

The Greatest Transition for Mankind

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Following is the text of a speech by Gus Hall, leading Communist spokesman, to a meeting sponsored by the Humanitas Society in McMillin Theatre, Columbia University, on Dec. 15.

BECAUSE I AM so aware of the pressures you of Humanitas Society have been under during the past days, I am even more grateful for having this opportunity to take part in this exchange.

These pressures are in fact closely related to the nature of the U.S. policy in Vietnam.

When the aggression could not achieve its goals in Vietnam through demagoguery, fenced in hamlets, through the so-called advisers, through the corrupt Diem regimes, through "anti-insurgency," it shifted to the present policy of genocide, to a war of depopulation, to the most brutal policy of saturation bombing, to the most heinous act of literally burning a people, putting a nation to the torch, by the massive use of napalm bombs. It is a policy based on the concept that if you can't win the people, the people become the enemy, the target. And the enemy must be destroyed. The increased attempts at creating the atmosphere of hysteria, of jingoism, on the home front, the threats of and acts of violence against the Americans who oppose this criminal policy is a corollary of the changed nature of the war in Vietnam.

War Hysteria

THE STAFFS of the war hawks, the FBI, the CIA fronts, like the Freedom House, the Birchites, the KKK, the Billy Grahams have all taken to the stump, not to discuss the issues, but in the attempt to create the war hysteria. The first announced casualty on the economic front is the Appalachia program. Here the war against the people replaces the announced war against poverty.

These changes are in fact evidence of the failure of the old policies. They are failures because the policy of aggression and war remains against the best interests of the people of Vietnam, and because it is against the best real interests of the people of the U.S.

The use of a new crime to cover up the failure of a past crime can only lead to the committing of an even bigger crime. This is the deadly logic of the policy of escalating the war of aggression in Vietnam. The deadly logic of the war in Vietnam leads to a world nuclear war. It could be the "crime to end all crimes." It could be the "war to end all wars" because it could end human existence on this globe.

On this path there is a point of no return. There is a point where all discussions, all exchanges, will have no value or meaning. From that point on, war fronts, casualty figures, expenditures for war budgets, or even the debate of who is wrong, who is the criminal and who the victim — will all take on a meaning in a qualitatively different world — if there will be one. The new bombings of the North Vietnam industrial installations are a dangerous step along this path.

So when we are discussing the war in Vietnam we are in fact discussing the immediate and the longer range prospects of every phase of human society. I will return to this question, but let me briefly introduce a related question.

The Big Lie

THE CENTRAL ideological Trojan horse of our times is the use of the Big Lie, anti-communism.

The "canned cover" story for every war, for every act of aggression is anti-communism. Hitler fascism murdered 30-40 million people under the cover of fighting the spectre of Communism. The late Senator McCarthy used it when he said, "I hold in my hand a list" — and then called for aggression against the liberties of all Americans. The presence of 58 Communists in the Dominican Republic became the "cover story" and seemingly enough reason to send 35,000 U.S. Marines there.

Al Capone and Anastasia both appealed for understanding and respectability because, as they said, "after all, we are anti-Communists." The "cover story" according to the historian, Arthur Schlesinger, is the use of a deliberate lie. He admits his own use of it when the facts would not convince and justifies it by anti-communism.

Under the hysteria of the McCarthyite witch-hunts, Congress passed laws that completely subverted the Constitution, such as the McCarran Act.

I am not talking about people who honestly disagree with or are not informed about the Communist position. Because we know that the majority of our fellow Americans do not agree with us on many basic questions. This we do not resent or condemn. This we welcome as a challenge.

I am talking about the big lie — anti-communism, the demagogic appeal to utter falsehoods. This kind of anti-communism has become the ideological narcotic of our day.

It is dangerous because under its spell, anything goes. This kind of anti-communism is a weapon against everything progressive — it is a tool of oppression. It has become the main ideological weapon of all anti-democratic, anti-labor, anti-Negro, anti-intellectual forces in our country. It is the tool of the pro-war and pro-fascist forces in our land.

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THE VERY NATURE of this "artillery of words" about Communism is a critical assessment of the state of our social science. For some 90 percent of this torrent of cliches is not devoted to any rational, objective examination of the stated subject. It is not a weighing of the facts, it is not a dialogue about nor a challenge to the ideas or the concepts of Communism. Its very purpose is not to discuss communism.

Rather it is a gigantic fraud. It is an exercise in inflating the ghost, it is an emotional appeal about the evils of the apparition, it is sticking the pins into a conjured-up caricature image of Communism. This noise is about the caricature of the ghost.

It is about foreign agents, about cloak-and-dagger conspiracies, about violence and subversion, about a world-wide conspiracy against God, country and motherhood.

Smokescreen for Aggression

I SPEAK about this now, not as a defense of the Communist Party, not from any narrow, partisan considerations. I speak against it because this Big Lie, anti-communism, has become the principal smokescreen for the war of aggression in Vietnam. If this poisonous smog engulfs our country and the rest of the capitalist world, the stage will be set for the madness of a nuclear disaster. Thus the responsibility of clearing the air, of rejecting this poison is not ours alone, but becomes an indispensable prerequisite for peace and freedom as well as democracy.

Just as Hitler's "anti-communism," after inflicting horror upon the world, ultimately led the German nation to catastrophe, so the "anti-communism" of U.S. corporate power now visits tragedy upon other peoples, but its ultimate victim, if it is not checked, must be the American nation.

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ALL WHO think or act in the realm of politics do so within some specific overall framework. They all have a theory, a point of reference, a specific starting point. I want to speak with you about our Communist point of reference as it is related to our opposition to the U.S. policy of aggression in Vietnam.

Of course, there are variations and shadings, and it is true people do react on the basis of immediate self-interest without reference to, or the knowledge of how these actions are related to theories, but in a fundamental sense the ideological points of reference tend to polarize around two main outlooks.

One starts and ends with the concept that capitalism is the beginning and the ultimate of all human systems. They have a rationale for their partisanship. They admit capitalism has its weaknesses, but it's the best man can do. By this logic they attribute the faults of capitalism to weaknesses in human nature, and transfer the positive features of human nature as contributions of capitalism. Thus the brutalities of capitalist fascist Germany are placed on the doorstep of a German personality trait. And the scientific achievements of the human mind are hailed as products of capitalism. Much effort is put into the attempt to equate capitalism with democracy and freedom.

This point of reference necessarily dictates a conservative — a status quo, and finally, a reactionary attitude to all problems of life. This point of reference becomes a rationale for wars of aggression. The capitalist way of life is referred to as the American way of life. They view any change, all progress as a challenge.

The point of reference that capitalism is the ultimate of perfection leads to a policy of arrogant superiority and chauvinism. This leads to a policy of genocide against people of underdeveloped countries, of the burning and destruction of whole peoples, holding other people as inferior and expendable, to the theory of the master race. Thus, in 1948, Lyndon Johnson proclaimed:

"No matter what else we have of offensive or defensive weapons, without superior air power America is a bound and throttled giant; impotent and easy prey to any yellow dwarf with a pocket knife."

A Changing World

THE STARTING POINT for the other point of reference is a changing world. A concept that the only absolute, unchangeable factor in life is that

process of constant change. That this is a law of nature is now quite well accepted in the scientific community. That it is also a law of social systems is bitterly fought by those who want to give capitalism the appearance of foreverness.

We believe the laws of motion, the law of continuous change fully applies to social systems as it does to all of nature. Marxism makes this its point of reference.

Thus, each economic system, slavery, feudalism and capitalism, has had its day. They all served their historic purpose and gave way to a higher form of relationship. Each reflected and served a specific level of human development. New social systems entered the stage of life as an answer to new social and technological developments.

In this view of history capitalism was an important step. It was an answer to a specific level of human life. Now new problems are pushing for a solution, a technological revolution is taking place — a new social order has emerged. It is challenging capitalism on all fronts. The new order is socialism.

From Books to Action

THIS SEEMINGLY abstract theoretical or philosophical question has become alive. It has moved from the text books to the field of action. This is so because the process of change has reached a qualitative point of a social explosion. Civilization is passing through its greatest moment of a revolutionary transition. The basic hallmark of this epoch, therefore, is the revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism and later to Communism.

For Marxism, this is a point of reference.

A distinct phase of this overall revolutionary process, this period of transition, is the explosive breakup of the old capitalist-imperialist empires.

For those who reject the law of change in human affairs, this new reality, this revolutionary process, is a shock. They refuse to accept it as an inevitable development. They try to attribute it to some kind of a "conspiracy," to "infiltration," to "subversion." They have not yet adjusted to the fact that, yes, civilization has now reached the plateau where the people of each nation want freedom and independence — and they demand it now. They now demand the simple right to determine for themselves all matters within their national boundaries. They all want an equal place in the sun.

They insist on reaping the full benefits from their labor, and from their national resources. This desire for independence is not new. The desire for independence was born with oppression. What is new is that they have the power, they have the will and are ready to fight for it. This is the meaning of the national liberation movements and national liberation wars. This is the meaning of the slogan, "Yankee, Go Home." The cause of those fighting for independence in any corner of the world is as just as was our cause at Valley Forge. This is also our basic point of reference.

Humphrey and History

RECENTLY vice-president Hubert Humphrey, the Earl Snowden of the Johnson set, stated the U.S. government point of view on this fundamental question. This goes into explaining the roots of the present U.S. foreign policy. Keep in mind that he is the spokesman for a country with more military bases around the world than all other countries put together. Here is how Humphrey put it: "There is a bold new form of aggression which could rank in military importance with the discovery of gunpowder. This is becoming a major challenge to our country."

Some things in life do change very slowly. Humphrey's statement is almost word for word what King George III said about the forces for U.S. independence in 1776. This ragged army was not a challenge to the British people, they were a challenge to the British throne representing colonial aristocracy.

The challenges of the national liberation revolutions around the world are not against the self-interests of the American people. They are not a challenge to our national honor. They are a challenge to the right of U.S. corporations to exploit their people and their national resources. They are a challenge to foreign military domination.

Humphrey, speaking for U.S. big business, wants to deny the course of history and in so doing also denies our revolutionary past and condemns our own war of national liberation. For our victorious war for independence was a classical example that still inspires the national liberation movements of today.

We are for independence of all nations. We are for an end to all forms of colonialism. Within this context, we are for peaceful coexistence between nations including countries with different social systems.

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THIS IS the framework for our position on the U.S. aggression in Vietnam. We are against the U.S. policy of aggression because it is against the best interests of the people of Vietnam and because it is against the best interests of our own people.

We are against the U.S. policy of aggression because the escalation is on the rails that is dangerously leading to a world nuclear war. The logical and unavoidable end of the present policy of escalation is a war with North Vietnam, China and a world nuclear war.

In 1964 General Edward Lansdale, the man from Uncle CIA, when writing only for the eyes of his conspirators, wrote, referring to some proposed new policies:

"Each falls short of understanding that the Communists have let loose a revolutionary idea in Vietnam, and that it will not die by being ignored, bombed or smothered by us." Then he added, "Ideas do not die in such ways."

Vietnam

THE REVOLUTIONARY idea of national liberation is not a communist invention. The credit for its birth goes to the very system Lansdale represents — capitalism. He is more right than he knows. Ideas do not die that way. They are not going to die that way in Vietnam, in the Dominican Republic, in Congo or in Rhodesia. In fact, when the time for an idea has arrived, they never die — they triumph. And the idea of the end of colonialism has arrived. This is our point of reference.

The forces of aggression find it very difficult to get around the incontrovertible clear facts in Vietnam, such as:

There are only two forces in Vietnam. These are the people of Vietnam and the U.S. forces of aggression. There are no Chinese or Russians there. It is one of the great ironies of history that the U.S. Seventh Fleet prowls the coast of China, that U.S. armed forces make Taiwan their military base, U.S. bombs fall in North Vietnam within hearing and eyesight of the borders of China, the U.S. military installations in Japan, Okinawa, Guam, the Philippines encircle and provide launching pads for attacks on China. But in spite of these facts the spokesmen for U.S. aggression make the ridiculous charge that China is the danger and aggressor in the Far East.

And the issues are clear also: The Vietnamese are fighting for the right of self-determination — for independence.

The Pentagon wants to establish a military command which to dominate the affairs of Asia.

The war is not over, but symbolically, this week the Chase-Manhattan bank and the Bank of America announced the establishment of their Vietnamese branches. These are investment banks. They are not there to make loans to the poor peasants, or to cash G.I. checks. This is the financial structure

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for the U.S. big business economic penetration.

The Business of War

THIS IS what the shooting is all about. Big business is for the policy of military aggression because it opens the way for economic and political aggression.

Big business is for the policy of aggression because it means war profits. This year the General Motors Corporation made almost two billion dollars in profit. And some 30 of its 40 industrial plants are involved in war production. The point of reference for big business is their selfish limitless drive for private profit. U.S. foreign policy is geared to this drive, to this point of reference.

The making of the napalm bombs designed for the specific purpose of burning human flesh in mass is now also a profitable war industry. The leading manufacturers of these tools that turn peaceful villages into blazing infernos are the Tennessee Gas Transmission Co. and the Chemetron Corp.

As is the case with these two corporations, what weaves through the directors of all the napalm bomb makers is the interests of the Rockefeller family. The oil is stolen from the colonial world and sent back as napalm bombs to further enslave them.

A criminal war policy brings out depraved criminal features of U.S. politics. The Nixons, Dirksens, Fords and Rockefellers are the front-line cheerleaders for a speedier escalation of the war. They call for more U.S. troops to Vietnam. Then, like vultures, they hail the growing casualty lists. They count the U.S. dead as votes and the caskets like ballot boxes. With scavenger-like glee they publicly proclaim — the war will be an election issue — as the list of U.S. dead grows, the chances of Republican victory grow with it. They demand the sending of U.S. youth to die and they use the grief-stricken parents for their degenerate political purposes.

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OUR CONCEPT of what is the solution for the war in Vietnam logically flows from our basic points of reference. The solution must start from the premise that the people of Vietnam, and the people of Vietnam alone, must have the right to determine their own affairs.

The National Liberation Front in South Vietnam represents 20 of the most influential political parties and peoples' organizations in South Vietnam. The Communists are one of the forces in this people's coalition. It is not a political alliance committed to socialism. Its objective is independence. Therefore, to deal with the realities of Vietnam is to deal with the one force that has the political confidence of the people. The refusal of the Johnson Administration to recognize this reality is proof positive that its professions about negotiations for peace is blatant demagoguery. If these realities are recognized, then the 1954 Geneva Agreement can be the basis of a settlement. Then the four points presented by Hanoi can become the basis of talks.

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THE PROFESSIONS of willingness to negotiate by the United States are as if the villain in a western movie were to ride into town blazing away from both guns, murdering anyone in sight and hollering "I'm the only one who can help you." bands on the outskirts. They are robbing, murder

ing, poisoning pillaging your city. But I am here to negotiate here. I am here to negotiate about making town." CIA-RDP75-00149R000300390002-8

If the Johnson Administration were serious about negotiating, it would take the minimum steps of halting the criminal bombings of the territory of North Vietnam. It would agree to meet with the one political and military power that does have the confidence of the South Vietnam people — the National Liberation Front. Short of this, the so-called willingness to negotiate is nothing but cynical demagoguery and a cover for further aggression.

These points of reference not only determine our attitude to the U.S. policy of aggression. It is the starting point for our position on other questions as well.

Racism in the U.S.

THE VICIOUS system of segregation, racism and bigotry has been poisoning the atmosphere and minds of our people. We must finally ventilate and get rid of the stench of the slave market that has permeated the moral fiber of our country for over 300 years. We are for civil rights because it is to the best self-interests of all Americans. And we are for civil rights because segregation, and discrimination are instruments in the exploitation of both Negro and white workers.

We are for the defense of democratic rights. We are for strong labor unions. We support the struggles of our people against the encroachment of monopoly power.

We take a stand on all questions involving the interests of our people. We do so because we are interested in the welfare of our people. But we do so with the knowledge that these struggles all take place within a larger framework. They are a part of and are influenced by the movements in history, a movement of a revolutionary transition from the old social and economic system to a new system. Our point of reference prods us to work for social change. It molds us into a revolutionary force.

THE MOST conspicuous feature of American capitalist society is the gap between its potential and its actual performance. And this is, after all, the most rational yardstick by which to judge a social order — the correlation between potential and performance. It does no good to tell a poverty-stricken family today that it really is better off than the fabulously wealthy of ancient Egypt. Such consolation is absurd because it rests on a comparison between two totally different social orders with two totally different potentials. The poverty-stricken family will judge its condition, not by the standards of ancient Egypt, but by the standards that it knows, or senses, are within the capacity of contemporary American society.

By this common sense measure American capitalism is the most delinquent social order in history. If in other lands poverty has been, or is, the condition of man because the capacity to produce wealth is inadequate, it is not so in the United States. Here the poverty and deprivation that afflict 70 million Americans by one authoritative count are glaring defects of the social system.

Here the social deficits in health and education and housing; the social blights of urban decay and chaos, of deteriorating public transport, of erosion of farm life, of chronically depressed regions are not the consequence of scarcity. They are indictments of a social order that possesses more than ample means to remedy these conditions — and

The Roots of Poverty

IN AN ECONOMY of abundance only social inequity can produce poverty. In this sense the very achievements of American capitalism rise up to accuse it. Here each malnourished child, each substandard dwelling is a witness to the defects of the social system because the capacity to produce food is so abundant.

The gap between capacity and performance is a manifestation of what Karl Marx, the founder of scientific socialism, revealed as the primary contradiction of capitalist society — the contradiction between the social character of production and the private appropriation of its output. To be sure, as we are constantly reminded capitalism has changed since Marx's day. It certainly has changed in this respect: the contradiction has become immeasurably more intense.

The polarization in the field of ideology is in fact a reflection of the polarization of wealth and poverty. On the one hand there are 70 million Americans who live on the level designated as poverty and deprivation. Then, only as an example, there is one family group that owns or decisively controls the following: six of the major oil companies — source material for the napalm bombs and the gasoline for the bombers. (I don't mean gas stations), 5 large banks (this does not count branch banks), 3 of the largest insurance companies, 2 large railroads, 2 major airlines, and major corporations in communications, electrical products, sugar, dairy, sulphur, paper and chemical industries. They just about own Manhattan Island. The total worth of all this is over 61 billion dollars. This is one of the families that is opening the bank in South Vietnam. This is the family so involved in the manufacture of the materials that go into making the napalm bombs. This is the Rockefeller family.

We view socialism as a logical solution to this basic contradiction that produces such monstrous abnormality. The solution is to synchronize the social production with social ownership and distribution.

Social Revolutions

A FURTHER POINT of reference for us is that socialism cannot be imported. Social revolutions cannot be made or ordered. Socialism will be on the order of the day when the majority of Americans are convinced that there is no other solution to their problems. At that point no power on earth can stop it.

With all due respect to the experiences of the countries that have established Socialism, Socialism in the U.S.A. will not be patterned after any other model. It will be shaped by our experiences — by our traditions as a people.

Our very basic and historic point of reference is that capitalism as a system is on the way out and socialism as a system is on the way in.

To clear up many of the misconceptions and to make crystal clear the Big Lie, anti-communism, has no relevance to real communism — by the end of the year we are going to issue for the first time in the history of our Party a basic program. We are going to invite our fellow Americans to take a critical look at us.

I hope that you will join us in this examination. Let me thank you again for this opportunity to express some of our thoughts.