

grow by leaps and bounds, wave after wave, whatever you wanna say. New people, including young people who have, who can bring, energy as well as creativity, need to become part of this. And yes, they need the scientific grounding. They need to have the fundamental orientation and outlook of why we need this revolution and why it's possible, in basic terms, and how we're gonna go about working toward that. They need to be won to that, and actually be firmly committed to it, on the basis of an essential grounding in that understanding.

But then they need to make the leap: "okay, this is what I'm gonna dedicate my life to." That flows from the understanding that the present world is intolerable, and, more than that (as you were referring to earlier), there is no permanent necessity for existing conditions—or, to put it more simply, things do not have to be this way. Well, then, the next leap is to leap into the Party—to become part of the Party, part of the organized and disciplined force that's working for this in a systematic way.

And, look, for everybody who's done this—myself, everybody else that I know—this is, in a real sense, a gigantic leap. It means this is what your life is gonna be about from now till whenever your life ends—because that's the commitment that has to be made. It's not a cult, it's not some secret society you're joining. But it is a commitment that, in order for this revolution to come about—which is urgently needed by humanity, by the masses of people in the world—in order for that to come about, people have to dedicate their lives to it. Once you've come to that level of understanding—that it's necessary and possible—it can't be a part-time thing, or it can't be, "I'll get into it for a little while, and then, when I 'grow up,' I'll get out of it." No. Don't "grow up." Don't grow up in the wrong sense. You know, like that saying attributed to Winston Churchill: Anybody under 30 who is not a socialist doesn't have a heart, but anybody over 30 who is a socialist doesn't have a head. Well, fuck you, Winston Churchill—you reactionary pig.

We Need to Be Right... and We Need to Win

BA: The point is, yes, you're gonna make mistakes, but you better learn from them—but, also, we have to win. It's not enough to say, we have right on our side, we're the "good guys"—no, imperialists, you're not the "good guys," you're the "bad guys"—we, the masses of people in the world and the revolutionary leadership that the masses need, we're the "good guys." Okay, true. That's very true, and it needs to be said, and it needs to be fought for. These monstrous criminals who rule the world as it is now are not the "good guys" in the world, and their military forces who go out to slaughter people to enforce this system are not the "good guys" in the world. That doesn't mean that none of their soldiers could come over to the side of the people. That's happened—it happened on a very significant scale during the 1960s, and we see some of it happening now, with veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars turning against those wars, and joining the people who are protesting and resisting those wars, and so on. But, as a force, you and your military are not the "good guys" in the world. You are mass murderers—that's no exaggeration or hyperbole—and you're a bunch of massive oppressors and slave drivers in the modern day sense, sometimes literally, but certainly in a real sense, in terms of the way people are driven and exploited and

degraded under your system, in massive numbers, in the billions, literally.

So, yes, it's very important: You're not the "good guys," sorry, you are the "bad guys" and we are the "good guys." Okay, that's important—that needs to be said—that even needs to be fought for. But, then, the "good guys" have to win. We have to actually make this real. If we don't win, if we don't break through, first here and then there—and then, if we're set back, learn from that and go forward again with a new stage and a new wave of this revolution, and eventually get to the point where the imperialists are cornered and holed up in a few parts of the world, and then eventually they're swept away entirely—if we don't do that, then the suffering of the masses of people, the things we were just talking about that we should feel real outrage and passion about, are gonna continue; it may be in some new forms, but they're gonna continue. And the future of humanity is gonna be threatened in an even more acute way through what's happening—what this system is doing to the environment, for example, as well as through the wars that these ruling classes wage, directly or through proxies, or whatever—and they have these nuclear arsenals, and all the rest of it. If we don't sweep all that away and not allow them to destroy humanity in the process, then it ultimately doesn't matter that we're the "good guys." It matters, but in the final analysis it doesn't matter if we don't win.

We can't accept this pragmatic thing of who are the "good guys" is determined by who holds power—whoever holds power gets to define who's the "good guys." No. This has to be scientifically determined, like everything else. So it matters a great deal that they're the "bad guys" and we're the "good guys," to use their comic book terms for a second. But ultimately it doesn't matter unless we do fight through and win, with everything that's involved in that, both in the realm of theory and in the realm of practice and struggle down on the ground.

We Have to Break on Through

BA: Look at the situation the masses of Black people are in today. Does that mean that the struggle they waged—their heroic struggle beginning in the 1950s and reaching its high point in the late '60s and early '70s—wasn't about anything, didn't accomplish anything, it was a waste of time, it was misplaced and unjustified, unwise sacrifice on the part of those who went to jail, or were driven into exile, or even killed? No, none of that is true. Tremendous things were accomplished, and the most important thing that was accomplished was raising the sights of not only masses of Black people, but many other people as well, to begin to see, first of all, the importance, as well as the possibility, of standing up against this system and fighting back, of fighting the power; and, even beyond that, seeing in a larger way at least important aspects and features of the oppressive nature of this system and of the need to fight against that whole system. Millions and millions of people came to that position.

But, because, as I spoke to earlier, we didn't "break on through to the other side," to use that phrase—because we didn't get all the way to revolution, and the ruling class of capitalist-imperialists remained, and still remains, in power—they've gone to work to undermine everything that was gained and everything that was learned through that struggle. And they've found new ways of oppressing people. They've had to back up off of open and legal segregation and

discrimination, but they've found means like containing people in ghettos: brutally repressing them; murdering them in large numbers—hundreds of murders by the police every year—incarcerating them in massive numbers, so a huge percentage of particularly young Black men and young Latino men, and growing numbers of women, are either literally in prison or in some way under the direction and control of the prison/judicial system—on parole, on probation and so on and so forth.

So what does that prove? That it was pointless and useless to rise up? No. What it proves is that we have to go all the way, we have to break on through. Or, to go back to what we were talking about earlier, we not only have to be right, we not only have to be righteous, we have to win!

Precisely a New Synthesis— of Profound Contradictions

Brooks: *And then there's the question, too, of what this is all for, and what the new synthesis is for, including this aspect you were talking about—about all kinds of experimentation and initiative. In other words, as you've spoken to before, it's not like: let's just repeat the past, but this time with a little bit more intellectual and artistic experimentation, so that this society is a little bit better to live in, but that actually all this is necessary to get where you're trying to go.*

BA: The new synthesis is directed at answering—among other things, but one of its objectives is to answer the often stated argument that: you can either meet the basic needs of the masses, and that's all good, but you have to suppress people's freedom and creativity and initiative and innovativeness, and so on, or you can give expression to all that—innovativeness, creativity, artistic flourishing, initiative, and so on—and meanwhile the fundamental needs, including the immediate needs, of the masses will be undermined. And the new synthesis is precisely, as one of its key aspects, addressing that contradiction in a way to strive precisely for a synthesis that doesn't fall into one or the other of those errors... Either you have to compromise the fundamental needs of the masses, including their immediate basic needs, in order to give full expression to creativity and dissent and unconventional thinking and critical thinking in the arts and intellectual endeavor; or, we can't compromise the fundamental needs of the masses, so we'll just have to pay the price with less creativity, intellectuals will just have to suffer some, so that the basic needs of the masses, including their immediate needs, or basic material requirements, can be met.

And the point of the new synthesis, or one of its main aspects, is to find a different synthesis on that, so that both those things are given due and correct attention; and, yes, as you were just posing it, all this is given expression in a big way, but also embraced in a big way—with broad arms, so to speak—and led toward the ultimate goal of communism, even while there are perhaps things, including in the intellectual sphere, that may run counter to communism, but in the overall process they can contribute to communism, if the communists themselves who are leading this process have the correct orientation toward this and lead people to sift through these things, and even to learn from the things which may be oppositional but may contain kernels of truth, or may inspire creative and critical thinking, or cause people to look afresh at new problems, or cause them to think about things they hadn't thought about before, and so on.