something, it must be good and if J. Edgar Hoover condemns something in terms of great severity then it must be very good indeed.

Shortly before the murder of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., J. Edgar Hoover said that Dr. King was “the most notorious liar in America.” This is exactly as though Judas insulted Jesus Christ. To be attacked by J. Edgar Hoover—that evil man, that callous cop, that prevaricating pimp in the service of potentates of pelf and plunder—to be attacked by the Chief Cop of the United States of America is a magnificent tribute; may the Black Panther Party in the future continue to merit the diatribes issuing from his foul mouth.

*This is the text of a speech delivered, in part, at the opening evening of the National Conference for a United Front Against Fascism, sponsored by the Black Panther Party. This was held July 18, 1969 at the City Auditorium in Oakland, California; it was attended by 4,000 delegates from all parts of the country and representing about fifty different organizations.

In a way—in a distorted way—J. Edgar is right; that is, Black militant men and women certainly do represent a decisive challenge to the internal security of the United States, if such security is identified with the interests of its present ruling class, for whom Hoover is a fanatically devoted lackey. In exactly the same way, Gabriel, slave of Prosser, represented a decisive challenge to Governor Monroe of Virginia, and Denmark Vesey, former slave, represented a decisive challenge to Governor Bennett of South Carolina, and David Walker represented a decisive challenge to the 19th century overlords of the United States; and so did Nat Turner to the same overlords and so did Frederick Douglass to Jefferson Davis and the entire slaveholding class, and so did W. E. B. Du Bois to the whole kit and kaboodle of corrupt, merciless, aggressive, parasitic and racist monopolists of the present American empire.

The most oppressed of all people in the United States are—and have been for over three centuries—the Black people. From this follow these central realities: Fundamental to the base of reaction in the United States is and has been this special oppression. From that special oppression has flowed enormous economic gains to the ruling class in a direct sense—that is, in the sense that the labor of the Black men and women was unpaid for two centuries and has been fantastically underpaid for the past century; enormous economic gains to the ruling class in an indirect sense, since when a segment of the working class is unpaid or very much underpaid, then the whole wage level is significantly reduced, and important in an indirect sense also because the racism fundamental to the condition of that special oppression has been the single most important weapon in dividing the U.S. working class and keeping it from developing significant class consciousness, in deterring it from effective political organization and in weakening its efforts at trade union organization. From that special oppression has flowed consequential political benefits to the ruling class, in a direct sense, since

the disfranchisement of the Black millions has weakened popular forces and strengthened forces of reaction, and consequential political benefits to the ruling class in an indirect sense because based on that disfranchisement there has existed racist Bourbon domination of Congress for the past ninety years, and there has accrued in fact an enormously swollen political power to the racist South as compared with the rest of the country—thus, a vote for a Representative or a Senator in New York City has only one-twentieth the potency of a vote in Mississippi. And from that special oppression has flowed great ideological and moral benefits to the ruling class because its facade, racism, has been the single greatest source of irrationalism and fanaticism in this country, because it has been the central force corroding the moral fibre of tens of millions of whites, because it has assisted the ruling class in carrying out wars of aggression and extermination against colored peoples from the genocidal assaults against the Red peoples originally to the rape and ravishment of Mexico a century ago, to the genocidal assaults mounted today against “the brown naked dwarfs” in Vietnam—to quote the compassionate language of that Texas Ranger, Lyndon B. Johnson.

That is one side of the dialectics of Afro-American history in the United States. The other side is the fact that fundamental to every democratic, progressive and radical effort and movement in the United States has been the position of that effort and movement towards the Black people and the position of the Black people not only toward but also within such effort and movement. To the degree that the effort or movement was anti-racist, to that degree it was in fact democratic, progressive and/or radical; where it lacked a conscious anti-racist component it compromised itself and weakened itself. And where it manifested such a racist component of course and properly Black people shunned it and this again decisively weakened it. To the degree that movements in the United States have comprehended this basic significance of racism and the struggle against it to that

degree such movements have advanced; this is true from the First American Revolution to the Abolitionist movement, to the trade-union movement, to the movement for the rights of women, to the struggle against imperialist wars. The failure to extirpate slavery in the First American Revolution—despite the repeated urgings and demands of Black people—made that Revolution incomplete even in bourgeois-democratic terms and led directly to the Second American Revolution, which took the lives of 500,000 American young men—most of them white. And the failure, with the betrayal of Reconstruction, to make real the demands of that Second Revolution—to destroy the plantation-oligarchic system and to extirpate the Jim Crow system—has helped induce the present shattering crisis confronting this nation. The United States could not retain slavery and get into the twentieth century intact; the United States cannot retain racism and get into the twenty-first century intact and in any form that would be recognizable by its Founders. Either the people of the United States—together, of all colors—destroy racism, or racism will destroy the United States.

The basic significance of the special oppression of the Black people to the nature and definition of U.S. monopoly capitalism is well understood by its ruling class; that is why that class holds on to that oppression with such intensity. And the basic character of the Black people's resistance to oppression in terms of a fundamental challenge to the social order here—what J. Edgar means by "greatest threat to internal security"—is also understood by that ruling class.

Hence, now—as that ruling class faces dangers and challenges unprecedented in its history—it is turning with special ferocity towards reaction in general and, therefore, towards intensified special oppression and repression of Black people, and, in that connection, especially the most militant and uncompromising of the personalities and organizations of the Black people. Thus, not only as a matter of elementary justice, but also as a matter of

the most profound self-interest, all who oppose reaction, all who oppose the danger of an American brand of fascism, all who seek to halt U.S. wars of aggression, all who wish to alter political and economic priorities in the U.S. from those favoring death and destruction to those favoring life and construction must build defenses against this special racist-inspired oppression.

President Nixon has introduced his so-called District of Columbia crime bill with its unconstitutional and gestapo-like "preventive arrest" provisions; his "preventive" arrest policy at home is directed in the first place against colored peoples just as his "preventive" war abroad is directed in the first place against colored peoples. But while colored peoples are—again—the first and main victims-to-be, they certainly are not the only ones to be victimized. In percentage terms more Black soldiers than white have died in Vietnam, but in absolute terms the number of white dead is much greater than that of the Black—just as during the Civil War the Black casualties ran about 30% higher than the white, but of the whites killed on both sides, the figure came to about 440,000 and of the Blacks killed—fighting only on the anti-slavery side—the dead numbered less than 40,000.

Mr. Nixon's Deputy Attorney General—Richard Kleindienst, says (May 1969) that, "If people demonstrate in a manner to interfere with others, they should be rounded up and put in a detention camp." Mr. Nixon with his "preventive arrest" and Mr. Kleindienst with his "rounding up" are both of course aiming first at Black people, but if Blacks have the honor in the United States to be the first targets, reaction does not confine itself to that color when it gets going. How about white students who "interfere with others"; how about picketing workers who "interfere with others"; how about people on relief demonstrating, who "interfere with others"; how about opponents of unjust wars and drafts who in expressing their opposition "interfere with others"; etc. The detention camps are ready and if we allow the likes of Mr. Nixon and Mr. Hoover and their minions to

round up people in order to fill them up we will have U.S. concentration camps whose inhabitants will be as mixed a group as in Hitler's camps. They will soon become quite as crowded as Hitler's camps and the same kinds of "solutions" as occurred to Hitler will occur to the masters of the U.S. concentration camps.

No one who looked upon those concentration camps while they still stank of death will ever forget the sight. Nor will he ever confuse tyranny with fascism. There have been tyrants before fascism; fascism is not simply tyranny. It is the incarnation of the death wish of a system that is senile and that realizes that not only is reason its enemy but that life itself is its enemy.

Reaction always must be resisted but today and in the United States resistance to it is especially crucial. This is because reaction triumphant in the United States means a fascist United States and that means crucifixion for the vast majority of American people—white and Black and Brown and Red—for all Americans certainly who work for a living—and it means also, almost certainly, World War Three. World War II cost five times the number of lives compared with World War I; World War III will offer no comparison with World War II or any other war and may very well be not only the end of all wars but the end of the human race.

Since the general crisis of the system of capitalism—that is, since the Great October Bolshevik Revolution of 1917—the tendency of the major capitalist powers, of those where monopoly capitalism is developed, has been towards the fascist "solution." This does not mean the inevitability of fascism's coming to power in such countries but it does mean that within all of them the tendency towards fascism is present and urgent. Fascism represents a new quality of capitalist rule, not simply the succession of one bourgeois government by another; it means unbridled and unrestrained and blatant and open terror at home and aggression abroad. Fascism is state power held by the most reactionary, the most chauvinist, the most imperialist and most aggressive com-

ponents of the monopoly bourgeoisie; it represents the negation of reason, the denial of science, the avowal of brutality, the quintessence of racism, the glorification of war. It exists in order to enhance the power and the plunder of the top monopolists and it does this by ruthlessly repressing all labor and all popular and all democratic and all radical expressions, organizations, and movements.

Its trump card—its “Big Lie”—is anti-Communism; on that basis it builds its system of racism, anti-Semitism, anti-democratism, anti-rationalism; its system of militarism, of suppression, and of war.

What was *the* Big Lie of Hitler? The Big Lie of nazism was its depiction of Communism. It was not anti-Semitism, racism, elitism. The latter were peripheral “adornments” the better to trap victims by the Big Lie. That—the Lie itself—was one (and is one) which pictured Marxism, Socialism, Communism, as the quintessence of evil, as satanic. In particular, Hitler’s Big Lie held that Marxism, Socialism, Communism was so awful that its threat to national security could not be tolerated; hence, it was (and is) something to be outlawed and extirpated.

That was the main content of Hitler’s Big Lie; on that basis, Jews—allegedly the carriers of Marxism—were to be annihilated; on that basis, Democracy—allegedly the ally of Marxism—was to be suppressed; on that basis, trade unions—allegedly the creation of and the training grounds for Marxism—were to be prohibited; and on that basis, the Soviet Union—lair of the Marxist monster—was to be destroyed.

Hence, the whole history of fascism, of nazism—and of its imitators, as McCarthyism of fifteen years ago, and the Wallace movement today—demonstrates that the policy of anti-Communism is the trump card of fascism, its main propaganda technique. On the basis of that experience one must affirm that a *policy* of anti-Communism makes impossible effective struggle against fascism.

Its aim is power and profits for the monopolists. Hitler was financed by Krupp and Thyssen and by Deterding of Shell Oil and by Henry Ford. When Franco's counter-revolutionary coup was under way, it had not only the financial and military support of international fascism, but also the support of National Committees as in the United States which included Basil Harris, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine Corporation; Ogden Hammond, leading banker; Joseph P. Grace of the shipping trust and Morgan partner; Thomas Woodlock, then of *The Wall Street Journal*; and Leon Fraser, president of the First National Bank of New York City.

Mussolini, and Hitler after him, crushed the labor movement in the first place, with the Communists the original victims; then all anti-fascist and democratic forces were smashed. As Mussolini said in 1923, he had stepped on "the putrescent corpse of Liberty" and replaced it with "words that exercise a far greater fascination . . . order, hierarchy, discipline." And the bourgeois leaders of the world responded favorably to fascism at once. Thus, Winston Churchill, speaking in 1927 before the Organization of Roman Fascists, said: "If I had been an Italian, I am sure I should have been entirely with you from the beginning to the end of your victorious struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism." Thus, Judge Gary, president of United States Steel, speaking before the International Chamber of Commerce Congress in 1923, said: "We should be the better for a man like Mussolini here too." Thus, in the magazine *Nation's Business*, organ of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the financial adviser, W. M. Kiplinger, wrote in March, 1935: "Many thoughtful people believe that our form of government must be changed to something resembling the fascist form", and the same man in the same magazine in May, 1935 said: "Many big businessmen think well of it and secretly hope for it."

Today, lice like Rockwell are knocked off by one of their own minor lice, and pipsqueaks like DePugh are captured by the

FBI, but the big money people go on with their money and their power—the Hunts finance the loudmouths like Wallace who call their parties Independent parties but you can bet your bottom nickel his party is not independent of Mr. Hunt and his oil wells!

The fascistic Harding College in Arkansas, founded by the so-called National Educational Program, was actually able to activate itself beginning in 1949 on the basis of a gift of \$400,000 from Alfred P. Sloan, the late president of General Motors. The founder of the Birch Society is a millionaire and a former vice-president of the National Association of Manufacturers; prominent as angels of that Society are Cola G. Parker, formerly president of the NAM, William J. Grede, another former president of the NAM, Martin J. O'Connor III, a former vice-president and E. G. Swigert, also a former president of the National Association of Manufacturers!

Between 1932 and 1939 the number of multi-millionaires in Hitler's Germany increased by 180. In 1932 German industrial corporations reported a net *loss* of 2.5 billion marks; in 1935—after three years of Hitler—they reported a net *profit* of 2 billion marks; while real wages in Germany stood at an index figure of 104 in 1932 they were down to 98 in 1936. In those figures are the basic truths about fascism and the nazis and how they paid off their financial overlords.

Now in the United States one does not have only the ideological and organizational trial-balloons of fascism and the trump card of racism; one has also the structural maturing of a base for fascism. That is, cartelization has never been so intense; the connection between monopoly and the state apparatus never so tight; and the profits never so high. Thus, *Fortune Magazine* (February 1969) remarks: "There have been merger movements in the U.S. before. One began in the 1890s and another in the 1920s; each lasted about a decade. But the current merger movement is lasting longer and is immensely larger." The Federal Trade Commission reported at the end of April 1969 the follow-

ing facts concerning mergers for the preceding three years:

	1966	1967	1968
Number of acquisitions	1746	2384	4003
Number of acquisitions by 200 largest companies	33	67	74
Value of assets of acquisitions by 200 largest companies, in billions of dollars	2.4	5.4	6.9

(The commission reported that for the first quarter of 1969 the rate of mergers and the tendencies indicated above were increasing further).

Now look at the record of profits—net profits after taxes, commencing with 1965—the year Johnson started the massive bombing of Vietnam:

YEAR	(billions of dollars)	
	PROFITS	DIVIDENDS
1965	46.0	19.8
1966	51.0	21.7
1967	48.1	22.9
1968	51.0	24.6
Last quarter of 1968 seasonally adjusted showed:	52.9	25.9

At the end of April, 1969, meanwhile, another arm of the government—its Bureau of Labor Statistics—published figures showing *a consistent decline in the real wages of workers at the very same time that corporations were admitting unprecedentedly high profits and dividends*. These figures cover 47 million production workers and they show that while actual purchasing power of the weekly take-home pay of American workers averaged \$79.95

in 1965, it averaged \$78.97 in 1968 and \$78.12 in the first quarter of 1969!

These figures minimize reality, because they do not include state and local taxes which have risen steeply in the past five years, and which together take another 6 to 10% of one's pay.

While the profits were soaring and real wages were declining, the number of families with dependent children receiving Federal aid rose from 803,000 in 1960 to 1,054,000 in 1965 and to 1,393,000 in 1968—the latter figure covering 5,609,000 human beings.

When a ruling class intensifies its repression and begins not only to dream of detention camps but gets to the point of announcing those dreams, it surely is not premature to assemble and weigh the best means of meeting the danger of fascism. In any case, let us be premature anti-fascists, rather than very mature and very dead victims of fascism!

Two basic things must be kept in mind as one considers ruling-class movements towards fascism. One is that such a tendency reflects *weakness* on the part of that class; its leading elements are tending to believe that it is not possible to rule in the old, legal way; that parliamentary methods and bourgeois-democratic forms are increasingly unmanageable and dangerous to their interests. And second, fascism is not fated to win—even temporarily—anywhere and it never does win *unless its opponents are divided*. This does not mean that all of us who are anti-fascistic need agree on everything or even on most things. But *it does mean that those of us who are anti-fascistic must unite to defeat the drive of reaction, must create a mighty anti-reactionary and therefore anti-fascist force*. This force must not be confined by anybody's sectarianism or purism; it must genuinely unite all who are anti-fascistic. This *does* mean that it must reject policies of anti-communism; that it must combat racism; that it must reject colonialism and aggressive wars. At the same time it must welcome all who are actually anti-fascist and find their inspira-

tion for this in varied forms—in the best traditions of religion, for example, or of democracy, or of science. When one remembers what fascism means in terms of blatant racism, fierce male-supremacist thinking, utter contempt for the teachings of Jesus, repudiation of the concepts in the Declaration of Independence, any kind of working-class organization, any concern for the values of culture, scholarship and science, one sees how many are the opportunities to unite scores of millions of peoples on all levels and on myriad issues in this anti-reactionary and anti-fascist coalition.

This broad conception of unity must be based, however, upon unity of the working men and women in the first place, and unity of the peoples—especially the Black and Brown peoples—who are the particular targets of reaction and of fascism. The mode of struggle must be mass; this does not mean ignoring the realities of splits among the bourgeoisie, for remember that fascism is the triumph of the *most* reactionary, *most* racist, *most* aggressive elements among the monopolists. At the same time, the line must be mass unity and struggle; therefore, the style must be militancy; unyielding principle; fierce dedication. Hence, it is impossible to over-emphasize the decisive importance of the revolutionary component, the fully class-conscious element within the totality of the anti-fascist coalition.

Demands must be of a basic character and must get to the heart of real people's real problems. Thus: for better housing; more nurseries and kindergartens at no or minimal cost; more parks; lower rents and prices; lower taxes upon the poor; massive appropriations for social well-being; a guaranteed adequate yearly income; free medical care for all; a decisive assault upon hunger and poverty to be managed by those who suffer impoverishment; the purification of the police and the courts with the people over both and not both over the people; an end to unemployment; an overhauling of the public welfare system with the recipients in charge of the overhauling; an educational sys-

tem cleansed of racism, elitism, snobbishness; all schools open free to all people with the goal quality education; the elimination of all discrimination against women; the youth encouraged in their righteous demands for creativity and relevance; the political and party structures at all levels democratized; all manifestations of racism illegalized and severely punished; all armaments production nationalized; high taxes upon the rich and tax loopholes closed; a militant drive to organize the unorganized workers; the repeal of all State and Federal anti-labor and anti-union laws and of all so-called anti-subversive laws and boards; the strict enforcement of all anti-racist laws, including the 14th and 15th Amendments; the freeing of all political prisoners, especially those victimized by racist "justice", and those heroic people, in and out of uniform, who have been jailed for refusing to fight in U.S. imperialism's vile war upon the Vietnamese people. For the complete re-direction of U.S. foreign policy from one which seeks to destroy the national liberation struggles of the colonial peoples and to contain and roll back socialism, to a policy which throws the power of the United States on the side of anti-imperialist fighters throughout the world. For an end to U.S. militarism; an end to the draft; the dismantling of all overseas U.S. bases; an end to all atomic-weapons testing; the return of all U.S. soldiers from abroad and the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam. Needed is a U.S. foreign policy that boycotts and blockades the Republic of South Africa and supports and trades with the revolutionary Republic of Cuba.

A system such as that in the United States condemns itself where, for example, Senator Eastland of Mississippi receives a subsidy from the Federal government, for *not* growing cotton, of \$13,000 each month; while in the same State an impoverished child gets from that Government \$9 a month. A system such as that in the United States condemns itself where, for example, as in Detroit, in 1967, the infant mortality rate in the richest neighborhood was 12.1 per 1,000 live births while in the city's

poorest section it was 69.1. That is institutionalized violence; in this case a violence concentrating upon the killing of infants. And those who profit from such a system have the gall to lecture others about "law and order" and about "violence"!

What is required is a domestic and a foreign policy for the United States which shuns racism as the barbarism it is, and which devotes its energies to the welfare of peoples. That is what is wanted and for the likes of J. Edgar Hoover it certainly is subversive.

It is natural, as I have said, for this Conference to have been initiated by Black militant fighters for liberation. Always in the forefront of all democratic, progressive, radical and people's efforts in the United States have been the Black people and so it is proving itself again in our own crucial time.

The word has come from the heart and soul of the oppressed Blacks in the United States from the earliest days: "Let your motto be resistance, *resistance*, RESISTANCE!" said Henry Highland Garnet at a Convention held in Buffalo, in 1843. "No oppressed people," he continued, "have ever secured their liberty without resistance." "Our only hope," wrote the martyred Dr. Martin Luther King, shortly before he was shot, "lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal opposition to poverty, racism and militarism."

The Black woman poet out of Birmingham, Margaret Walker, wrote in her great poem, in 1937:

Let a second generation full of courage issue forth, let a people loving freedom come to growth, let a beauty full of healing and a strength of final clenching be the pulse in our spirits and our blood. Let the martial songs be written. Let the dirges disappear. Let a race of men now rise and take control.

Such a generation is here; it is a multi-colored generation

which knows that it is all for one and one for all or we all go down together; which knows that no one is doing any one any favors; which knows that with courage and unity everything is possible and that with disunity and cowardice all is lost.

Let my last words come from Dr. DuBois. In 1906, this immortal man wrote: "We refuse to surrender the leadership of this race to cowards and trucklers . . . We will never give up, though the trump of doom find us still fighting . . . The battle for humanity is not lost or losing. All across the skies sit signs of promise . . . The morning breaks over blood-stained hills."

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