

PC DISCUSSION ON BREITMAN MEMORANDUM ON 1969 MAYORALTY CAMPAIGNS

January 17, 1969

Breitman: I don't think there are any precedents in this country for the present radicalization. There may have been phases of radicalization which didn't begin over directly economic issues but I'm not familiar with them. I think that there are a number of things which have occurred over a period of years now which if you add them together change the quality of the situation. I would be interested in knowing what the other comrades think about this.

If this is correct than I think that we have to start using the transitional program more than we have in recent years. That will require an educational effort inside the party, because many of the comrades who have joined in the last several years are not very familiar with the concepts; in fact even some of the comrades on the national committee of the party are not comfortable with it.

I've already been asked what there is to read about it. I pointed out that we had some discussions on the subject at the time we adopted the transitional program 30 odd years ago and that some of these discussions are contained in the internal bulletin and elsewhere -- discussions with Trotsky and discussions inside the party. We adopted an American transitional program around the same time. I know that there were discussions for some years around it. I would suggest that the national office prepare a reading list for the benefit of comrades who want to look back on the most important of this material.

I also think that perhaps the party ought to begin to consider the pros and cons of assigning some of the older young people into new and newly changed unions like the teachers union. We have one or two members here in New York, but we probably have a number of others working at other jobs who could easily become qualified. The teachers union, just to take that one, is going to be the center of a great deal of social struggle in the next several years throughout the country. It would be very useful to us to have people inside the union -- useful in general and useful also in connection with whatever work we are going to be able to do in the black community. That's one thought that occurs to me that we might consider in addition to what was said in the thinking out loud discussion I had with Jon Britton.

Novack: I was impressed with the key thought in Breitman's exposition -- control by the people of their immediate environment to satisfy their needs as a step toward more fundamental social control. We took a step in this direction with the slogan black control of the black community.

We are all aware that the ordinary person feels a powerlessness and an incapacity to have any say, and certainly any measure of control, over what most affects him. If we can begin to popularize and concretize the notion of the working people getting control of their own city away from the men of money and the Democratic and

Republican parties this is a good application of the spirit of the transitional program.

The second point is that in educating our own comrades we should make it clear that the transitional program is not something to be learned by rote -- that you memorize what was set down in the 1930's. In addition to the basic concept of raising demands which move the masses toward the goal of mobilizing themselves for the acquisition of power, specific points can be added to the program according to the development of the struggle and the specific problems and needs that are encountered. For example, I don't think that most of our comrades think of 'bring the boys home!' as a transitional slogan. It's not in the original program but it's a demand that was cast up in the course of the struggle against the Vietnam war that has become adopted as a pivot of the movement. And we can take the credit for popularizing it.

I endorse Breitman's suggestion that we should do more thinking about directing some people into several of these new unions, especially the teachers union.

Hansen: Separate and apart from the electoral campaign it would be well worth while to take another look at the transitional program -- which would be an advantageous staging for a further developing of the transitional program. I think I have a somewhat different impression than Breitman as to the degree we've let it fall into disuse. We haven't taken the program itself inside the party and given a lot of education on it -- that's quite true, and maybe we should pay more attention to it now.

But if you look at the way we've handled the entire concept of the transitional program over the past period it appears to me that we have followed it fairly consistently.

During the 50's the aspects of the transitional program dealing with the struggle for democratic rights were emphasized. The struggle against McCarthyism became our major political preoccupation and most of the slogans and battles we conducted then were under that phase of the transitional program, the defense of democratic rights.

When new issues developed we developed slogans or proposals or methods of intervening in the struggle which advanced partial demands which went in the direction of further battles which could lead to the struggle for socialism. The one that George (Novack) mentioned, bring the troops home, is a very good example of that. In other fields too we have pressed slogans of the same basic kind.

I don't mean that we've always necessarily originated those slogans because one of the aspects of the transitional program was to take the slogans or issues which were developed in the struggle itself and pick them up and sharpen them and advance them. An example of that was the black power slogan -- the whole struggle around

the political rights of the Afro-American people, their rights to organize, and the fact that they should organize and should advance their struggle. That was something new that was not in the original transitional program.

The same goes for the student struggle. That comes under the general heading of the youth in the transitional program but its specific slogans were something that came after the original formulation of the transitional program.

The transitional program has that aspect of watching for these sorts of developments and plunging into them and developing them in a very conscious way.

When the atomic bomb was dropped and the whole question of atomic energy appeared we brought in the transitional program. We tried at that time to develop some transitional slogans for that field. After a while they were sort of dropped because there was no response on the political scene itself for slogans like control of atomic energy. And then the whole struggle developed in a different direction which was the direction of banning the bomb, establishing some control over the bombs, etc.

Then the question of nuclear fallout became an issue, and now that has widened to a much broader issue: the entire question of the pollution of the environment, which Breitman mentioned in his memorandum. That is a very good issue, one that has developed on a big scale in the recent period and one that we've been remiss on. Almost every newspaper very frequently carries articles and sometimes even serials on this, and there are books being published on it. All aspects of the world's environment -- stemming in the beginning from the question in its modern form of the question of radioactive fallout -- there's one area where we could sharpen our transitional program.

On the economic side at the present time we probably should pay a lot more attention to the question of inflation and how to fight it. There may be partial slogans that we could develop, or partial applications of our program in that field that we should pay more attention to.

But I think in general, at least in the party press, the general concepts of the transitional slogan have been pretty well applied. Now I think it's a question of seeing what areas in the current scene we're not paying as much attention to as we should in our press and our campaigns.

Ring: There are several aspects of the question I think we have to be aware of. I've heard debates before that are of a rather talmudic character as to whether a particular demand is an immediate demand or a transitional demand. These debates can become extremely scholastic.

I agree that the radicalization in this country is developing more deeply and more rapidly than we are fully conscious of. We have to think out what it is that is radicalizing people and be sure that our approach is attuned to the factors that are radicalizing people today. We have to be careful that in projecting transitional concepts we don't fall into the trap of working out specific concrete demands which might be eminently correct in and of themselves but don't deal with the totality of the social problem in a rounded way. I think that along with the transitional concepts there has to be a very active relation to our general socialist concepts. Very often that's a problem. We tend to think of some very good and very correct immediate or transitional demands and campaign around those very effectively, but we don't relate them to our socialist perspective and our socialist goal and socialist solutions except for occasional declarations to the effect that socialism is the only answer.

I think this is particularly important right now. We can focus on central key issues to the point where we lose sight of the more rounded thing. A comrade commented to me the other day that when she finished reading the Militant her reaction was that there was nothing in the Militant but the student black power struggle and the antiwar struggle which she said was very good but she thought was not enough. She said that she went back and looked over the paper again and she saw that there were other things that it did deal with. But this was the impression that the paper left her with.

Now a feature of the radicalization is that it is not based on economic difficulties in the main but precisely the opposite. People are becoming extremely dissatisfied with the present situation precisely because they are employed and they should have the opportunity for a decent life -- something that they've worked and striven for and they can't have. They work long hours but they can't have a decent home or a decent neighborhood to live in. They can't get a decent school for their children. The difficulties of life in the city become more and more key -- pollution, transportation, the lack of medical care, and all the other difficulties.

And then you have racism and the war -- the key social issues that make all of these things much more explosive -- and people begin to ask why it is that we have to tolerate all of these abominations. Why is it that we have absolutely no voice in settling any of these questions or trying to do something about it? And I think that we have to respond to that not only with specific proposals of an immediate and transitional character but with our general socialist answers as well, because I think that these answers become much more meaningful to people who are reacting to these generalized social problems as well as with one or another specific issue like the war and racism or what have you.

Malcolm X once made the point that you cannot build a movement by simply offering people a perspective to fight on a particular issue, no matter what that issue is. He said that if you're going to build

a movement you have to give people a perspective of a different kind and better kind of life; that's the only thing that will really move people. That's a concept that we have to keep very much in mind, particularly as we talk to the young people who have become so completely alienated from this society. This is also applying to others than those layers of whose radicalization we are aware.

Shaw: What's implied in the discussion that was begun with this document of Breitman and Jon is the beginning of a small move toward adopting some of the characteristics that our party, the revolutionary party, would have if it were a mass party. Correctly so because we are moving in that direction and there are opportunities to broaden our appeal and our support in areas that we may not have taken full advantage of before or which just a few years ago were not open to us.

One of the things that appeals to me about the discussion was the idea that from academic circles we might be able to get some help in the area of research and writing about problems like environmental pollution.

The Rand Corporation and IBM also note that there's a radicalization taking place in this country and they're investing millions of dollars in one of what they call their 'think tank' sessions to analyze the problem and come up with some report on what should be done about it. And their tentative analysis of this problem is that it stems from the technology that's available to our society, and especially here in the United States, and that the increased ability to utilize technology gives everybody a feeling of more individuality which has led them to be more obstreperous. They tentatively are coming to conclusions and making discoveries which Marx made a hundred and fifty years ago about the effects that urban living and increased productivity, etc. would have on the working class. They're talking about ghetto dwellers who are developing their feelings of individuality and beginning to show them.

Trying to figure out what to do about it they come up with some rather ancient ideas which they think are new, like technocracy. They agree that you can't have too much participation of the individual because he's not properly prepared to analyze all the problems carefully and that would only result in chaos and if you don't have enough participation of individuals in government you'll have a dictatorship and they don't have a ready answer and they're looking for a middle way.

They've also discussed the problem of environmental pollution that results from what they call technology and they already have concluded that this results from the fact that there is in the profit motive absolutely no social incentive to avoid polluting the atmosphere and that very strict controls have to be placed on individual power to make decisions in that field too. Which is, of course, one of the things that we've known for a long while.

I think that if people like that are trying to attack some of these problems for the ruling class somebody who is academically inclined could investigate things like that. We could write some very interesting material from the point of view of the need for a socialist society and transitional demands for immediate control of these guys. I would like to see us do that and possibly even print articles by people who are sympathetic to us, not written just by ourselves, along those lines -- popular scientific articles that are background for different aspects of a transitional program that we develop in our election campaign. It relates to the New York election campaign because most of these questions can certainly be applied here more than any other city in the country and we can begin to try to attack some of these problems.

Kerry: On the question of the radicalization or the type of radicalization projected in the memorandum. You have to ask yourself, it's radicalization compared to what their previous state of consciousness was, in most instances, but is it radicalization in relation to socialist consciousness? From that point of view there's a long way to go.

At least there's been no manifestation, no movement organizing any of these sectors towards the revolutionary socialist party. Neither we nor any other socialist adult formation has increased in size significantly. It hasn't yet reached that stage of radicalization, which doesn't mean that it couldn't appear quite rapidly.

In connection with the mayoralty campaign -- you always have the problem that the more localized the election is the more difficult it becomes. If it's a national campaign we can deal in a more general and abstract way with the big national and international issues. In a state election campaign it's not quite as broad as a national campaign although we always try to inject what we consider national questions into state election campaigns.

When it comes to a local campaign you have to deal, in order to make your campaign sound realistic, with the issues of the city election. Otherwise you begin to sound like the SLPers. It doesn't make any difference to them what the election campaign is -- national, state, or local. Their propaganda is essentially the same all the time.

I raise these questions because implicit in the memorandum is a suggestion of the reorientation of the entire party. You know, when you begin to think in terms of applying transitional demands to such things as community problems or urban problems then you have to begin to think of membership participation in these movements that now exist. And by and large we are not in these hundreds and thousands of so-called community movements. And we cannot be because of the size of our movement; we're not a mass party. If we were a mass party these problems would arise naturally in the course of our electoral or day-to-day activity and become part of our election campaign. And our transitional slogans, our transitional demands,

would become both part of our election campaign and would be raised in these community organizations and take the form of actions that would be supplementary to or part of the election campaign itself. I don't think that we are in that position yet.

There is another problem with our propaganda, especially with the paper. I've heard that some comrades are dissatisfied with the character of the paper. I don't find the paper very interesting, personally, because I'm not involved in the student movement, I'm not involved in the black movement. I am interested in bigger political questions that it seems to me the paper doesn't deal enough with.

The whole question of the Nixon cabinet, for example, I find very interesting. Channel 13 has extended recordings of the questioning of these cabinet members, especially this Hickel from Alaska. It's not only that. A week or so ago in the Times there appeared an article on the financial page of what happened to the outgoing cabinet, and that was very interesting too. It seems that they were already prepared with very comfortable corporation posts for everyone that was in the Johnson cabinet. Isn't there some socialist lesson that you could draw from this?

And the country is very much concerned about it. Otherwise there would not be the kind of time and attention given to it on television that there is. They're very much concerned about all of these questions -- conservation, pollution, and the safety of the automobiles, and the fact that the rich are taking over the country and the hell with everybody else. People are not considered. Those are the things that they're concerned about. As you say, it's not an economic question. They don't feel the economic squeeze. It's the character of life, or, as the new left say, the life style under our present circumstances.

The memorandum is very good on many ideas that we have to think about. But I think it's premature to try and put into practice with the present state of our organization and the present degree of radicalization.

The paper now, as always, is directed at a specific audience. When comrades complain that it deals with the antiwar movement, it deals with the student movement, it deals with the black movement, that's the audience that the paper is directed to. Those are the people we go to for subscriptions to the paper, for the sale of the paper, and so the tendency is to weight the paper on the side of the audience that we're talking to. I don't think we can change that essentially, although we can probably broaden it, bring in some of these bigger political questions about which this audience also is concerned -- of a national and international character.

We have to be careful about beginning a move toward a reorientation without really being prepared for it in the party. The same with the transitional demands, because when you get into a mayoralty

campaign you begin to cast about for what sort of demands you would raise. Most of the demands we have raised in the past are of a transitional character. I don't know what new demands can be formulated; probably there are some. But if you look over some of the previous platforms of our mayoralty campaigns you'll find that essentially the demands were of a very general character and didn't deal too specifically with the needs -- that, I think, is one of our problems. There are immediate demands which are important and which do play a part in this new radicalization and with which by and large we don't concern ourselves.

DeBerry: In the national campaign we reached the youth and propagandized in the black community and among people who were in opposition to the war. This is the same audience that we are going to be talking to in this local campaign. In this New York mayoralty campaign it is going to be necessary for us now to take up concretely the question of black control of the black community -- what we mean by it and how it differs from what other people mean by it -- and relate this question to the question of independent black political action. |||

One demand that we should certainly bring up is to lower the voting age. Around this it seems to me that we could get support from many young people -- those who are engaged in fighting the war -- they can be drafted and yet they can't vote, something of this nature.

If we are going to run a campaign we have to zero in on what they key issues are. This isn't to say that all of these issues aren't involved; they certainly are. But we've got to have some focus around which the campaign revolves. The focus is still the question of community control and the need for independent political action, and I think we can add to that the need to lower the voting age.

It seems to me that this local election campaign would give us a real opportunity to counterpose our position on community control to all of the other positions on this question. The issues will be around the question of schools and around the whole question of black control of the black community. I think that we have to take them up in a more concrete form than we did in the national campaign because it's a local campaign. ||

Barnes: As Breitman points out in the memorandum we keep getting all kinds of signs that the radicalization that we saw most clearly among the young people is beginning to deepen. I think the main reason that it doesn't have a socialist character while it deepens is, one, the small size of the socialist movement in this country and its past character, and two, the fact that the radicalization doesn't take the form, at this stage, of an industrial radicalization even as it effects working people. They're coming in through the back door of the thing, so to speak. But there's nothing to prevent us from developing our transitional program to give a clear class struggle impetus and socialist perspective to those who are being radicalized.



Other people try to respond to the radicalization by developing a program around this type of issues. We saw it in the Triple Revolution document, we see it among kids in SDS -- they've actually drawn up their version of a transitional type program. We see these little radical groups come up like the Peace and Freedom Party, one of whose stated purposes, which they never carry out, is to develop a program. Unfortunately sometimes our own people get the idea that these issues Breitman spoke of don't have anything to do with socialism. We can make the mistake of thinking that these issues are just the things that these SDS or reformist or middle class elements are talking about. The truth of the matter is that it's only the socialist program, the transitional program, which can give some sort of coherent answer to these "problems of the cities." And certainly the radicalization has reached a deep enough point so that there are whole layers of young people, especially, that are looking for some sort of coherent program for solving these problems as well as relating them to broader national and international questions.

I agree with Tom about not getting the wrong impression from the memorandum and starting to throw comrades into community action organizations. That's not what's on the agenda. What can be on the agenda is for the party, like in New York through this campaign for mayor, to open a propaganda offensive around some of these questions, to concretize them, to begin acting more like we have the program of the kind of party that can become a mass party.

Inside the New York party we have a growing percentage of the party membership, and it will become a bigger and bigger percentage of the party membership, which are young people in their 20s or early 30s who have come out of the YSA and are now party members who give us (not overestimating it) a growing ability as the party to intervene, function, carry out campaigns of one kind or another. It gives us the resources to do things, to open the kind of offenses, that we could not have done in the past or that we did to a large degree only through the apparatus of the YSA.

A good thing about the mayoralty campaign is that the other radical groups tend to pass up these kinds of elections -- at least the CP does, it will be a token thing at best; the SP and the SLP won't run here; very few of the Peace and Freedom or Freedom and Peace outfits anywhere will be running in these elections. So our participation is a little bit like our entry at the very beginning of the presidential campaign in that whole period of time where we made our biggest gains in the election campaign. We were the only radical alternative.

And we will act like a small group which has the perspective of becoming a mass party and we put forth a program dealing with the issues that are raised, not the ones we preferred were being raised, and give an answer that no one else has given.

I would also throw out some cautions. One is the caution that Tom raised, that I don't think we should throw comrades in any numbers into these organizations involved in the communities.

Secondly, I think Breitman was wrong on at least one point in the memorandum, that's on the Vietnam war. I think the war question is still the central question in the mayoralty campaigns, that it must be tied in propagandistically and systematically, especially between now and Easter, between now and April 6 in our campaigns. The campaigns themselves should be used to build the Easter GI-civilian actions and to use our almost monopoly as far as radical candidates in the election to campaign for supporting the GIs and fighting for withdrawal from Vietnam. That's one place in the memorandum I think by implication he goes off.

(Interjection by Breitman: I've been wrong on the war for years; but if I keep saying it, one of these years I'll be right.)

There's no contradiction at all between the party carrying out this kind of campaign and the party comrades who are not in the YSA organizing to do some of this research, to get other people to do some of this research, and the kind of things that George projected, like a lot of emphasis on reaching out toward the high school age youth with the party, its program and its campaign. That is certainly on the agenda.

Back to the war question. We've got to deal with that and hammer on it someways even more than before because we're in the middle of a polemical struggle in the radical movement on the antiwar movement. A fight to involve layers of radicalized people and the radical type infected organizations toward continuing the struggle to build actions against the war until the troops are brought home. This remains very very important for us, and we can use the campaigns for mayor that we run and the municipal campaigns especially between now and Easter to hammer this ourselves. That's the only disagreement I have with the memorandum, plus this caution that Tom has added that we should see it clearly as a propaganda offensive.

Shaw: I wanted to say something about the radicalization. I agree that it's very difficult to put your finger on what kind of a radicalization is taking place. It seems to me that the radicalization which affected the youth first has percolated up to many different layers of the working class, older people, etc. It hasn't been in the form, as Tom pointed out, of any socialist character or even an organized form. But there are some signs in addition to the ones that George raised in his discussion with Jon.

In some ways we've regained what we lost during the period of the witchhunt. For example, no one's shocked now, I don't think, that Morton Sobell is free; no one is overwhelmed by the fact that Old Chinahand Davies has been rehabilitated, and we're sort of back to being acceptable again. But we've also gone way beyond it in some ways.

There's a kind of radicalization taking place which I think has more political overtones to it than is thought in the sense that primarily it seems to show that there is a growing feeling on the part of many individuals in an unorganized way of total contempt for the government, local or national, and for governmental authority. The big divergence between the stated purpose of the government and actual practice, like freeing Vietnam, people are more aware of it. I think that Tom is absolutely right that we should become more indignant about these things and point them out more, why there is this wide divergence between stated purpose and actual practice. Explain how capitalism works.

Ring: I've thought for some time that one thing that would help us to understand the present stage of the radicalization would be to consider and analyze the evolution of the student movement over the past eight years, because I think that that gives us an insight into the present situation. I think the present situation among large sectors of the general population can generally be defined as one of a growing social consciousness, that is a consciousness of social needs, of social dissatisfaction, and of social protest. What's lacking is any political or ideological concepts as to how to cope with these problems.

The evolution of the student movement has been more significant than we have taken note of. It began around 1960, around specific issues, the black struggle, Cuba, and then after that the Vietnam war. At the beginning there was a very conscious anti-ideological mood that prevailed among the newly radicalized students. All of the new left concepts -- no party, no program, no ideology, just issues. Then their radicalization began to become generalized, they began to talk of themselves as anti-imperialist, of the need for a broader thing, that it's not enough to fight just on these particular issues, it's the whole question of the life style, etc. And then you wind up at this last SDS National Council meeting in four days of fierce factional debate on Leninism, the black struggle, nationalism, self determination, whether or not you need a party, what kind of party, etc.

There has been a process taking place and while there are very big limitations to it, there have been big advances in the general ideological consciousness of the young people who have become radicalized. I think that their elders are in different terms where the student radicals were a while back, but also they're affected by the student radicalization. One of the things that struck me during the Columbia University counter graduation ceremony was that several hundred parents marched with their children. It seems to me that a few years back the average middle class parent who sent their kids to Columbia would have been very upset at the fact that their children were boycotting the graduation and organizing an illegal counter graduation. It struck me as an example of the affect that these young people are beginning to have on their parents. We see in the YSA the number of YSA members who have succeeded in winning their parents to sympathy, very often to a very active degree, with our movement.

You see it certainly in the black community. At San Francisco State where they have succeeded in striking a very responsive chord in the black community. At Brandeis, with the whole press against them, they have won a very significant degree of support within the black community in the Boston area.

I think the student movement is having its effect on the adult movement. Just in the smaller things you can see it. [Comments on hippie dress being picked up by Madison Ave.] I think all of it is part of a social process that is going on, that the radicalization continues to spread. We have to step back and consider the evolution of the struggle.

Hansen: On the question of radicalization, it's true when we say radicalization we tend to think of it in terms of the '30's or other periods of that type when what the radicalization implied was a movement of the working class generally in a social direction. This movement often took explicit forms of consciousness, either Communist or socialist, or connections with or sympathies in those directions. Now when you use the term radicalization for this it's somewhat misleading because these have not yet appeared in a big way -- although maybe there's certain trends or indications along that line.

What is true is that there has been a big rise in social unrest -- that I think is absolutely undeniable and that's what we're dealing with, a big rise in social unrest in the United States. I think that the political forms of that unrest have not yet become completely clear. All we have at this point is indicators.

In George's memo, for example, where he's talking about radicalization he includes the phenomenon of the Conservative party in New York which got a million votes in the last election. I think that would indicate a tendency in another direction than socialism, even though there may be components in there that could be won over if there were an effective challenge to it. But that the source of it is the social unrest there is no doubt whatsoever. So when we think of this radicalization I think that we must think of it at this stage as rather unformed and not yet jelled or crystallized but very, very real and there and presenting us the problem of how to connect with it and push or lead it in the direction of socialism. That's where the questions of the use of our campaigns, press, and everything come in, in understanding this quite exactly.

One of the sources of this social unrest is the war, and the consequences of the war. You can conceive of the war as an issue in the rather direct sense of the boys fighting over there and bring them back home. But there's also an indirect sense that may have quite an effect in the local elections. And that is not just the killing of our boys over there, but also the fact that prices have gone up, taxes have gone up, and social services of all kinds, medical services, etc., have declined in the face of obvious possibilities of eliminating poverty completely. These are consequences of the war.

So they give you issues which can be related to the war in a local election campaign.

For example, in New York City, they raise city taxes. So the Democrats give the explanation that that's because of the governor, he won't give us a big enough cut on state taxes, therefore we have to have city taxes. Then the governor makes his explanation: unfortunately we can't give you what you need because the U.S. government takes its cut, which is about 85% of the New York taxes, therefore we have to have a state tax and we've got to increase state taxes. Then you stop to think, where the hell does the 85% go that the federal government takes if it's not returning it to New York City and not returning it to New York state? The explanation is very clear -- they're spending it over in Vietnam.

Therefore in the local election when someone raises the question of the city taxes you explain, well, if you want an Asian land war with a lot of boys over there, you've got to pay for it, and therefore you've got to have these taxes. Or if you put it in a different way you explain why these taxes exist and what you can do about it. The same way for all the price increases and everything that's occurring of that nature. Doing away with Medicaid in New York -- a very hot issue, and it seems to me a very good one. Doing away with this after we got to the point where we actually had some services of that character -- what was the reason for it? Couldn't pay for it. Why? \$25 billion going to Vietnam.

So I would say that the problem for us is not to just conceive of a radicalization which has now reached the point where we can immediately link into it with socialist slogans, although we can try that to a certain extent. The problem is to see that this social unrest is not yet quite formed -- it can move in different directions, and our problem is to meet it at this level and at this stage.

The unrest has reached the point where there is a big tendency to vocalize it -- to vocalize their thinking, down with this guy, down with that, get rid of Johnson -- to vocalize it and even to take forms of emphasizing the vocal protest -- throw a picket line, make some kind of a demonstration, getting out in the subways -- you immediately make some kind of a protest -- it's a way of emphasizing their verbal protest against the whole set-up. But it's unrest at this point.

Dobbs: There's one thing, Jon, I think you should keep carefully in mind in your further talks with the comrades in the branch about the campaign in light of this discussion -- that is, two things essentially are intermixed here. One is the process of thinking out loud about the developing radicalization and the implications and the questions it raises for us for evaluation. The other is the launching of a campaign here and now. We should be very careful not to mix them.

It's good and it's natural that the discussion should tend to take the bent that it has here, looking at the radicalization process as a whole and all its implications, and we've got to begin to continue to think quite intensively about this, I think, all the way from here on down to the party convention. We're going to have to

draw a balance sheet on where things stand, how they're changing, in what has become an increasingly rapidly changing social reality, and think out our general tactics accordingly.

On the campaign itself: George cites a number of points in the memorandum to illustrate the process of radicalization or, as Joe puts it, more precisely, the intensifying social unrest with deepening implications of a radicalizing potential reaching into new layers and wider sectors of the population. That certainly is valid with respect to the city of New York.

For quite a period of time I've been following rather regularly the hour-long newscasts at 6:00 in the evening where they've got an hour to fill and so they try to go a little more into depth about what is going on. On a cumulative basis you begin to get a feel that this has become a city in which the ruling class and its ruling structure have got more problems than they know what to do with. There's scarcely a night when Lindsay's not on the hour-long newscasts two or three times trying to explain or apologize. You know, he's trying to straighten things out but things are so complicated it's not as easy as people seem to think, etc. You not only get more than you get reading the papers but instead of the cold print in the paper you get numerous flashes of the people themselves involved in the protests of one or another kind -- the anger, the indignation, the militancy, the general mood comes through there.

The cumulative impression I've derived is that there is already an extensive and a swiftly increasing general disenchantment with the status quo in the city of New York. From it flows an increasing tendency to protest every time something particular happens that touches this or that individual or group of individuals and to demand action here and now and when they don't get action to try and do something about it.

The other half of it is you get an impression of a sense of frustration, impotence, anger among the people feeling that they haven't got any control of anything. They're going up against a cold, unresponsive, unsympathetic, generally hostile administration that is becoming quicker all the time now to respond with police power against the protestors.

Another thing you notice is that through lack of action by the established traditional mass organizations be they in whatever quarter, the black community, the unions, etc., this process is accompanied by the burgeoning of ad hoc committees of one kind or another -- a kind of a do it yourself process with limited, sporadic, erratic forms of mass protest to try to put something into this void of organizational leadership on the part of the people who have these deep feelings and desire for change. That's what we approach. In that sense Breitman is right when he says that when we approach the New York campaign we have to go beyond the two central issues of the war and black control of the black community that were the two main points of the presidential campaign.

I, too, want to disagree with Breitman about the perspectives regarding the war question. LBJ yesterday, with that pious Texan deepening of his voice, warned the people that there's hard fighting ahead before the peace can be realized. There we have a preview of what we can anticipate during the process of these negotiations; that is, the use of the lives of American soldiers in South Vietnam to gain a debater's point at the negotiating table. We can anticipate this is going to drag on for some time, and even if they do make some kind of a tentative compromise settlement that doesn't mean the American troops are going to be withdrawn from South Vietnam. So the issue's not about to wash out, and we should not anticipate anything of that vein in the course of the campaign. And if something we don't anticipate happens we'll adjust to it.

One of the things I want to stress is that we be careful not to let any comrades get the impression that we're backing in to an adaptation to the community action business that has been projected in one and another way at one and another time by opponent tendencies in the antiwar movement. It should be made clear that the mayoralty campaign is a continuation in New York City of our presidential campaign parallel with our participation in the antiwar movement. This will be emphasized and underlined by the fact that at the same time we are campaigning politically on a multi-issue basis in the mayoralty campaign we are playing an active, central, leading role in the single-issue coalition antiwar movement.

From another point of view, it should be very clear to the comrades that this is no adaptation to the community action perspective of immediate demands of the kind the Stalinists generate that are devised to try to get people involved in Democratic party politics. Rather we emphasize and underline that the whole central aim and thrust of our propaganda will be around the concept of the exploited masses spearheaded by the working class taking the control into their own hands and out of the hands of the capitalist class, and in that sense it is qualitatively different in every respect from these approaches. That should be made very clear to the comrades on both counts.

Concerning the approach with regard to transitional demands, I think Breitman's suggestion is good; maybe he can prepare a synopsis of the background material on the transitional program for the comrades at this juncture. Harry said that he'd heard some pretty scholastic arguments about whether or not this or that demand is a transitional demand. I would add that while this is true I have also heard some pretty simplistic attempts here and there to make a simple, immediate demand a transitional demand by definition. It's very important that the comrades understand not only what demands in our background propaganda material have been considered transitional demands but also what the dynamic is of the concept of transitional demands. In this respect that discussion material with Trotsky would be very useful to the comrades.

I don't want to undertake now to speak about specific demands, but I want to add that while we should broaden beyond the two questions

of the war and black control of the black community, it should not be too much of a catch-all program. It's a question of what demands to focus on. We should give some major emphasis to the careful process of selection, thinking it out in terms of the totality of the tasks and opportunities before us.

I want to make an observation about another point that George made in his memorandum with which I agree, that is the recommendation to put the accent on youth on the selection of the ticket. George said in the memorandum he didn't think anybody would be justified looking upon this as a trick. I'll go beyond that; not only is it not a trick, it is a reflection of a reality of the party itself. A young ticket is absolutely valid and symbolic of the fact that we are managing to alter the composition of this party from the point of view of infusing an increasing amount of young blood into the party.

It's not at all a case of the party selecting candidates from a token force of youth in its ranks and putting them up as a facade. It is a reflection of the changing reality of the party itself. And the appeal has a great validity in my opinion, because while it is true that there is growing evidence that the disenchantment with the status quo and the growing desire to change it is reaching into the older age levels, it is still principally and primarily youth that are and must be the most combative in that process and it is primarily to them that we would appeal.

From another point of view, what are our expectations in this campaign? Here again comrades should be very clear. Our expectations are exactly as they were in the presidential campaign -- it isn't the vote we get that's going to be the criterion at all. We want to extend the party's influence. We want to extend the body of sympathizers, develop contacts, look toward the recruitment of new members to our ranks. And these primarily are going to come from among the youth, particularly at this juncture. An anticapitalist, prosocialist radicalization as yet I think is going to find its focus primarily among young people. Not so much among the older layers. That will come later on when the party is bigger, the movement has gained new momentum, you can reach into older layers; but not yet. We're still after young people.

George says also in the memorandum that we may have some possibility of reaching workers. We may or we may not; that's one of the things you'll find out in the course of the campaign. But the first thing that we should recognize is that in reaching out to the working class we are really reaching out to them in a form other than the union form. We are reaching out to them in a more general political sense in terms of an election campaign using all the vehicles available in the campaign for the purpose.

On this question of whether or not we assign some people to a few unions. I think we have to give it some very careful thought. But that doesn't have anything to do with what we do with this campaign and it shouldn't get in the way, and there should not be any confusion about that.



Are we or are we not going to find it necessary to pay more attention, to make some assignments we haven't previously made to community organizations, will we find it possible? I think those are things we'll have to think out. But they have no direct bearing on the election campaign.

The thing that should be crystal clear is that in adjusting our perspectives as required in down to earth terms in regard to conducting a mayoralty campaign in New York City we're not stumbling into some change in general party organization, some new overall tactical approach, some new body of criteria in the allocation of comrades to certain assignments, etc. -- all of those things in the larger sense we have to think out much more carefully. And we have to be on guard about letting any erroneous impressions arise about this or instead of making any real headway here and getting in a position to think out flexibly and in the light of the changing situation the conducting of a pilot test operation in terms of the New York City campaign we can stumble into confusion and problems in the party.

Breitman: It didn't occur to me that anyone would think that the local campaign would be any more than a propaganda campaign. That's entirely what I had in mind. I think there's a lot more people who are looking for a candidate to express their feelings and their complaints and their demands than we thought was the case in 1968, and that if we run the right kind of campaign that they will think that we are their candidate. That's the main point about the election campaign.

Whether we call it social unrest or radicalization I'm not sure and I don't care too much. But it's social unrest which is having some effect on the consciousness of people. They're beginning to think differently as well as be uneasy. I think that in that sense it's a radicalization the way we used the term to apply to the students at an earlier stage in the development of the student movement; that is, that before they became a pro-socialist tendency or an anticapitalist tendency we were speaking about student radicalization then too.

The local black work fraction the other night was having some discussions and recommended that we ask the paper to consider writing an answer to Progressive Labor. Progressive Labor has been carrying on an agitation and propaganda against the idea of transitional demands, especially demands applying to control. Their latest issues are full of this. The reason for it, we figured out, was that Lynn Marcus and his group have been making some inroads into Progressive Labor, taking some of their members away with their talk about a transitional program. So they now have come out hot against it. But it is important, aside from why they do it, because Progressive Labor has some influence inside the student movement, inside SDS, and we felt that this would be a perfect foil for an educational discussion in the public press about a transitional program, what it is, and so on.

Kerry: In trying to think of some analogous situation and development the only thing I could think of is the period in American history

when the socialist candidates for municipal office were, in a number of cities, successful. And beyond the point where the question of economic depression was involved. The whole period of what we refer to as sewer socialism, that is that the socialist label was not a deterrent, people who were not socialists voted socialist. The radicalization had not reached the point where they would affirmatively vote for a socialist because they were for the overthrow of capitalism, but the fact that a candidate was a socialist would not turn them off and prevent them from voting for a candidate. I'm not familiar enough with that period, but if I remember there was a socialist mayor in Milwaukee and several other cities.

I think the question in the city with most of them was corruption -- corruption of the two party political machines, and the socialists appeared to be the ones from whom you could get an honest administration.

The point is that they continued to be elected long after the economic pressure was the key factor -- it wasn't because of that that they were elected.

We are reaching the point now, especially in the cities, where the problems of ruling the cities are beyond the capacities of the capitalist city administration. There's more talk that the federal government is going to have to step in and take over the planning of the cities -- the question of transportation, the question of housing, the question of pollution -- all of these questions are beyond the capacity of the city. And the character of the cities has changed, with the exodus to the suburbs not only of the middle class but a large part of the white working class.

So we have to test it in this kind of an election campaign, whether the fact that you run as a socialist would act as a deterrent to those who are dissatisfied or subject to the social unrest from voting for socialist candidates.

The only political form it has taken in New York has been the reform movement inside the Democratic party. That's the political form this social unrest has taken in the two party system. What the reform Democrats will do in the city election I don't know. Undoubtedly there will be another internal struggle inside the Democratic party on the candidate and the character of the candidate. They'll have to because Lindsay has considerable popularity precisely because many people who are not Republicans and who are not favorable toward the Republicans as against the Democrats support Lindsay because they think he's honest and they think he's a reformer; that he's not a Tammany Hall hack.

End of discussion.