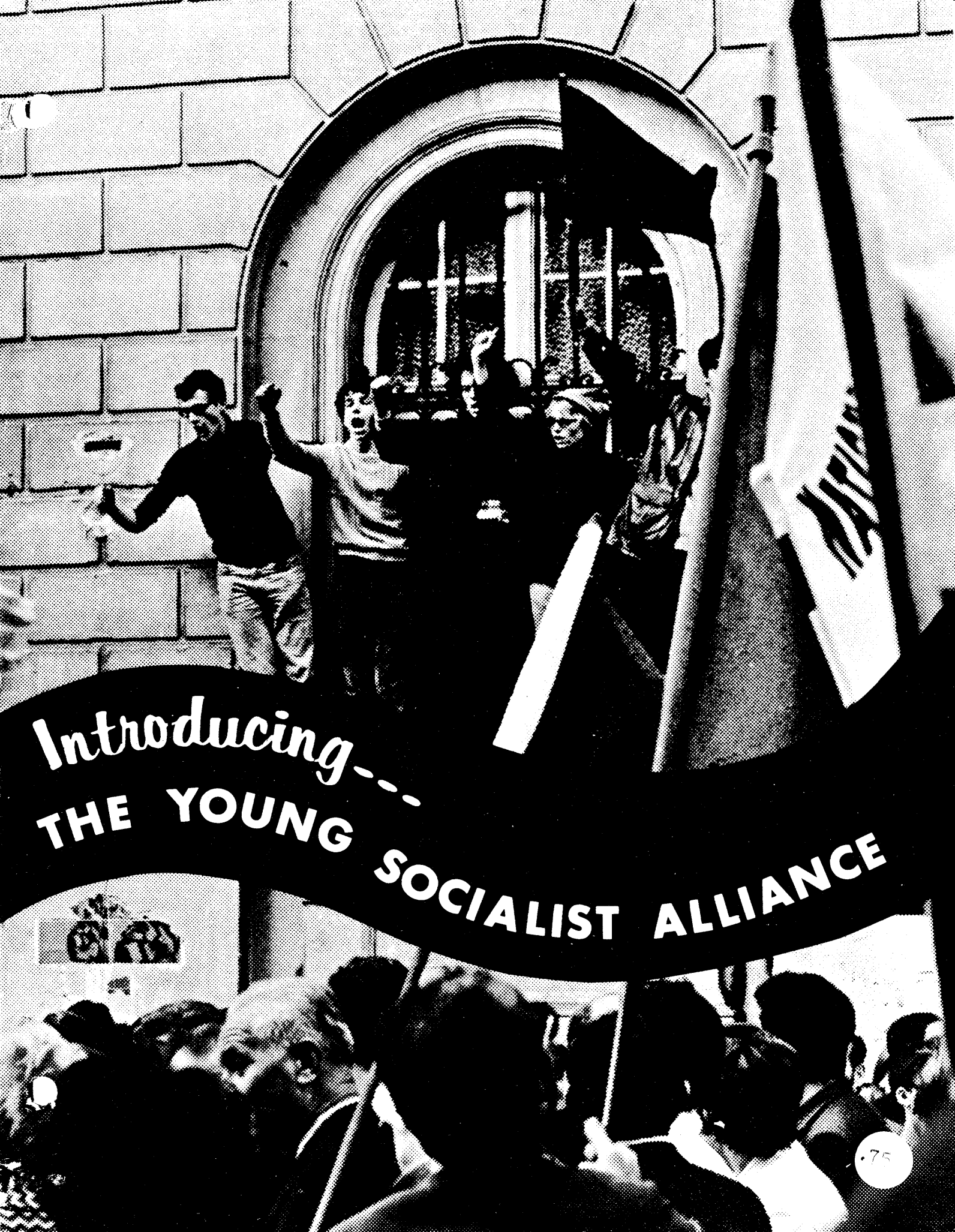


Introducing...
**THE YOUNG
SOCIALIST ALLIANCE**





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The material printed in this pamphlet constitutes a clear statement of what the Young Socialist Alliance is and where it is heading. The first four articles were originally presented as resolutions by the YSA's National Executive Committee to the Eighth National Convention of the YSA held in Chicago, November 28 to December 1, 1968. The four resolutions were passed overwhelmingly by the Convention, and constitute the basic orientation of the YSA.

The article on "The Organizational Character of the YSA" was also written as part of the discussion which preceded the Convention, but it was not submitted for a vote. It is a concise explanation of the organizational structure and functioning of the YSA.

The Constitution of the YSA is printed here as it stood prior to the Eighth National Convention. That Convention approved two minor amendments: raising the initiation fee to two dollars, and giving the National Committee the authority to set a cut-off date prior to which new members must have joined in order to vote on delegates to the national conventions. The Introduction to the Constitution was written in 1966, and remains a valid statement of how YSAers look at the Constitution.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL YOUTH RADICALIZATION

A new generation of revolutionary youth has begun to emerge on the world scene. In Vietnam, Prague, Paris, Mexico City, and Detroit the growing combativity and revolutionary attitudes of large segments of our generation have been proven.

In country after country youth in rebellion against the capitalist system are searching for an answer to the most serious challenge of our epoch: by what means can capitalism be eliminated and the way be opened for mankind to progress toward a socialist future of material abundance, social peace, and personal freedom?

The new wave of radicalization began to emerge more than a decade ago. At the root of this development were the problems and contradictions of the world capitalist system itself.

Our generation has come to political consciousness during the most intense period of social convulsion the world has ever known. We have lived through several of the most savage and brutal wars in man's history. Not a single year of our lives has passed without a major revolutionary upheaval somewhere in the world. Egypt, Lebanon, Guatemala, the Congo, Angola, Poland, Hungary, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cuba, Greece, France, and Czechoslovakia are only the high points of the list. As Lenin described it, ours is truly an epoch of imperialist wars, colonial uprisings and proletarian revolutions.

While the productive capacities of the advanced capitalist countries have gone through an explosive expansion in the last two decades, the world market for these goods has decreased. Successful revolutions in China, Cuba, North Korea, and North Vietnam have removed

vast areas of the globe and hundreds of millions of people from the sphere of imperialist exploitation. Continual explosions and uprisings in one colonial country after another have underscored the instability of the system and hindered an even greater expansion of capitalist investment.

In the context of steadily increasing competition between the major capitalist countries for a share of the shrinking world market, the contradictions of world imperialism have grown. For capitalism to survive, halting the advance of the colonial revolution and turning back the successful socialist revolution of the past five decades is not an option but a necessity.

Understanding full well that the U.S. is the main bulwark of world imperialism, the capitalist rulers of the U.S. have taken on the job of attempting to prevent any further encroachments on the already restricted world market. With the American government acting as world cop, every shiver in the colonial revolution has sharp repercussions in the United States.

These economic and political contradictions of imperialism have been the basic cause of the radicalization of our generation around the world. Growing numbers have come to reject the capitalist system as a whole and turn toward Marxism in search of an answer.

The University Explosions

This radicalization has been particularly extensive and deep-going amongst the students of the industrialized countries. Such youth are highly literate, have access to sources of information, and have time to study. Such factors have unquestionably increased

their sensitivity to the abuses of the capitalist system and they have abundant energy to put their ideas into action.

But a major supplementary factor in accelerating this radicalization among student youth has been the deep dissatisfaction with the educational system itself. This dissatisfaction stems from a rejection of the role of the educational system in capitalist society.

It acquires special importance because it is the avenue through which the general contradictions of the capitalist system touch larger and larger numbers of politically awakening youth directly, in their day to day life.

The tremendous expansion of the productive capacities of the advanced capitalist countries in recent years has been achieved through the development and introduction of highly complex tools and processes. This in turn has created the need for large numbers of highly trained technicians, engineers, and administrators. The old, narrow, elite system of bourgeois education is

no longer sufficient to meet the needs of the capitalist class, which has been obliged to support a large scale expansion in higher education facilities. This process has gone the furthest and fastest in the United States. In Europe the boom in the student population has not been provided for so rapidly, creating even greater social problems in most countries.

The attempt to "modernize" the educational system to meet the needs of the economic system, to streamline it for fast production, and to make it politically safe for the ruling class ideology, runs headlong into the aspirations and needs of students and faculty who are being radicalized by the world events around them, and more and more coming to reject the value system, the moral judgments and the political rationale which underlie the capitalist educational system. At the same time students have a greater social weight than ever before, due to 1) the size of the university population, 2) its high concentration in units larger than most major factories, and 3) the growing number of Afro-American and working class youth who are allowed into college.

All these contradictions and problems are mirrored most clearly in the facts and statistics which sum up California's higher educational system.

In California today more than 60% of all high school graduates go on to some form of higher education, either junior college, a four year college, or university. There are over 100,000 students registered in the nine state universities alone. More than half of California's state budget is devoted to education, and in 1963 the operating expenses for the University alone were close to half a billion dollars, with much less than one-third of those expenditures directly related to teaching. The university employed over 40,000 people.

At the same time this enormous business enterprise was closely run and controlled by the biggest monopoly interests in the state who maintain tight control over the Board of Regents. In 1964 thirteen of the 24 regents represented the four biggest banks; two oil companies; three aircraft manufacturers; two shipping lines; two airlines; a trucking line and two railways; two giant utilities; several chain stores; two publishing empires; half the food-packing industry; and the richest agricultural entrepreneurs.

While California is perhaps the most advanced of all the states in the development of an educational system



COLUMBIA STUDENTS OCCUPY UNIVERSITY



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fitted to the needs of big business today, several other states are fast catching up. With 1) an explosive world political situation, 2) a rapidly expanding and politicizing student population, and 3) control over the giant educational factories firmly in the hands of the biggest monied interests in the nation it is hardly surprising that such built-in contradictions have produced the large scale student explosions of recent years, and contributed to the further radicalization of thousands of youth.

Under these conditions it is not by chance that the universities have provided a political laboratory for the discussion and testing of all types of political ideas, theories, and programs of action. For instance, it has largely been the student youth who have promoted, led and organized the antiwar movement and the black power movement. Because students are playing an important role as a political vanguard, we can expect university conflicts to spill over, become popularized and generalized, and taken up by broader layers of society. As the events in France last May and June confirmed, not only can student struggles serve as a catalyst for action by other sections and classes of society, but revolutionary students can also play a certain role as a political vanguard helping to educate others who enter the struggles at a later date and for different reasons.

At the same time, it is important to be clear about the limits of the powers of student activists or the limits of change that can be accomplished in and through the educational system alone. Educational institutions from nursery school through post-doctoral studies programs are designed to play a necessary and vital role in capitalist society. As larger and larger numbers of students are coming to realize, "you can't change the university without changing the system," and by themselves students are not capable of taking power and changing the system.

Those who are seriously interested even in making the educational institutions conform to the needs of the students and teachers, rather than the needs of big business, must make the transition from "student power" consciousness to a socialist consciousness. They must join the revolutionary youth movement, join with other forces in the country who also want to change society and have the potential power to do so. This means helping to build a revolutionary party that can provide leadership for such a struggle. That is the difference between student power politics and socialist youth politics.

Differences East and West

While the basic international factors underlying the current student radicalization have produced many similarities in the movement from one country to another, there are also obvious differences. For example, while the Vietnam war has been the central issue in many countries over the last four years, there are very few countries where it has had the same immediacy and intensity as here in the United States, the aggressor nation. Similarly, student protests in Eastern Europe have much greater repercussions in Western Europe than they do in the United States where they often seem remote to American students.

Specific student grievances also vary considerably from one country to another. In Italy agitation has revolved around excessively large classes, an almost total lack of scholarships, insufficient teaching, staff absenteeism, and the arbitrary powers of the professors. In France, where Napoleon I laid down the lines of higher education, students have protested their lack of any say in the running of the universities, the inadequate facilities and archaic methods of instruction and the perversion of the university system which often fails to provide jobs for them.

In the United States the most frequent causes of protest are the impersonal educational process and wide gap between the students and professors; the stresses and strains engendered by pressures to meet the assigned requirements and secure passing grades; the irrelevancy of a fragmented curriculum which deadens incentives to learn; arbitrary administration which allows students no voice in deciding university operations or the kind of education they receive; the administration restrictions on the personal and political lives of the students; and the compliance of the university with the dictates of the capitalist ruling class, notably in its tieups with the government, military, and big business.

Such differences mean that the general political level of the student movement as well as the specific issues around which protests coalesce, vary from one country to another.

The issues around which students in the post-capitalist countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are mobilizing stand in a separate category. In these countries which have already undergone a basic social transformation with the nationalization of all basic industry and the establishment of a planned economy, student protests are today directed against the political abuses of the bureaucratic layer control-

ling the economic, political, social, and cultural life of the country. Protests are directed against the absence of socialist democracy, the absence of control by the masses of workers over all spheres of public activity.

The protest movements within the workers states not only are anti-capitalist but pro-socialist. Their usual target is against some form of political restriction on the right of communist youth and others to voice their criticisms of the government bureaucrats. Due to the restrictions on political organizing, the outbursts are usually even more spontaneous than similar protests in the West, but out of these experiences the obvious need for organization develops. In this way new nuclei of revolutionary socialists have begun to develop in many of the Eastern European countries.

One of the best examples of this is provided by Poland. The events of the Polish October of 1956 coincided with the revolutionary upheaval in Hungary. During those events, and after, the students, who played a key role throughout, organized political clubs where discussion flourished on how to achieve a democratic socialist society as described and envisioned by Marx and Lenin. The clubs discussed and analyzed the crimes of the Stalin era and how to prevent their recurrence. Out of these clubs came nuclei of young revolutionaries who developed thorough analyses of the degeneration of the Russian revolution and came to see the need for a political revolution to replace the ruling caste with a government based on democratically elected workers councils and full freedom of expression and organization for all socialist tendencies.

Although these political clubs were dissolved in the early 1960's, the political education many students received in these clubs could not be erased. Communist students at Warsaw University like Karol Modzelewski and Jacek Kuron developed their analyses even further, and when they attempted to put their ideas down in writing and submit them to the Polish Workers Party, they were jailed.

During the student demonstrations in Warsaw last March, which began with a protest against the banning of a famous 19th century Polish play (described by the authorities as "anti-Soviet") Modzelewski and Kuron were re-arrested and re-imprisoned along with many others. The protests continued for several weeks with the occupation of the Polytechnic University in Warsaw, and the students gained considerable support from the Polish working class. While their demands -- primarily the abolition of

censorship and a guarantee of free speech for all socialists -- were not met, out of the struggle another new layer of revolutionary Polish youth has developed and continues to work in Poland.

Czechoslovakia is a second example. While all the repercussions of the recent months of increasing political liberty, followed by the Soviet-led invasion, are still far from clear, several important things should be kept in mind. A student struggle at Charles University in Prague last October was the immediate impetus to the final crisis for the Novotny regime. Student demonstrations against the physical conditions at the University were harshly repressed by the police, evoking widespread support for the students throughout the country. This turned out to be one of the last gasps of the Novotny regime.

Second, the youth and the intellectuals have spearheaded the drive for greater political freedom, the abolition of censorship, the right to form political clubs, and other reforms. They have received virtually total support from the Czechoslovakian working class. Under pressure from these forces, the Dubcek regime proceeded with the liberalization. Thirdly, it has been the Czechoslovakian youth who led the resistance to the occupation.

Out of these experiences, it is certain that significant numbers of youth will come to revolutionary conclusions about the limits of reform that the bureaucracies will allow, and the need to organize and struggle for the establishment of a government based on democratic workers councils.

Origins of the "New Left"

In the advanced capitalist countries of Europe and North America the radicalizing youth have often been labeled the "new left." While the phenomenon of the "new left" has been defined in many different ways in recent years, it actually has a very precise origin and political content, and represents a distinct current in the new generation of radical youth.

At the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, Nikita Khrushchev gave a speech admitting a small fraction of the crimes of the Stalin era. While these "revelations" came as no surprise to the revolutionary Marxists around the world who had suffered at the hands of Stalin and his agents for more than three decades, they shocked many in and around the Communist parties, who had believed in Stalin as the greatest of revolutionary leaders. They had defended his purges, trials, and executions as just



MEXICAN STUDENTS MARCH BEHIND CHE'S SLOGAN: "CREATE TWO, THREE, MANY VIETNAMS."

and necessary. Within months the Khrushchev speech was followed by the Hungarian revolution, and the Kremlin's bloody suppression of it. The Communist parties around the world lost tens of thousands of disillusioned members and followers.

This was the beginning of the destruction of the Stalinist monolith. In a very short period of time, all questions were up for re-discussion. Thousands of former members and supporters of the Communist parties, disenchanted with Stalinism, began looking for and discussing alternatives.

In Britain a substantial number of intellectuals split from the Communist Party. Their decision to split was a rejection of Stalinism, but instead of recognizing the antithesis between Stalinism and Marxism-Leninism, they falsely established an identity between them and rejected the whole package. They proceeded, under the guise of searching for a new ideology, to revert to some of the most primitive ideas which had been weighed and found wanting

during the earliest years of the socialist movement.

The superiority of spontaneity over organization, the rejection of theory and program in favor of pragmatic action, the practice of "participatory democracy," the theory of the propaganda-of-the-deed, the rejection of the working class as the agency for social change -- all these ideas were as old as the socialist movement.

The British intellectuals of this group became the fountain head of the new left, spurred on by such sympathizers as C. Wright Mills and others who rejected the revolutionary potential of the working class and sought after some new elite grouping to change the world.

The essence of their development was the rejection of Marxism in the sphere of ideology and Leninism in the sphere of organization. They never went back to examine the nature of Stalinism and the degeneration of the Russian revolution and the Communist



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parties. They never answered the question "why Stalinism?" or differentiated it from Marxism and Leninism.

They never went back to Stalin's program of "socialism in one country" to demonstrate how that led inevitably to the bureaucratic degeneration of the revolution and reduced the Communist parties around the world to serving the Soviet bureaucracy. They never came to realize that you cannot have a Leninist party with a reformist program, that such a party could be nothing but a mockery of a Leninist party.

The experiences of the British "new left" group were repeated in one form or another in much of Western Europe and North America, giving rise, during the decade of the 1960's, to the international phenomenon of the "new left." Today, few of the forces of the "new left" are coming out of the Communist parties, but most of the attitudes, theories, and ideas of the "new left" stem from the history of Stalinism and confused rejection of Stalinism by significant numbers of left-wing intellectuals.

General Characteristics of the Student Radicalization

Despite all the differences which exist from one country to another, and even from one campus to another, several conspicuous features characterize the student struggles in a general sense on an international plane.

First is the highly political character of today's student movements. Gone are the communist and socialist youth organizations that were largely concerned with social activities, sports contests, and colorful uniforms. The best of today's radical youth are attracted to revolutionary youth organizations because of their political programs, their international perspectives, and the actions they engage in around the key political issues of the day.

Secondly, the radicalization taking place today is marked by a genuine rebirth of internationalism, the kind of solidarity in international struggles which was destroyed four decades ago by the narrow bureaucratic nationalism of the Stalinist movement.

The Vietnamese can take considerable credit for stimulating this development by their tremendous courage in resisting American aggression which helped bring a world wide effort in their behalf into being. The Cuban revolution is also partly responsible through the example set by revolutionaries like Castro and Che, their call for "two, three, many Vietnams"

and their understanding that the only way to protect the revolution in one country is to spread the revolution to other countries and continents.

The growth of a strong internationalist consciousness amongst our generation comes from the fact that around the globe we have a common enemy, imperialism. We have had many common political experiences in our still short lifetime. We are tied together by almost instantaneous world-wide communications which serve to unify our struggles and make our actions more effective. This internationalism is one of the most positive and promising aspects of the new radicalization.

A third general characteristic of this student radicalization is its anti-authoritarianism, its willingness to challenge and question most of the norms, rules, regulations and sacred cows of its elders. Our generation is searching for answers and solutions to problems we did not create. We are willing to consider precisely those solutions and answers which are considered heretical. Many feel like the radical German youth of today when they are falsely criticized for creating anarchy and fostering conditions that give rise to fascism. Their answer to their elders is simple: "History proves you are not qualified to teach us how to fight fascism."

Whether it is the authority of the state, school, family, or employer, the tendency is to reject the ready made answers and criticisms and search for new solutions.

Fourthly, the young radicals are groping toward a revolutionary Marxist understanding of world politics. They tend in "new left" fashion to lump reformism, Stalinism, Marxism and Leninism together and dismiss the whole lot. At the same time, however, they are usually trying, in a pragmatic and blind fashion, to fight their way through the decades of lies and distortions built up by the capitalist rulers as well as the Stalinists and social democrats, and rediscover for themselves the basic tenets of Marxism and how to apply them to the world realities of today.

Stalinism

The pro-Moscow Communist parties find themselves rejected in country after country not only because of their history, but also due to their current policies which represent more of the same. Their narrow nationalistic defense of the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy and support to the status quo in the pursuit of peaceful coexistence

with imperialism, continually put them in the right wing of any revolutionary political development.

Events of the last decade have given ample proof of the reactionary politics of the Kremlin. The invasion of Hungary, the economic blackmail of Cuba, the minimal support to Vietnam and the reluctance to call for the withdrawal of U.S. troops or victory for the National Liberation Front, Moscow's opposition to armed struggle in Latin America, the American CP's support to Johnson in the 1964 elections, their opposition to black nationalism, the French CP's betrayal of the May Revolution in France, Moscow's invasion of Czechoslovakia--all these events (and they constitute only a portion of the record) have given abundant confirmation of the consistent policies of the pro-Moscow Communist parties and the fact they do not constitute a revolutionary tendency.

In turning away from the pro-Moscow parties, some revolutionary minded youth have turned toward the pro-Peking Communist parties in hopes of finding an answer. While this is a positive reaction since it indicates a willingness to look to communism for the answers, still large numbers of these have rapidly become disillusioned with Chairman Mao's version of Stalinism too.

Peking's position on Vietnam has been key in helping to clarify the real political nature of Maoism. Sectarian refusal to build a united front internationally, and refusal to participate in united front demonstrations in individual countries (such as Progressive Labor in the United States) has been a serious blow to the Vietnamese fighters. It has given the Soviet leaders the necessary excuse for refusing more aid to Vietnam, and divided the pro-socialist forces in the face of an all-out attack by imperialism.

In addition to Maoism's failure to defend Vietnam, Peking's condemnation of Cuba as the left cover for counter-revolutionary revisionism and the economic blackmail of Cuba (similar to the Kremlin's) have also made many realize that the pro-Peking parties are only a variation on their pro-Moscow counterparts.

While loudly denouncing the Soviet Union as counter-revolutionary, the Maoists have shown that wherever they have significant forces their class collaborationist policies closely resemble Moscow's. In Indonesia, the leadership of the largest Communist party outside the workers states paved the way for its own destruction by collaborating with and relying on the Indonesian capitalist class for more than two decades. As a result, in 1965, the party was totally

unprepared to defend itself against the savage repression of the generals, and over one million Indonesians were slaughtered.

Having learned nothing, the pro-Peking forces in the Indian state of Kerala last year continued the strategy of class collaboration, and formed a coalition government with capitalist parties there.

In the United States, where Progressive Labor represents the pro-Peking line, that organization has also been discredited in the black community by its totally opportunist flip-flops on the question of the Afro-American struggle, first pretending to lead the black struggle, and then condemning nationalism as petty bourgeois.

Added to all this, the Mao-cult, superimposed on the Stalin-cult, gives Maoism a heavy handicap in approaching and winning over large numbers of revolutionary youth.

Social Democracy

The social democracy has won equally severe condemnation from the new generation of radical youth, and the record of the British social democratic Labour Party under Wilson provides a prime example of the reasons for this rejection.

Since World War II the Labour Party has succeeded in accomplishing what the Tories could not have done without much greater force and social strife--they have forced the working class to pay for the decline of British imperialism out of its weekly pay check. The Labour Party's wage freeze, unemployment policies, racist immigration laws, monetary devaluation, servile support to U.S. imperialism, and similar policies have propped up capitalism in Britain--all in the name of protecting the interests of the working class.

Other social democratic parties in Europe have played a similar role. The decision by the German Social Democratic Party to enter a coalition with the Christian Democrats has been an important factor in the rising class consciousness of the European radical students.

In some countries, the default of the Communist parties and the social democracy has left openings for various "left wing" social democratic forces such as the United Socialist Party in France (PSU) and the PSIUP (Socialist Party of International Proletarian Unity) in Italy. However, these parties have not attracted the more revolutionary students.

For example, the crucial test of the French PSU came in the May-June events.

While they were the only left wing party that defended the student revolutionaries --against deGaulle and the CP--the PSU leaders were simultaneously making corridor deals to try and enter any new government formed if deGaulle should fall. The French revolutionaries correctly saw this as a betrayal of the struggle, and Mendes-France, the prima-donna of the PSU, declined to address a rally of 50,000 youth for fear of being hissed out of the stadium.

While the conscious rejection of the social democrats and the pro-Moscow and pro-Peking parties are crucial first steps on the road towards revolutionary politics, they represent only the beginning. After decades of distortions, slanders and lies, it is no simple task to resurrect the real traditions, norms and politics of Lenin's Bolshevik party.

There are many problems inherent in this often pragmatic and empirical process of reconstruction from partial history and limited experience. All types of misconceptions and errors arise.

Without clarity on a revolutionary socialist political orientation, it is impossible to chart a strategic course or analyze tactical needs. Vital and basic though this is, such a program is not alone sufficient. There is another major, fundamental requirement along side this revolutionary socialist orientation. That is the need to build a politically homogeneous combat party, with full internal democracy and the will and confidence to act unitedly in carrying out its decisions--in short the need for a Leninist party to successfully carry through the fight against the most powerful, strongest, and deadliest ruling class the world has ever known.

This is precisely the question on which the new radicals have the least understanding. Yet, without this key element, no matter how correct their comprehension of other questions, they will not be able to act effectively or carry out a revolutionary policy. They must go back to Lenin and learn how to build such a party. Events like the May revolution in France are bringing revolu-



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tionary youth daily closer to the realization that building such a Leninist party is the most difficult task before us, and the most crucial. Over time, the best of these revolutionary youth will be convinced that the policies and programs of the Trotskyist movement, on a world scale, continue the real program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and the other great revolutionaries of our past.

The Dynamics of the World Struggle

The world revolution is on the advance in all of the three basic sectors. It is on the advance in the colonial world, where the struggle in Vietnam stands as the focal point and the symbol. It is on the rise in the advanced capitalist countries where, after twenty years of subdued class struggle, the French workers and students suddenly burst their bonds and renewed the march towards a socialist revolution. And it is on the advance in those countries which have already rid themselves of capitalist property relations, as the Czechoslovakian workers and students are demonstrating by their unwillingness to accept anything short of full socialist democracy.

Each of these struggles is closely related to the others, and any defeat or victory in one sector is sharply registered in all three. The dynamics of these interlocking struggles is of fundamental importance to revolutionaries everywhere.

The Colonial Revolution

From the end of World War II until the late 1950's, the colonial world was the most dynamic center of revolutionary struggle. The fight for national independence and land reform in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America played a key role in awakening the consciousness of our generation as it came to political life in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Central amongst those struggles were Algeria, Cuba, and Vietnam. The youth of those countries themselves played a decisive role in molding the direction of the struggles and providing the manpower, enthusiasm and determination.

It was this spirit and overwhelming courage of the liberation fighters of these countries that caught the imagination and idealism of youth around the world. Their identification was frequently romantic and moralistic, but it tends to become more and more an act of political solidarity, more and more an identification not only with the colonial revolution as such, but an understanding that it is an integral part of the world socialist revolution. The tendency toward "third worldism," the substitution of the colonial struggle for worldwide struggle, including struggle in the advanced capi-

talist countries, is receding under the impact of the events in France, Czechoslovakia, and the black ghetto explosions in the U.S.

The Algerian revolution of 1954-1962 played a key radicalizing role in Europe, and France in particular. The brutality of the war waged by France, and the polarization of French society which resulted from the war, had an impact on French youth that affected much broader layers than the conscious radicals.

It was around public meetings, rallies, and demonstrations in favor of an independent Algeria and against the fascist threat posed by ultra-rightist organizations like the Secret Army Organization (OAS), that the nucleus of the left opposition inside the French Union of Communist Students was formed. The communist students decided to oppose the line of the CP and lead the students and young workers in street actions. Those were the beginnings of the revolutionary student movement in France.

The victory of the Cuban guerrillas and the continued deepening of the revolution overlapped in time with the final years of the Algerian war. The Cuban example was both an inspiration to the Algerians and a further political lesson on the necessity for a successful revolution to take a socialist direction. In Che's words, "it's either a socialist revolution or a caricature of revolution." In Algeria, the Boumedienne military coup in 1965 was a negative confirmation of that lesson.

In the U.S., the Cuban revolution had greater impact than the Algerian war, primarily because of the U.S. government's deep involvement in trying to crush the revolution, and its geographical proximity to the U.S. Hundreds of radical American youth visited Cuba in the first years of the revolution and returned to spread the truth and build organizations like the Fair Play for Cuba Committees. For the first time in over a decade, significant numbers of youth, inspired by the Cuban revolution, began to join the revolutionary movement in the U.S. Defense of the Cuban revolution became one of the lines dividing the revolutionaries from the faint-hearted radicals.

The Vietnam experience came on top of the lessons of Algeria and Cuba--as well as the developments in the Congo, Santo Domingo, and other places. The intervention of the U.S. government collided with the determination of the Vietnamese to assure the victory of their revolution against staggering odds, and set the stage for Vietnam to become the focal point of the world revolution for an extended period.

The impact of Vietnam accelerated revolutionary developments all over the world, from Bolivia to Palestine, from Cuba to Warsaw, from New York to Paris. This summer's massive and militant demonstrations in Mexico City, Brazil, and Uruguay were only the latest examples of such crucial developments to Latin America. The emergence of an international movement against U.S. aggression in Vietnam, led and organized by the revolutionary youth of country after country, has laid the basis for profound changes in the international balance of forces, and a new rise in the world revolutionary struggle.

The importance and depth of the new period opening up can be judged by the events of recent months in France and Czechoslovakia.

The Workers States

For the first time in 12 years -- since the Hungarian revolution and the Polish October of 1956 -- mass pressure for the establishment of socialist democracy has developed in one of the deformed workers states. That is the basic significance of the political reforms that were carried out in Czechoslovakia between January and August of this year. Opposition to the establishment of socialist democracy and fear of its spread were the main reasons for the Soviet-led invasion of that country.

The political reforms against which the Soviet bureaucracy directed its fire were the abolition of press censorship, freedom of political organization for all Socialist tendencies, and the recognition of the rights of political tendencies to exist within the Communist Party. Those three reforms which simply return to the norms of the early Bolshevik Party constituted a deadly threat to the bureaucrats of the Kremlin and the other Eastern European countries.

Freedom for revolutionary communists to discuss, project, and work towards the formation of elected workers' councils as the basic democratic units which would organize the economic and political life of the country would spell the end of the usurped power of the bureaucrats. (In some respects this is similar to the bureaucratic control of the unions in this country. If political freedom in the unions were reestablished, the bureaucrats would not be long for their posts and privileges either.)

While the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia has brought a temporary halt to the democratic reforms, it will be more difficult to reverse the basic process set in motion. 1968 is not 1956. A world-wide radicalization of youth has been underway for more than a decade; the workers

states and Communist Parties are divided and following separate policies; the pressures for socialist democracy exist in strong currents in every Eastern European country and the Soviet Union. Young revolutionary communists in Czechoslovakia and the other Soviet-bloc states will be able to make major contributions to the world struggle if they continue to spearhead the drive for socialist democracy in their country. By reaffirming the fact that socialism means greater freedom than ever before in man's history, they will aid the socialist revolution in all spheres.

The Advanced Capitalist Countries

In France, during May and June, 1968, the revolutionary upsurge in the advanced capitalist countries reached its highest point in three decades. While that struggle had a dynamic of its own, it was not unrelated to the struggles in the colonial world and the workers states, even on the most basic level. The student revolt began when police tried to arrest a member of the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR) for organizing a demonstration against the Vietnam war; and one of the earliest resolutions passed by the students' general assembly at the University of Nanterre was in solidarity with the Polish revolutionary students in general, and Modzelewski and Kuron in particular, in their fight for socialist democracy.

In the May revolution the students, by taking their struggles into the streets and forcing the de Gaulle government to retreat, and by setting the example of courageous action in the face of unprovoked police brutality, inspired the French working class to act also. They set in motion social forces which could have led to a victorious socialist revolution in an advanced capitalist country, if there had been a mass revolutionary party to lead those forces.

The students quickly began to establish ties with the working class youth of their generation and developed common forms of organization and action with them. But the French revolt made crystal clear once again that without a revolutionary party uniting the most class conscious and most combative representatives of the workers, students, small farmers, and oppressed minorities, the revolution will not be able to defeat either the capitalist rulers with all their armed might, or their Stalinist and social democratic agents in the working class.

Student youth, through their own organizations, can play a key role in winning the best of our generation to the perspective of building such a party and helping to educate the cadre for that party.

The United States

The developments in the U.S. constitute an important element in the dynamics of the world revolution today. Precisely because the U.S. stands as the citadel of world imperialism, every action, every event that builds the revolutionary movement in this country has profound repercussions around the globe.

Foremost amongst these developments in the U.S. is the growing and deepening black nationalist consciousness of the Afro-American population. The struggle for self-determination inside the U.S. places Afro-America in direct and irreconcilable opposition to the rulers of this country. More and more, elements in the conscious vanguard of the black community are turning toward Marxism and coming to recognize the perspective of a socialist revolution as the prerequisite for national self-determination for Afro-America. Every step in that direction, every new indication of the revolutionary potential and combativity of the black masses in America brings new inspiration and encouragement to revolutionaries around the world.

The second struggle in the U.S. today which has international revolutionary importance is the movement against the Vietnam war. For the first time in U.S. history a mass movement has emerged against a war that is actually being fought.

The mass actions against the Vietnam war began in the U.S. and their example inspired the movement internationally. The first teach-ins and mobilizations came as a response to calls for action from North American youth. Now we are able to respond to calls from other sections of the international movement,

such as the call for October 21-27 actions from the Japanese students and the British Vietnam Solidarity Campaign.

The knowledge that a revolutionary opposition is growing within the U.S. itself and preparing for the most difficult and decisive of all struggles -- the struggle against the American ruling class -- is a major source of inspiration to revolutionaries around the world. They know, and we know, that only when the destructive power of U.S. capitalism is eliminated can there be world peace and prosperity under socialism.

This places an exceptionally heavy but crucially important burden on the new generation of revolutionary youth in the U.S. today. We are fighting not just for ourselves, not just for other Americans, but for the cause of the oppressed and exploited throughout the world.

Our political debates and activities are directed toward a conscious, specific goal -- to win the best members and largest number of our generation to revolutionary Marxism and build a party that can lead the struggle for socialism to a successful conclusion. This is no easy or single task. It cannot be accomplished without serious debate by critical-minded students over all the current issues as well as the theory, strategy and history of revolutionary struggles in the past.

The Young Socialist Alliance is attempting to build a revolutionary youth organization based on these concepts. We discuss and decide our political objectives, and we act on our decisions. We want all American youth who are working for a socialist America and a socialist world to join us in this struggle.



YOUNG SOCIALISTS LEAD SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN WITH FRENCH STUDENTS AND WORKERS



YOUNG SOCIALISTS LEAD SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN WITH FRENCH STUDENTS AND WORKERS

THE '68 CAMPAIGN AND BEYOND ...

SOCIALIST YOUTH POLITICS IN AMERICA

Introduction

The eighth national convention of the Young Socialist Alliance takes place in the context of a deepening radicalization of young people throughout the world. In the past year in this country we have seen this process continue to develop especially among students and Afro-Americans, opening up important new opportunities for the revolutionary youth vanguard in the United States.

The most important feature of the past three years has been the continued escalation of the Vietnam war. The international and domestic repercussions of this escalation have created a shift to the left, especially among youth, indicated by a growing movement and mass sentiment against the war.

The general dissatisfaction with the war policy of the ruling class affects the thinking and consciousness of the American people on other important issues. Workers by and large have rejected any notion that they must sacrifice their living standards to pay for the war, and have demonstrated willingness to battle to preserve those standards in the face of war-caused inflation and taxes. Black Americans have intensified their struggle in the midst of the war, and the most conscious identify the imperialist aims of the U.S. ruling class in Vietnam with their own subjugation by the same imperialist power. Students revolted by the war are beginning to see through the myth of the "American Dream," and are further radicalized by the hypocrisy of the "affluent society" with its racism and poverty in the midst of potential abundance.

The radicalization among students has been intensified by the example set by the Vietnamese freedom fighters and

other colonial revolutionists such as Che Guevara.

The mass struggles in France, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere also add to the general radicalization in this country. They are a graphic example to radicalizing youth in the U.S. that they are not alone in their struggles.

1968 has been the year of the presidential elections in this country. The elections have been the center around which all the important political issues were discussed and debated. Every political tendency has been tested in its position on the elections and the issues involved in them. The YSA convention takes place just after the completion of our vigorous intervention in the elections through our support to the Socialist Workers Party campaign. The YSA must now strike a balance sheet on the experience of the campaign and the gains made, and chart a course of the post-election period.

Our socialist campaign occurred in a much different political situation than in 1964. The 1964 elections were over before the major escalation of the war took place early in 1965. The antiwar movement had not gotten off the ground. It didn't really blossom until the SDS march on Washington in April, 1965. The explosions in Watts, Newark and Detroit had not yet occurred.

We ran our campaign in 1964 against the overwhelming sentiment in the country to defeat the "war monger" Goldwater by electing the "man of peace" Lyndon Baines Johnson. Although the SWP candidates emphasized that there was no basic difference between Johnson and Goldwater, our ability to win people to our campaign was limited in view of the "lesser evil" frenzy whipped up by almost every radical



Paul Boutelle, SWP Vice-Presidential Candidate, speaking at Free Huey Rally

political tendency, to defeat Goldwater at all costs.

We knew that significant changes in the political climate would develop. Our task was to win over those young people who were ready for an anticapitalist, socialist alternative, and to prepare for future struggles.

The period after the 1964 elections up to the 1968 elections saw the erosion of the Johnson consensus, the rise of the antiwar movement, the deepening of the black struggle, the growth of student radicalization, and in the past year indications of greater militancy among the workers.

The Antiwar Movement

In the past year antiwar sentiment has continued to mount. With no end of the war in sight and regardless of who is elected, we may expect this sentiment to continue to increase.

Even with the pressure exerted on the adult and student antiwar coalitions during this election year by those, such as the Communist Party, who wished to push the movement away from mass actions in the streets in the direction of class-collaborationist politics, the prospects

for building the antiwar movement are good. The elections are over in November but the war will go on. Our job in the next period will be the same as it has been since the inception of the antiwar movement: to build mass actions in the streets through united-front type action formations, specifically the Student Mobilization Committee among the youth and the various adult antiwar coalitions. Within this context we will continue to press the demand that the troops be brought home immediately.

A key aspect of our work in the coming period will be antiwar activity among GIs. There have been important signs of growing antiwar sentiment inside the army, and the antiwar movement has the opportunity to win a powerful new component to its ranks -- the soldiers themselves.

The Campus Struggles

The International Student Strike last April, which brought out hundreds of thousands of students from colleges and high schools across the country, was an indication of the growing radicalization among students. Other manifestations of this process have been the occupations of buildings and even of whole campuses, such as occurred at Columbia and Howard universities last spring, and the Berkeley free speech fights.

The deepening radicalization on the campuses around the issues of the war and black power has led students to question the role of the university in society. Antiwar students have exposed the innumerable connections between the university and the war machine, leading to the demand of an end to "campus complicity with the war." Black students, especially in the last year, and white student supporters of black power, have exposed the university's failure to meet the educational needs of black people and the university's role in their continued subjugation. At Columbia, for example, students exposed the fact that the university itself is a slumlord in the surrounding black community. One of the issues involved in the struggles at Columbia last spring was the university's insistence on building a gymnasium on the site of a park in the black community, in total disregard of the needs of that community. Such struggles have underscored the whole question of the role of the university in society.

The university is not an island separated from the rest of society. It is an institution of society, specifically an institution of capitalist society. Its primary function is to turn out the administrators, technicians, scientists, and ideological apologists needed to serve the capitalist system. All creative intellectual work is subordinated to,



Paul Boutelle, SWP Vice-Presidential Candidate, speaking at Free Huey Rally

warped and stamped by, this primary function. One symptom of this fact is that the needs of the war machine have come to dominate a large portion of university life.

The needs, interests and goals of radicalizing students run into direct conflict with the university as an institution in the service of capitalism, on the ideological level as well as on the level of questions such as complicity with the war machine and racial oppression. The university is a center for the creation and dissemination of procapitalist ideology in many fields, from philosophy to economics. Radicalizing students also find themselves in conflict with university administrations over their rights to organize on campus and to participate in the general social struggles in society as a whole. The university administration in this respect plays the role of a cop. This is even more pronounced in the role played by high school administrations.

In the context of deepening radicalization on the campuses we can expect more conflicts and struggles between students and the university administrations. We can expect university administrations to call upon the repressive apparatus of the state to intervene against the students in many of these conflicts (which itself underscores the nature of the university in capitalist society as a bulwark of that society).

Young socialists must intervene in these struggles on two levels. In joining and supporting these actions we should call for the formation of united-front type action committees and mass decision-making meetings to lead the struggle. Against all tendencies which propose individual actions and adventurist actions by small groups we insist upon mass action. Rejecting ultraleft verbiage, we propose that the demands of a particular struggle be clearly defined and tactically pursued under defensive formulations. We can point to the experience and discussions around the Berkeley June events to help explain these points.

The second level of our participation in these struggles is on the broader ideological plane. Against those who would limit the struggle to "student power" demands narrowly conceived, i.e., as purely and simply a struggle between students and the administration, we point to the connections between the particular struggle and the struggle against the whole capitalist system. In actual fact, in every major campus struggle during the past year, broader social questions such as democratic rights or black power have been intimately connected with the particular campus struggle. We should explain the role of the university in capitalist

society, and why it is necessary to change the system itself if the university is to be changed fundamentally. A "liberated" university, a truly free university, cannot exist as an isolated island surrounded by this rotten capitalist system. Those who are seriously interested in making the university conform to the real needs of students, teachers, and society, rather than the needs of big business, must make the transition from "student power" consciousness to socialist consciousness.

In place of the idea of a "liberated" university within capitalist society we propose the concept of turning the campus into an organizing center for the antiwar, black power, and revolutionary socialist movements, the idea the French students have advanced under the slogan of the "red university." To accomplish this, student rights, or "student power," must be fought for and defended.

The radicalization among students has also begun to reach high school youth. This is reflected in the successful high school strike against the Vietnam war in New York and other cities last April, as well as by high school participation in the antiwar movement and black power movements, and by the increased recruitment of high school students to the YSA.

The Black Revolt

The ghetto explosions have helped shatter the myth of steady progress toward complete freedom and equality for black Americans.

Occurring right in the midst of an imperialist war their effect is to bolster the rising tide of black nationalism. Black America, enslaved and held in subjugation for over 400 years, stripped of all national heritage, is retracing its history and developing an identity of its own. The war has intensified this radicalization of black people by making them bear a disproportionately large share of the casualties, and by the war-caused inflation and higher taxes at home which hit blacks the hardest. The gap between living conditions for black and white grows greater every year. The ghettos where black people are concentrated are in decay in the midst of the longest boom in American capitalism's history.

Nationalist consciousness is especially strong among the black youth who have been in the forefront of the struggles in the black community and on campus for black power. The past year has seen an important development of intensified struggles among black students.

The demands raised in the black struggle are directed in essence against the government and are political in na-

ture. Consequently, the question of political power is becoming more and more important in the minds of black youth. This poses the question of black political action, and the formation of an independent black political party which can unite the black people against the white capitalist state in a struggle for black liberation.

Black Political Party

The formation of an independent black political party is the key question facing the Afro-American people today. For three decades black people by and large have supported the Democratic Party, which, together with the Republican Party, is the political instrument of the capitalist rulers of this society to keep black people in bondage. A necessary step in the struggle for black liberation is for black people to break with the parties of the white capitalist oppressors and organize their own political instrument, a black political party, independent of and opposed to the parties of the ruling class.

Such a party could unite and lead the black people on a year-round basis. It could, with sufficient organization, win elections in areas where blacks are a majority or near majority, such as in Newark and Gary. It could also organize and lead the struggle for such demands as better housing, better schools, and control over the institutions in the black community, including the police. It could help to organize systematic armed self-defense of the black community from racist attack. In other words, an independent black political party could help organize all aspects of the black struggle, and lead the political fight for black political control of the black communities.

The organization of such a party would also deliver a staggering blow to the Democratic Party by removing the black component from the coalition the Democratic Party has relied on to win elections, and would provide a powerful example of independent political action for the white section of the working class.

Indicative of motion towards independent black political action is the development of the Black Panther Party. This community-based organization is attempting to unite black people around a program based on the needs of the black community. Its example is an important progressive step forward for the whole black struggle.

At its present level of development the BPP is still encumbered by questionable concepts of action by a small group of dedicated people as opposed to mass organization and action. While its deci-

sion to enter the elections was a step forward in political consciousness, its electoral alliance with the Peace and Freedom Party in California was a step backward for the idea of building an independent black political party.

The organization, program and leadership of the black people have lagged behind the demonstrated readiness of Afro-Americans to struggle. This necessary leadership will emerge from the youth in black organizations on the campuses, in the black communities, and in the unions. A key component of the leadership of the black struggle, and of the revolutionary struggle as a whole, will come from black youth won over to revolutionary socialism. The building of a black revolutionary socialist cadre in the YSA is a key task for the entire organization.

The 1968 Elections

Although the period since the 1964 elections has seen a deepening radicalization among youth and the growth of the antiwar, black power and student movements, these movements faced the 1968 elections in the context of the absence of any mass working class or black political party. In spite of the growth of these mass opposition movements, the capitalist parties maintain their virtual monopoly in the political field. The Wallace campaign, too, is being run within the con-



YSAers man literature table at April 27, 1968 antiwar demonstration in New York



YSAers man literature table at April 27, 1968 antiwar demonstration in New York

text of the two-party system as a racist pressure campaign on the two major parties.

As a consequence, many young people concerned with effecting changes in America have supported various capitalist "peace" candidates running in the two major parties; others have supported middle-class reformist third-ticket electoral formations like the Peace and Freedom Party.

The fact that many young people have become involved in political activity is a progressive thing. However, the kind of political activity is of fundamental importance. The key question is, can this capitalist society be patched up or reformed, or is a revolutionary transition indispensable?

Young socialists are convinced that this system is beyond repair. One glaring example is the fact that in the richest and most powerful country in the world people suffer from grinding poverty while the government spends close to half its huge national budget for instruments of war. This is just one contradiction of a system that produces for private profit instead of public need.

Eugene McCarthy, a professed "peace" candidate, was supported by many people opposed to the war. But McCarthy is a capitalist politician dedicated to the preservation of the capitalist system on a global scale. His disagreements with Johnson's Vietnam policy were tactical, as indicated by his refusal to support the demand for immediate withdrawal of troops from Vietnam. He, too, wanted to keep as much U.S. presence in Vietnam as he thought he could get away with. As a capitalist politician he offered no alternative to the system responsible not only for the war in Vietnam but for the whole U.S. imperialist foreign policy, which he pledged to defend throughout the world. For example, he was for increased U.S. military intervention in the Middle East. As a capitalist politician, he offered no alternative to the system that oppresses black people and which is responsible for poverty, exploitation, etc.

McCarthy's professed objective in running for the Democratic nomination was precisely to "take the protest off the streets" and bring the antiwar youth back into the "mainstream" of American politics, i.e. back into support of the Democratic Party, the very same party carrying on the Vietnam war. To the extent he was successful, antiwar youth were led into political support of the warmaking system through support to one of the political instruments controlled by the warmakers.

The Capitalist Parties

The Democratic Party cannot be transformed into an instrument of fundamental social change. Not only is it stacked with rabid racists from both North and South, it is financed and controlled, lock, stock and barrel, by the ruling capitalist class. This was graphically, if grotesquely, illustrated by the Democratic convention.

At the convention a sizable number of delegates tried to get a plank adopted on Vietnam which was more "liberal." Even this timid gesture was overwhelmingly rebuffed by the party hacks. In reality a major problem has been to convince the mass of workers and black people that the two capitalist parties cannot be transformed into parties representing their interests.

The two capitalist parties ended up nominating fitting symbols of U.S. capitalism, Hustling Hubert and Tricky Dick. To this repulsive duo has been added the third-ticket candidacy of the Alabama demagogue.

The Wallace Third Ticket

The Wallace campaign represents a Dixiecrat breakaway from the Dixie-Democrat-labor-Negro coalition which Roosevelt put together 30 years ago. It is not yet a "third" party but is in essence a third capitalist ticket intended to appeal racist, right-wing pressure on both major capitalist parties. Wallace is appealing to the more backward section of the white workers, on an out and out racist pitch. He has also had appeal posing as an alternative to the "tweedledum-tweedledee" major party candidates.

The labor bureaucracy, echoed by the class-collaborationist Socialist Party, has launched a campaign to "stop Wallace" by supporting — Humphrey. This is the form the "lesser evil" argument is tending to take in the 1968 elections. These forces exaggerate the "Wallace danger" and obscure the real and greatest danger facing the American people, the certain outcome of the elections of a victory for one of the capitalist parties and continued capitalist misrule, with its wars and racism.

Wallace has been called a fascist, but this is not accurate. While he is a racist and right-wing spellbinder, Wallace lacks the social demagoguery characteristic of fascism. In the long run, as the crisis of capitalism deepens to the point where the continued existence of capitalist rule is threatened, the imperialists will turn to the fascist solution. But we are not yet at that point, and the big bourgeoisie still finds capitalist "democracy" and rule through the two par-

ty setup possible and preferable to any attempt to impose fascism.

What the Wallace third-ticket candidacy indicates is the further drift to the right of capitalist politics, a drift that is also reflected in the "law and order" campaigns of the two major parties. This steady drift to the right by the capitalist politicians is caused by the crisis of the capitalist system itself and the inability of the system to solve any of the basic problems facing the American people. But this rightward drift of capitalist politics cannot be fought by picking out the worst of the capitalist candidates, branding him the "greater evil," and then supporting one of the other capitalist candidates. The capitalist political machines can always come up with a "greater evil" candidate, and those who use the "lesser evil" argument for support to capitalist politicians will remain trapped within capitalist politics forever. This rightward drift, and ultimately fascism itself, as all other symptoms of the decay of the capitalist system, can only be fought by building a class political alternative to capitalist misrule.

"Peace" Formations

Some young people have supported formations like the Peace and Freedom Party. The PFP was set up by various radical political tendencies such as the Independent Socialist Club and reform Democrats who became dubious about the possibility of the Democrats coming up with a "peace" candidate in 1968. The Peace and Freedom Party is in reality a coalition of various forces all of whom disagree with each other on many issues, including on just what the Peace and Freedom Party is. Some view it as merely a "third ticket" in the elections, while the ISC has the utopian hope of actually launching a mass third party through PFP. There are important differences on many other questions, for example Cuba. The ISC does not support the Cuban revolution, while others in PFP do. To hold these various groups together, at least up to the elections, the PFP has adopted a "minimum" election platform that these various forces can agree with.

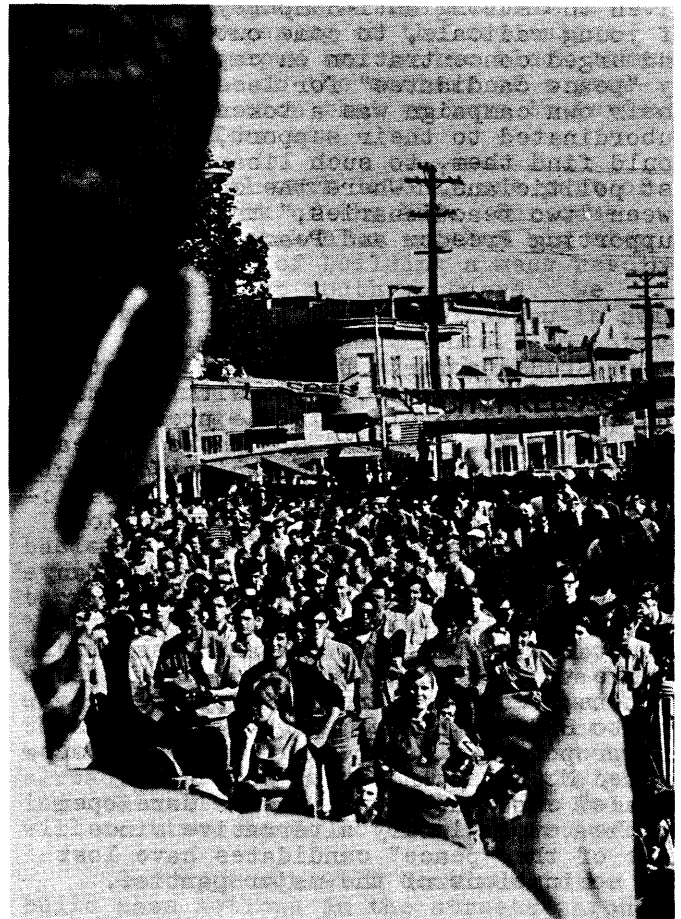
This PFP platform, while containing points we support, such as advocacy of withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, does not project an anticapitalist, socialist alternative to capitalist class rule. Programmatically, the PFP is an incipient capitalist political formation which does not go beyond proposals for certain reforms in the capitalist system. Neither does PFP represent a potential alternative to capitalist class rule in the social class it is based on. It is not a working class party in either program or composition. It is a middle-class forma-

tion, appealing to middle-class radicals.

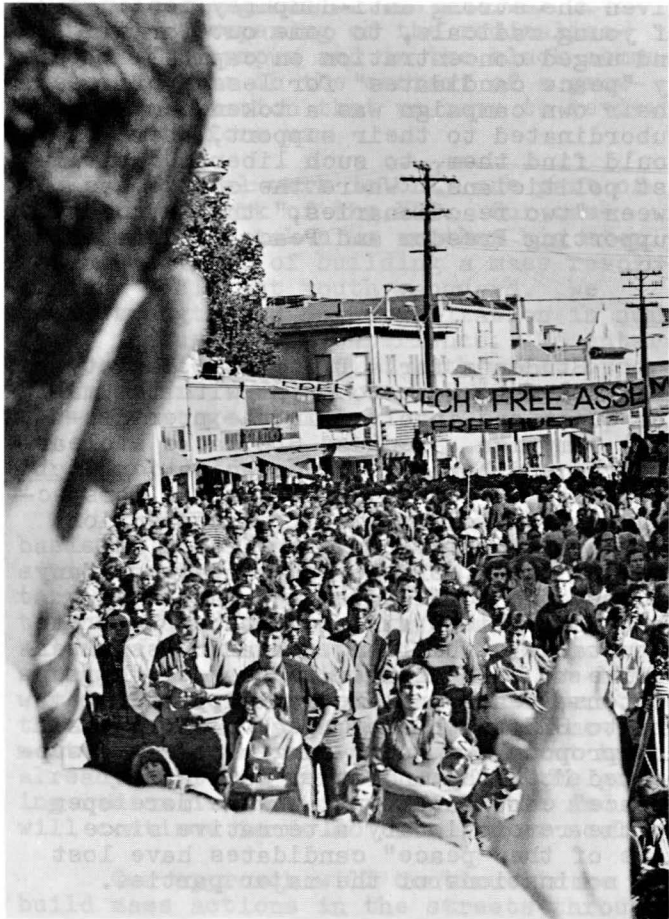
The Marxist analysis of capitalism demonstrates that the working class is the key motive force for revolutionary change. Because of its position in the productive process, the working class, in the long run, is both driven to struggle against capitalism and has the power to destroy this system and build the new system of socialism.

The events of May-June in France were a graphic example of the power of the working class and the key role it plays in modern capitalist society.

The struggle of the students in France was the detonator that set off the charge of the working class. The struggle which the students started, however, could go only so far because the students by themselves do not have the power to fundamentally change the system. When the workers entered the struggle, the whole situation changed. Because of their function in the productive apparatus, the workers were able to paralyze the whole country through the general strike and plant occupations, and placed the question of continued capitalist rule or its replacement by workers power on the agenda.



YSAer speaks to victory rally in Berkeley on July 4, 1968



YSAer speaks to victory rally in Berkeley
on July 4, 1968

The major political weakness of the new young radicals in the U.S. is confusion and doubt about the role of the working class. This is due to the fact that they have never seen a combative working class since they have grown up in a period of relative working class quiescence. These young radicals find no mass political alternative to the ruling class parties on the scene. Trying to find answers and alternatives, they are susceptible to supporting "independent formations" like the Peace and Freedom Party that in reality are reformist capitalist formations. The inevitable radicalization of the American working class will change this situation.

The CP Campaign

The Communist Party has also projected its own form of class collaboration politics during the election. The politics of the CP are totally subservient to the Kremlin line of "peaceful coexistence." The form this takes in the U.S. has been to give support to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. The CP vigorously supported McCarthy, and continues to back McCarthy men like O'Dwyer in New York. McCarthy's defeat presented them with problems in carrying out their fundamental line. They found it difficult, given the strong anti-Humphrey feelings of young radicals, to come out for him, and urged concentration on capitalist party "peace candidates" for lesser offices. Their own campaign was a token campaign, subordinated to their support, where they could find them, to such liberal capitalist politicians. Where the choice was between "two reactionaries," they advocated supporting Freedom and Peace candidates, etc.

SDS

Students for a Democratic Society also tried to come to grips with the major questions involved in the presidential campaign. Because SDS lacks a clear program and homogeneous organization it is unable to come up with a clear perspective. Positions varied from abstention to supporting McCarthy, the Peace and Freedom Party, or the SWP campaign. Many SDSers were confused about what to do. Young socialists will want to explain the importance of building a real class alternative to capitalist rule to McCarthy supporters, Peace and Freedom supporters, and to SDSers who are open to our ideas and proposals. Many young people who supported McCarthy and other capitalist "peace" candidates will now be more open to the revolutionary alternative since some of the "peace" candidates have lost the nominations of the major parties.

Abstentionism

This election year, as in the past,

some political tendencies have called for abstention from the election campaign altogether. This sentiment was voiced by some members of SDS and other radicals because they consider electoral activity to be either tactically ineffective or a form of selling out to the system.

Many thousands of Americans abstain simply because they think voting is a waste of effort. The sentiment to abstain is healthy to the extent that it is a recognition that both parties of the ruling class have the same prowar, racist politics. Sometimes abstention is correct if there is no real alternative. In 1968 in the U.S., however, abstention is wrong because there is an alternative.

Revolutionaries recognize the importance of using all available forms of struggle against the ruling class. One form of independent political action is mass actions in the streets against an imperialist war; another form is independent electoral activity.

To reject electoral activity not only shows a misunderstanding that the central problem facing the American working class and the black community is to break with capitalist politics, but also does not take advantage of one form of struggle against the ruling class. Militancy and radicalism are not a basic threat to the ruling class as long as they remain unorganized and do not pose the question of political power.

To advocate abstention really means giving back-handed support to the ruling class parties and maintenance of the political monopoly the ruling class enjoys through those parties. Unless the American working class and black community are organized into their own independent political parties fighting for power there can be no American revolution.

The SWP Campaign

In the SWP election campaign, which we supported and built, we have focused on three main political challenges:

1. To support the antiwar movement by helping to unify the largest possible number of people from every sector of the population in united front type organizations in a drive to win broad layers of the American people to struggle against the imperialist war. The SWP campaign has pressed the demand that the GIs be brought home now, both within the antiwar movement and the population as a whole.

2. To give uncompromising support to black people in their struggle for black control of the black communities and self-determination. The campaign has explained the need for an independent black political party, and has combatted

the racist assault on the black community in the "law and order" appeals of all three capitalist candidates.

3. To carry on the fight for a class struggle approach in politics through supporting the SWP ticket as a concrete class alternative to capitalist rule and gaining the support of all those ready to break with capitalist politics, and by propagandizing for an independent black party and a labor party.

All of these tasks were carried out within the framework of the most extensive election campaign that our movement has ever conducted.

The electoral strategy of the YSA is based on several considerations which determined who we would support in the 1968 elections. We decided over a year ago to support the SWP campaign because 1) it has a full class struggle program for revolutionary change which fits the needs of the struggles taking place in the U.S. today; 2) the SWP is a party that fights on a year-round basis in the interest of the working people, through action and education; 3) the SWP is also a party made up of workers in collaboration with students dedicated to the uncompromising struggle that will have to be made to achieve socialism.

These three considerations -- program, practice, and composition -- determined our support for the SWP and our rejection of "peace" candidates in the Democratic Party, the Peace and Freedom Party, and all other formations of their ilk.

The YSA supported the SWP campaign with the general view of offering a class alternative to those people who wanted to break with the parties of the ruling class. We knew that the SWP campaign would be the only class alternative because, for certain historical reasons, there is no mass political party representing the interests of either the working people or the black people of this country. It was also our understanding that most people, including many antiwar activists and radicals, would again support capitalist candidates. With these things in mind we also knew that because of the general political situation many more people would support the socialist campaign than in the past and that many new people would join our ranks and dedicate themselves to the struggle for socialism.

Black control of the black communities is now a widely accepted and discussed slogan in the black community, as is the slogan of withdrawal of troops among broad sections of the population. The SWP campaign has won the support of many people, in the main of young people, who want to fight for a socialist solu-

tion to the problems facing America and the world. The SWP candidates, national and local, have had the opportunity to speak to thousands of people, campaign supporters have sold or distributed large amounts of campaign literature, and numerous newspapers and TV and radio programs have carried news about the SWP campaign. In addition, the trip of Fred Halstead to Saigon and other cities of the world has highlighted our campaign work among American GIs.

The development of Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle and Afro-Americans for Halstead and Boutelle are two important gains of the campaign. Many YSHBers and YSHB groups are joining the Young Socialist Alliance, making an important addition to our forces. We are also recruiting young black supporters of our campaign.

Due to the absence of mass working class or black political parties, the campaigns staged by Humphrey, Nixon and Wallace dominated the electoral scene, creating the illusion in some that there is a general rightward shift among the population as a whole. This picture is false. We can expect that after the elections disillusionment with whoever is elected will rapidly proceed, and we can expect a powerful resurgence of the antiwar movement and a deepening of the radicalization on the campus and in the black communities. It is in the context of a growing radicalization that we have to review the tasks before us.

Electoral work is only one part of the regular work of the YSA. Our campaign work has taken us another big step toward our goal of building a mass revolutionary socialist youth vanguard. We have strengthened our organization in numbers, influence and experience. We enter the post-election period with great opportunities and a bigger organization to take advantage of them.

Our Tasks

1. We will continue on a campaign basis to build the mass movement in opposition to the Vietnam war. Our elementary duty as internationalists is to aid to the best of our ability revolutionaries in other parts of the world who are struggling against imperialism. The best way for us to carry out this task here in this country is by building a mass movement against the war. This movement has already played a central role in the growing radicalization of young people and will continue to do so on a larger scale.

Our approach will continue to be to build mass actions in the streets through united-front type action formations, specifically the SMC and the various adult antiwar coalitions. Within this context

we will continue to press for the demand that the troops be brought home immediately.

A key aspect of our antiwar work in the coming period will be antiwar work among GIs. There have been important indications of growing antiwar sentiment inside the army, and the antiwar movement has the opportunity to win a powerful new component to its ranks -- the soldiers themselves.

2. To carry out a campaign of unconditional support to the Afro-American struggle for full freedom, justice, equality, and self-determination. Explaining the need for an independent black political party will be central to this task. To counter racist violence we advocate organized, armed self-defense of the whole black community.

We will continue to defend all victims of racist frame-ups, and seek to establish close ties with Afro-American organizations on the campuses and in the black communities.

Our movement has the best supply of literature on Afro-American history, the ideas of Malcolm X, and black nationalism, and has the best and most complete analysis of the black struggle of any tendency. We should be sure to get this literature, and our publications, into the hands of every Afro-American we come into contact with.

All of us, black and white, must study the history of the black struggle in this country and grasp the revolutionary thrust of black nationalism through a theoretical understanding of the national question as it relates to black America.

3. The central focus of our work remains on the college campus and in the high schools. The bulk of our recruitment, of both black and white young people, will continue to be from high school and college students. The campus remains the vanguard of the antiwar movement, and provides a section of the vanguard of the black movement.

4. The only way we can carry out this work effectively is through a thor-

ough understanding of the history and traditions of the revolutionary movement. Our educational programs are now more important than ever. Education will be a key factor in our ability to reach out and take advantage of the opportunities facing us. It is only through the continued development of well-rounded revolutionists that we can be sure that we will reach our ultimate goal.

Along with our central areas of work in the antiwar, black power and student movements we will continue to carry on our regular socialist activity, such as continued and regular trailblazes to new areas where we can recruit significant numbers of people.

We should also be attuned to new developments in the world arena where we can support the world revolution as we did around the French and Czechoslovak events. Through this work we have established ourselves as the internationalist wing of the revolutionary socialist youth movement in this country. These tasks go hand in hand with our regular sales of the Militant and the Young Socialist. Both of these publications represent our ideas and thinking on the major events in the world today. Our publications are the public face of our movement and are major tools for building the YSA.

A great deal of our work during the entire history of the YSA has been carried out in close collaboration with the SWP, the revolutionary party in the U.S. This collaboration comes from common program and common goals. This close work has been invaluable for the development of the revolutionary socialist youth group in this country. The experiences and traditions of the American Trotskyist movement have been our guide in every area of our work.

If we carry out our tasks with revolutionary optimism and confidence the best of our radicalized generation will be recruited to our ideas and will join our ranks. All our tasks should be carried out with an eye to recruitment, for this will assure us of developing the YSA into the dominant socialist youth movement in this country. All young socialists are encouraged to join in this task.

October 12, 1968

ON THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE OF BLACK AMERICA FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

"The grief and depression caused by the condition of black men in America is an unpopular reality to the sufferers. They would rather see themselves in a more heroic posture and chide a disconsolate brother. They would like to point to their achievements (which in fact have been staggering); they would rather point to virtue (which in fact has been shown in magnificent form by some blacks); they would point to bravery, fidelity, prudence, brilliance, creativity, all of which dark men have shown in abundance. But the over-riding experience of the black American has been grief and sorrow and no man can change that fact.

"His grief has been realistic and appropriate. What people have so earned a period of mourning?

"We want to emphasize yet again the depth of the grief for slain sons and ravished daughters, how deep and lingering it is.

"If the depth of this sorrow is felt, we can then consider what can be made of this emotion.

"As grief lifts and the sufferer moves toward health, the hatred he had turned on himself is redirected toward his tormenters, and the fury of his attack on the one who caused him pain is in direct proportion to the depth of his grief. When the mourner lashes out in anger, it is a relief to those who love him, for they know he has returned to health.

"Observe that the amount of rage the oppressed turns on his tormentor is a direct function of the depth of his grief, and consider the intensity of black men's grief.

"Slip for a moment into the soul of a black girl whose womanhood is blighted, not because she is ugly, but because she is black and by definition all blacks are ugly.

"Become for a moment a black citizen of Birmingham, Alabama, and try to understand his grief and dismay when innocent children are slain while they worship, for no other reason than that they are black.

"Imagine how an impoverished mother feels as she watches the light of creativity snuffed out in her children by schools which dull the mind and environs which rot the soul.

"For a moment make yourself the black father whose son

went innocently to war and there was slain — for whom, for what?...

"It is the transformation of this quantum of grief into aggression of which we now speak. As a sapling bent low stores energy for a violent backswing, blacks bent double by oppression have stored energy which will be released in the form of rage — black rage, apocalyptic and final.

"If existing oppressions and humiliating disenfranchisements are to be lifted, they will have to be lifted most speedily, or catastrophe will follow.

"For there are no more psychological tricks blacks can play upon themselves to make it possible to exist in dreadful circumstances. No more lies can they tell themselves. No more dreams to fix on. No more opiates to dull to pain. No more patience. No more thought. No more reason. Only a welling tide risen out of all those terrible years of grief, now a tidal wave of fury and anger, and all black, black as night." -- Black Rage

Thus two black west coast professors of psychiatry, William H. Grier, M.D. and Price M. Cobbs, M.D., render a psychological account of the agitation and animation that has seized the body of Afro-America. This animation and agitation is only the beginning of the awakening of 22 million Afro-Americans to nationalist consciousness.

This display of nationalist consciousness is not only shaking up and re-making the North American scene, but has consequences for the world at large. No significant social motion can take place in the strongest of the imperialist powers without having world-wide ramifications.

The specter of Blackism caused the British and their lackeys to ban Stokely Carmichael from England and parts of the West Indies, including Trinidad, the place of Carmichael's birth. But the specter of Blackism has been only a source of inspiration to the fighting Vietnamese and the ever-ready Cubans. The nationalist movement inside the U.S. is educating the international revolutionary vanguard as to what the problems of black people are and how those problems will be resolved.

The mistaken idea that the principal thrust of the black movement was for civil rights, or integration into the American set-up, was exposed by Carmichael's appearance at the OLAS (Organization of Latin American Solidarity) conference in Cuba last year. The upheavals in Newark and Detroit at the time of the conference also helped show the direction of the struggle. The concatenation of black explosions in over 100 American cities after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King again drove home the nationalist character of the struggle to the international vanguard. With the rapid spread of the demand for black control of the black community and the growth of the

Black Panther Party and the black student movement there need be no argument among revolutionaries anywhere in the world about the central thrust of the Afro-American liberation struggle.

The non-violent civil rights struggle was only a stream that led inexorably to the swelling river of black nationalism, not the other way around as some would like to have it. To get this latter view across, the militant to moderate notion, the propagandists for the American ruling class have tried to take the evolution of the ideological fountainhead of present day nationalism, Brother Malcolm X, and make it look as though Malcolm, in his last months, was taking the road of compromise and reconciliation with the American establishment. It was precisely because Malcolm lacked these qualities that North American imperialism had him assassinated.

If we are in any way to understand what the black liberation struggle is all about and where it is going we must first develop an appreciation of Malcolm X.

It was Malcolm who constructed the ideological framework for black nationalism as we know it today. In the wilderness of North America, the rebirth of the idea that black is beautiful; of the need to psychologically go back to Africa; that black people should pick up the gun to defend themselves against racist violence; that black people should run and control their own organizations; that black people have to seize political, economic and social control of their communities; that the vulturous system called capitalism cannot grant freedom to black people; that the racism manifested by white people comes from the social system, not from some innately evil characteristic possessed by whites; that black people have to reject the Democratic and Republican parties; that the problems of

black people were not just local matters but international matters tied to the struggle between imperialism and the colonial peoples, and that pan-Blackism or internationalism is essential if black people are to defeat Uncle Sam -- all of these ideas can be traced back to Malcolm. He developed and refined each of them in the course of his last year.

The idea that Malcolm was most maligned about was his advocacy of the need for black people to arm and defend themselves against racist violence. While white people may arm themselves, the idea of black self-defense is tantamount to un-hinging the whole social system in the eyes of the American ruling class. If social, economic, political, and physical violence is necessary to keep the black man in his place, then the implications of black self-defense are obvious. "By Any Means Necessary" was the phrase Malcolm coined to get this idea across.

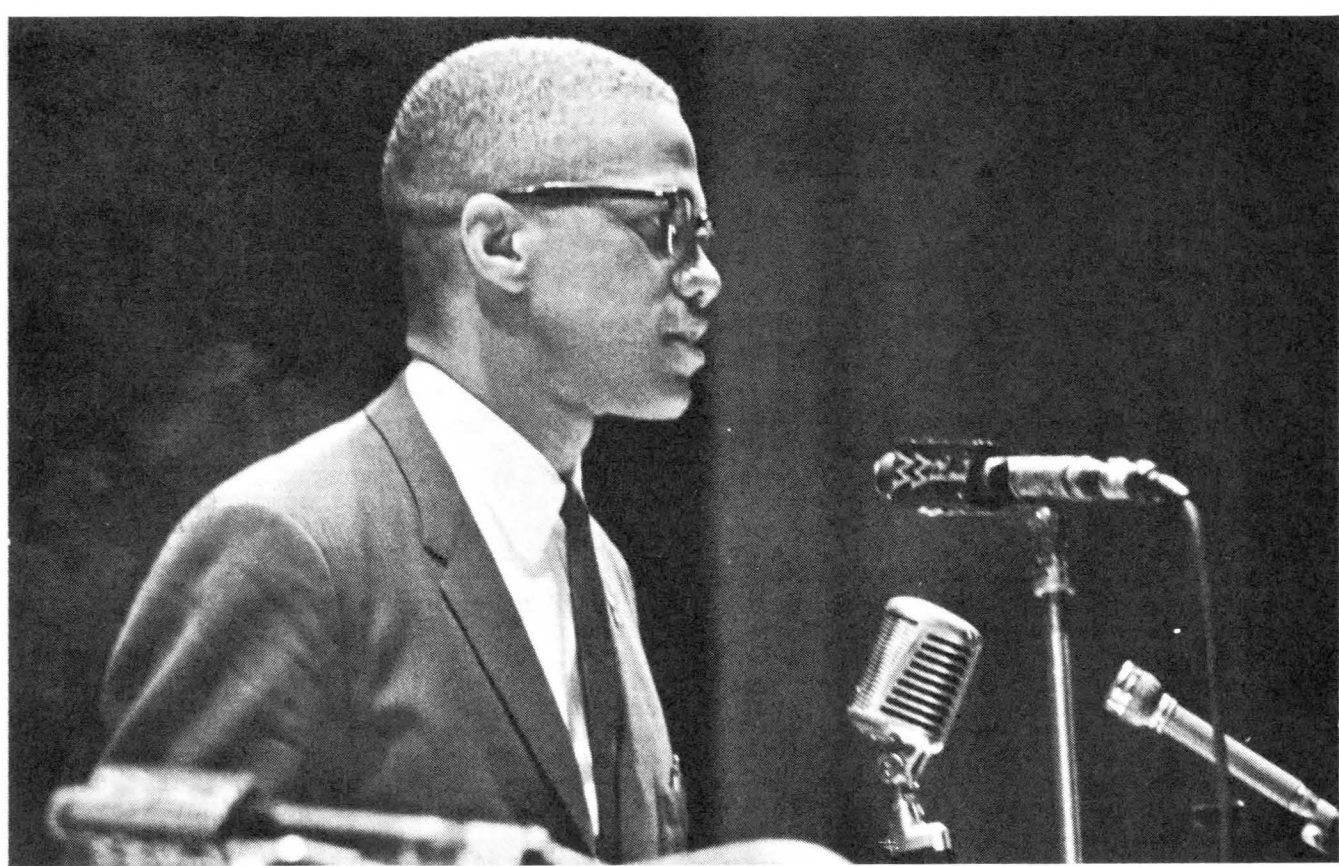
Malcolm's internationalism also caused a great deal of indignation amongst those who sit in Washington and on Wall Street. The black man's struggle for civil and human rights in the post-World War II era was brought on by the weakening of European imperialism and the

outbreak of revolution in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Although this was the objective situation, it was yet to be reflected subjectively by leaders of the civil and human rights struggle in this country. It was not until Robert F. Williams came on the scene that this non-identification by black leaders with the colonial revolution was breached. Williams, as the leader of the self-defense movement in Monroe, North Carolina, started out by expressing admiration and respect for the Cuban Revolution that occurred in 1959. His increasing solidarity with this Revolution plus his advocacy and practice of organized, armed self-defense brought him under severe persecution by the state of North Carolina and the federal government, forcing him to flee the country.

Starting from this breach, Malcolm widened it considerably. Malcolm became the first black leader of any stature in the post-World War II era to take on the task of explaining to the world what the struggle for human rights was all about. He consciously sought aid and support on the African continent for the Afro-American struggle back home. Malcolm spent almost half of his last year abroad.



MALCOLM X



MALCOLM X

But the role that Malcolm played and enthusiastic response he received from abroad had a greater significance. What Malcolm's excursion indicated was the potential that existed for the black struggle in the United States to play a crucial role in helping to shape and inspire the worldwide movement for revolutionary change.

The crisis in the world today does not revolve around lack of revolutionary conditions, but lack of a capable revolutionary leadership and organization. Bolivia, France, and Czechoslovakia are the most recent examples of this crisis of leadership.

Since the United States is the bastion of world imperialism, it is obvious that the world's people look with great elation at any force that arises inside that bastion and threatens the functioning of the Beast. The Afro-American struggle is doing just that. For this reason, the power of the black minority is increased several fold.

This world-wide role that black people have assumed is registered in the number of languages in which you can read the speeches of Malcolm. Malcolm X Speaks has been printed in English, French, Italian, and Japanese.

The most significant upsurge of black nationalism has occurred in the post-World War II era. But we must ask the question, are we only dealing with a transitory phenomenon? Will nationalism slowly ebb away as sections of white workers radicalize and move against the imperialist state? The answers to these questions have far-reaching implications for the coming American Revolution. Any attempt to find the answers begins with an examination of the history of the black man in the Americas.

Before black people were forcibly brought to this country they were part of civilizations that grew up on the African continent. The many kingdoms in West Africa out of which black people were taken had their own languages, sets of rules and conventions for maintaining their own law and order, communications systems, and an extensive network of trade relations throughout the African continent. These civilizations drew upon a very rich and long cultural heritage that existed in Africa.

When the savage and parasitic white European brought the African to these shores he immediately began to denude and strip the African of his heritage and culture. This was necessary if the European was to put the African to work on the slave labor plantations that were erected throughout the Americas. It was through this super-exploitation of black labor on

the islands of Jamaica, Barbadoes, Haiti, and other islands that British and French capitalism obtained an important part of the capital needed to start industry and large-scale manufacture. Even after Britain entered the industrial revolution and lost her dependence on the West Indian islands the British textile mills depended upon raw cotton supplied by slave labor plantations in the North American South.

In the northern part of North America, home-grown American capitalists accumulated their first fortunes off the lucrative slave trade and the plantation system. In fact, the restriction of the slave trade by the British was one of the main reasons behind the American Declaration of Independence. All of this goes to show that the first European and North American capitalists didn't accumulate their fortunes to launch the industrial revolution through Puritan frugality or penny-pinching. The looting and plundering of Africa had a great deal to do with it.

Of all the Africans brought to the Americas only the black man in North America suffered complete cultural genocide, i.e., he was totally stripped of the culture and values he acquired on the African continent. His identity as an African was totally destroyed.

In other parts of the Americas the degree to which the slaves maintained their African identity was directly related to the size and intensiveness of slave rebellions and insurrections.

In pre-1791 Haiti the maroons kept alive the quest for freedom and the spirit of resistance among the slaves. The maroons were Africans who escaped the noose of slavery by going into the mountains and operating like guerrillas, carrying out liberation raids on the French sugar plantations. There were over 3,000 maroons on the eve of the Haitian Revolution in 1791. As a sign of the surviving African heritage among the Haitian slaves the maroons sometimes communicated with each other and to captive slaves through the use of the drum.

Farther east, in Brazil, the slaves retained a great deal more of their West African heritage and culture. The equivalent of the Haitian maroon was the quilombola. After several hundred quilombolas escaped and made it into the interior of Brazil they set up a settlement called a quilombo. These quilombos were established throughout the period of slavery in Brazil, from the 1500's to 1888. In the northeastern part of Brazil a confederation of quilombos was set up around 1630 which became known as the kingdom of Palmares because of the concentration of palm trees, and which was not definitively smashed until 1697. The kingdom of Pal-

mares embraced several thousand escaped slaves. Traditions brought over from Africa by the slaves were used in organizing and maintaining Palmares.

In Brazil the nations or tribes of Africans from West Africa were never systematically broken up by the Portuguese. You had Yorubas, Hausas, Dahomans, Mandingos, and Fulahs occupying distinct parts of Brazilian provinces and sections of cities. Even those nations that practiced it in Brazil. In certain parts of the Brazilian province of Bahia the Muslims would sometimes wage holy wars against mulattoes, whites, and other slaves who did not practice the religion. The Portuguese settlers noted that the Muslim slaves were the most aggressive. Because these nations also maintained their languages to some degree they were able to easily pull off a number of slave insurrections in the cities and countryside that were very costly to the Portuguese slave holders.

The examples of Haiti and Brazil are not to say that because the North American Africans in bondage did not maintain their heritage, therefore they didn't revolt. The North American slaves put together a number of elaborate conspiracies and insurrections. Since there was very little of the African heritage to use to fight the "peculiar institution," the North American slaves had to use the culture and heritage given to them by the slavemaster to fight the system. One has only to mention Christianity, the Bible, and the spirituals to illustrate this use. Nat Turner was a Christian preacher who drew his code of revolution from the Bible.

Nevertheless, the examples of Haiti and Brazil go to show why the contemporary Haitian and black Brazilian do not have much trouble in identifying with their African heritage. Part of their heritage brought over from Africa was allowed to fuse with their Latin environment. Contrary to this, there has been no fusion of the African heritage with Anglo culture in the United States. Therefore black people have to reject Anglo culture and institutions when they reclaim their identity as African-Americans or Afro-Americans. White Anglo-American culture and society were never meant for the participation of black people. From this point of view, then, black nationalism, identifying as part of the collective mass of black people, becomes a necessary thing for a black person to begin to deal with the crippling and putrid effects of this decaying society. This is one of the reasons why nationalism is not just a transitory phenomenon but an historical necessity.

The nationalism that arises from the North American black population will

be most devastating for the white oppressor. In other parts of the Americas and in Africa, as was shown in the examples of Haiti and Brazil, the white oppressor did not destroy the total African heritage and culture. In fact, over a period of time, European and North American imperialism subverted and used part of the cultural heritage to better subjugate the African and Afro-Latin. The exploitation of tribal differences by the imperialists in Africa is an example of this subversion.

But this subversion and method of rule is also related to the fact that a large part of the African and Afro-Latin populations are of a peasant or semi-peasant composition. The peasantry is a source of all types of obscurantist and unscientific notions. Coupled with this, you have a miniscule bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie or middle class that is well integrated into the colonial or neo-colonial structure. The oppressive nationalism that emanates from this colonial elite is used by the imperialists to set up a neo-colonial state, whereas the revolutionary-latent nationalism of the peasants that leads to self-determination will only be able to topple the landlords and the imperialists if it is linked to the struggles of the colonial proletariat. Therefore, the nationalism of the African and Afro-Latin can be channeled into many grooves, from that of reaction to that of revolution.

Contrary to these class divisions and peasant diversifications, the Afro-American population is predominantly proletarian. To understand this proletarian character and its relation to the rising tide of black nationalism we again have to refer back to our history.

After the Civil War the masses of black people lived an existence as tenant farmers, i.e., farmers without land, in the South of these United States. A trickle of blacks went North.

In the period between 1910 and the 1929 depression a combination of natural disasters in the South, growing mechanization of farming, World War I, and the rapid expansion of northern industry caused a flood of over a million blacks to migrate to northern cities to live in defined sections called ghettos. During World War I, with part of the working class in uniform, the expansion of the war industries required that cheap black labor be recruited. This same phenomenon occurred during World War II. After the end of each of these wars the black man was let loose to wait for another job opportunity.

This cycle points to the use of black people as a reserve labor force, a reserve labor army in which many black

men spend their whole lives. "Last hired and first fired" is the phrase that aptly characterizes this position.

The basic labor force among black people is composed of between 8 and 9 million people according to government figures. This figure also includes those blacks who are listed as working part-time. Since the number of black capitalists (not including petty businessmen) can be counted on two hands, the composition of the black population is overwhelmingly proletarian or working class. Hence the position of black people as super-exploited beasts of burden involves a dual state of oppression: oppression deriving from being black, i.e. national oppression, and oppression as members of the working class.

The factor of national oppression makes black people the most oppressed section of the working class. This special status creates the situation in which black workers are worked more and paid less than the white worker, and in which black people are forced to make up a large part of the reserve army of labor.

On top of all this, the U.S. imperialist war in Vietnam shows that black youth are coming into increasing use as an agency to defend North American capitalism's "right" to ride roughshod over the peoples and wealth of the entire world.

To those militants who believe that there is an excess number of black people in the United States, or that black people are totally irrelevant to the functioning of the U.S. economy, this is devastating evidence that Uncle Sam knows better.

From this evidence we can say that it is the proletarian base that makes the nationalism of the black man in North America the most explosive force for social change in the world.

Recovering the black identity and Afro-American heritage is part and parcel of the realization that black people have contributed 300 years of free slave labor and 100 years of underpaid, superexploited labor to the making of the North American colossus. The collection of the indemnity on this labor will force black people into a position of having to wipe North American imperialism from the face of the earth. The measure of this indemnity gives one a glimpse into the torrential force that Afro-American nationalism will become.

The People

Over the past few years the collective consciousness of black people has radically changed. This is registered

most graphically in the rebellions that have taken place. It is also displayed in the aftermath of the rebellions, where the Negro identity is shed for the black or Afro-American identity. The aftermath of Watts, Newark, and Detroit attests to this change.

In a Supplemental Studies issued by the President's civil disorders commission it was revealed in a survey of almost 3,000 Afro-Americans from 15 different cities that a little under half thought that black school children should study an African language. Over 50% of these respondents were sympathetic to those blacks that participated in the rebellions. Just several years ago these same respondents would probably have had nothing to do with black self-defense and would have condemned as un-American the idea of teaching black children an African language.

The Youth

That sector of the black population which has been in the vanguard of all this radicalism is the youth. Unhampered by the hangups of the past, the youth of Afro-America want revolution now. As Brother Malcolm put it, "Give it to us now. Don't wait for next year. Give it to us yesterday, and that's not fast enough."

The majority of Afro-America is under 25. Whereas the median age of white America is 29, the median age of Afro-America is 21. Over 25% of black youth suffer from the twin evils of unemployment and underemployment (having a part-time job but looking for a full-time job). Black youth are drafted all out of proportion to their number in society, and constitute over 22% of the dead in Vietnam. These and other statistics justify the total alienation from, and rejection of, white American society by young Bloods.

In the high schools and on the college campuses black youth have displayed a considerable amount of activity. The militant protest activity takes place because these institutions of indoctrination where black youth spend a considerable amount of their time are in stark opposition to the nationalist motion. The demand for the blackification of these so-called education institutions is not understood by the white administrators, and the Negro and white teachers. It is only when violence breaks out, or threats of it, that some token concessions are made.

Activity in the high schools immediately brings in the police. The city-wide demonstration by black high schoolers in Philadelphia in November, 1967 resulted in a mobilization of Police Chief Rizzo's "pigs," who moved against the demonstration. The Detroit police used guns

to disperse a demonstration of junior high schoolers and their parents last spring. To any police department around the country black people are just cattle, animals that have to be corralled and caged.

On the college campus the action by black students at Columbia last spring was pregnant with the most revolutionary implications. Here you had the inciting and exciting of the Harlem community by the demand of the black students to get rid of the construction site in Morning-side Park. Had there been the leadership and organization, you would have had the non-student brothers and sisters seizing Columbia as well as sections of Harlem itself. It was this potential linkup between the students and the black community that struck fear into city and police officials. This is what makes the activity on campus and in the public schools so explosive with farreaching consequences.

The Workers

Another sector of the black population that has shown some combativity, as a result of the influx of youth and the nationalist awakening of the black community, is the black working class. The actions spearheaded by black workers in DRUM, the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement in Detroit, and the Concerned Transit Workers in Chicago, have dire implications for the lead-bottomed and lead-headed trade union bureaucrats. The relative and absolute strength of black workers is constantly on the upswing. In the United Auto Workers (UAW) black workers constitute over 33% of the 1.6 million member union. Of the 1.1 million members of the United Steelworkers of America black workers are 25%. In the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) 30% of the 400,000 members are black.

About 70% of AFSCME consists of blue-collar workers. AFSCME embraces city sanitation workers, janitors, service workers, university and public school employees, and hospital workers. One of the concessions that the Memphis sanitation workers achieved in their struggle with the vicious cracker government was the right to form a local of AFSCME. The National Field Director of AFSCME was maced by Memphis pigs during one of the strike demonstrations. As the unionization of this stratum of workers continues we can expect many more similar strike struggles.

However, it is the concentration of black workers in industry that will have the most forceful implications for the future. The formation of DRUM at the Dodge plant in Detroit marks the opening of a new and higher stage in the development

of organized opposition against the UAW bureaucrats. Because of the racist consciousness prevalent among white workers only a minority of whites are at present sympathetic to DRUM. The composition of DRUM for the most part is young black workers.

While fighting the racist abuse of the Chrysler Corporation, DRUM has to contend with the racist UAW leadership. The plant is over 50% black. Because most of the black workers are entrenched in the dirtiest, lowest paying jobs, DRUM is also fighting for the breakup of the lily-white skilled trades.

It is conceivable, considering the number of auto plants with black majorities, that as the antibureaucratic struggle deepens union locals will be taken over and plants will be occupied by black workers in the fight against the auto corporations.

The Concerned Transit Workers in Chicago is less radical than DRUM but has a broader base. It is possible for the CTW to actually take over the Transit Workers Union, which has a slight black majority. One of the issues in the struggle is the right of retired workers, who are mostly white, to vote on internal union matters. The vote of the retired workers maintains the lily-white bureaucratic union leadership. Since the black



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workers are not only fighting for representation in the leadership, but criticizing the pro-boss policy of the bureaucrats, they have the support of some of the white workers.

The fight in the TWU has important implications for the rest of the trade union plutocrats. If the CTW is able to restrict the vote of the retired workers on contract issues this sets a precedent for workers to use in attacking one of the bases of bureaucratic power.

Again, as in the case of the students, linking up the struggles on the job to the overall struggle of the community is necessary for success. This is the lesson of Memphis. In the long run, the overthrow of the Beast is intimately tied to the radicalization and organization of black workers.

The Veterans

There are over 120,000 black veterans walking around in this country. Each year their ranks are swelled by 40,000. The government and police departments across the country are worried. How will these veterans act in the event of a ghetto upheaval? Already the army brass is worried about lack of cannon fodder: while draft quotas are getting larger, black reenlistments have dropped 50% in the last two years.

When black Vietnam veterans start saying, "I'm ashamed of what I did in Vietnam. We did to yellow people what whites do to us," or, "The rights we fought for for somebody else just don't exist for us," or "We fought for the honkie and now we're going to fight for ourselves" the vultures in power have great reason to worry.

Just recently 60 black GIs at Fort Hood, Texas refused to go to Chicago for riot duty during the Democratic Party Convention. The nationalist awakening of black GIs, while the imperialist war goes on, is a sign that imperialism will find it increasingly difficult to carry out its aggressive policies.

Other Oppressed Peoples

The resistance to white oppression and aggression by Afro-America has ignited and excited other oppressed national minority groups: Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Indian Americans. The Indian American has a bottomless pit of searing grievances and vexations to bring against the Beast. There are over 16,000 Indians now fighting in Vietnam. Indian youth are beginning to show signs of Red Power motion.

The largest Puerto Rican population in the U.S. is locked up in New York City.

In the summer of 1967 the Puerto Rican ghetto exploded in fury against the police. More and more Puerto Rican youth are beginning to direct their pent-up anger and resentment against the Anglo establishment. During the school strike in New York the Puerto Rican community, in cooperation with the black community, began to unite and organize around the issue of the schools.

Mexican-Americans are beginning to awaken to the anti-brown or anti-Chicano nature of Anglo society. Schools in East Los Angeles were rocked with cries of Chicano Power in the spring of 1968. Young Mexican-Americans realize that their Indian ancestry and Spanish heritage are being omitted or cruelly distorted in the Anglo indoctrination center called a public school. The emergence of Mexican-American student organizations, such as UMAS (the United Mexican-American Students) and the Brown Berets, patterned after the Black Panther Party, are signs of a great deal of nationalist motion. The black and brown nationalist organizations have worked together very well in Los Angeles, jointly organizing protests against the L.A. pigs. Viva la Raza!

State of the Movement

In analyzing the thrust and direction of the struggle as it has evolved over the past two years we find that the vanguard in the black community has gone past the stage of the spontaneous upheaval or rebellion. The Watts rebellion in the summer of 1965 began this stage, the Newark and Detroit upheavals were the apex of this type of widespread spontaneous action. Liberating commodities from the stores was the most salient feature of these rebellions. The people were attacking the superstructure of oppression and degradation, the greedy corner store merchant.

Elements in the black vanguard know that it is foolish for unorganized and ill-equipped masses of people to go up against the organized violence of the white capitalist state. The vanguard knows that the next stage in the unfolding of the black struggle is one of organization, organizing the sentiment and thirst for revolutionary change.

The last two years have witnessed the rapid spread and absorption of the philosophy of black nationalism and the idea of black power by the people. What has not gone along and kept pace with the flowering of the idea is the growth of a black revolutionary organization. The unevenness between the ideas and organization around the ideas is now beginning to be bridged with the growth of the Black Panther Party.

However, to understand the signifi-

cance of the Black Panther Party we must take into account the stratification and fragmentation of all those who rallied to the flag of nationalism and black power two years ago.

SNCC and CORE were the vanguard organizations in the nationalist movement at the initiation of the cry for black power. With this initiation, various cultural nationalist organizations like the L.A. based US or the Yorubas of New York experienced a period of growth. Other cultural nationalist organizations began to spring up all over the country. After the white establishment overcame the initial shocks of black power the carrot treatment was applied by the Ford Foundation to CORE. The stick treatment was brandished and used against SNCC and other organizations that could not be bought off. While trying to get Carmichael and Rap Brown, the federal government emasculated many militants through the use of the so-called anti-poverty program.

The Ford Foundation operation on CORE was to provide an example as to how big business can go about defanging and pacifying black power organizations that are just out to get a piece of the setup, not to overthrow the setup. The Republican Party Convention even got hip to this when they promised black militants a "piece of the action" if they should win in November.

By helping CORE to pay off its debts, getting the organization involved in the Carl Stokes Democratic Party mayoral campaign in Cleveland, and funneling the leaders of the organization through the neocolonialist school called the Metropolitan Applied Research Center (MARC) CORE was rendered incapable of revolutionary leadership. This compromising of the organization led to the split that occurred at its July convention. CORE is now off in the direction of setting up black businesses, seeing black economic power as the key to the solution of the problem.

In fact, setting up black businesses rather than striving for independent black political power has become the major drive of the reformist or compromised nationalists. In Detroit the Federation for Self-Determination, a coalition of black nationalist groups, was destroyed when the leadership began to fool around with Ford Foundation money. Now, most of the traditional nationalist leadership in Detroit is spending its time starting and operating black co-ops. This is being done instead of, rather than as part of, the task of providing political direction for the people.

The Xerox Corporation is helping a group of militants in Rochester, N.Y. set up a \$1 million a year business. Xerox

is also sponsor of the TV program "Of Black America." New York's Mau-Mau leader Charles 37X Kenyatta was photographed walking arm in arm with Gov. Rockefeller at the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial march last April. And so the search of big business is on, looking for nationalists with all bark and no bite.

Meanwhile, the revolutionary nationalists ponder the question of organization. Some of the revolutionary nationalists are grouped around newspapers such as the Inner City Voice in Detroit, Boston's Rebellion News, New York's Mojo, and the Plain Truth in Champaign-Urbana. Others are in and around the black student organizations.

SNCC is one of the leading organizations among this tendency, but has serious problems. The shift from civil rights to black power brought on a severe financial crisis in SNCC. The guilt-complex white liberals could not take, and did not understand, the cry for black power. More funds were cut off when SNCC came out in support of the Arabs in the Arab-Israeli War last year. Due to this financial crisis, SNCC chapters across the country in the North were busy raising funds.

Since SNCC considers itself for the most part a tightly knit organization of cadre or political organizers, and not a membership organization, it wasn't structured for people to join after they heard and agreed with the speeches of Carmichael or Rap Brown. SNCC people could provide a revolutionary analysis of the problem, but no concrete program. This lack of program, not concretely defining black power, caused some to get caught up in the rhetoric of the spontaneous rebellions. Many revolutionary nationalists talked in terms of forming underground and clandestine groups to spark the masses.

Early this year, proceeding from the principle that "every Negro is a potential black man," SNCC moved to form militant-moderate coalitions, i.e., united fronts, in the black community. While these united fronts threw every tendency together, they still did not speak to the question of a revolutionary organization. Because the Urban League, NAACP, SCLC, and minister types are more organized than the revolutionaries, the united fronts thus far have tended to wind up as reformist swamps. This is the case in Washington, D.C. where the first united front was started.

The Black Congress, a coalition in Los Angeles set up independently of SNCC, is another example of how these organizations can be used by big business and the government to control the ghetto. The second edition of Black Voice, the organ

of the Black Congress, came out in support of the capitalist dove, Eugene McCarthy. Neo-colonial organizations are what these organizations tend to turn out to be.

Unlike the Black Congress, the United Brothers, a quasi-united front organization in Newark, has taken a step away from capitalist politics and the Republican and Democratic parties by running two black independent candidates for city council.

The United Brothers campaign is a reflection of the growing motion in the black community toward independence from the capitalist parties and the building of a black political party. At present SNCC is attempting to relate to this motion by propagating the idea of building a mass political party.

It has been the Oakland Black Panther Party that has emerged thus far as the most significant development toward answering the question of revolutionary organization. The Panther Party, founded by Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton in 1966, is developing a revolutionary perspective and program as well as a revolutionary analysis. It not only has begun to speak to the needs of Afro-America, but has been able to organize the brothers and sisters on the block and from the campus into a disciplined, tightly-knit organization. One of the reasons that the BPP has been able to do this is because it has the structure of a membership organization, unlike SNCC. Because its membership is based on agreement with a basic program, the BPP is homogeneous, not heterogeneous like a united front. One of the main purposes of the BPP in its initial phase was to protect the ghetto by instituting armed patrols of the police. To do this and be able to point out police violations the Panthers diligently studied the law. By using these laws the Panthers attempted to educate the black community as to its legal rights.

In the early part of this year the Panthers, whose full title was the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, dropped the Self-Defense from their name. This signified that the Party was evolving from just an armed defense group in the direction of a political party. The political party direction was given more delineation when the Panthers announced the local candidacies of Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, and Kathleen Cleaver, using the ballot status of the Peace and Freedom Party, but based on the Panther ten-point program.

The Panther Party is very different from either the Lowndes County Freedom Party in Lowndes County, Alabama, or the now-defunct Freedom Now Party that grew up in Detroit and ran statewide candi-

dates in Michigan in 1964. While the FNP and LCFP had and have a broader base of support in the community, they were not national organizations as the BPP has become. Whereas the FNP and LCFP were and are implicitly revolutionary, the BPP is explicit about its revolutionary nature. The BPP is pro-socialist, at this stage drawing especially on the thoughts of Mao Tse Tung and Che Guevara.

Concomitant with this revolutionary direction, the BPP has certain deformations which have to be cleared up if it is to continue to grow and increase its influence in the black community. Firstly, the Panthers have to decide whether they are going to become a political party or just purely a self-defense group. The two concepts are not mutually exclusive, but organized armed self-defense is clearly a subordinate operation of a political party.

The actions of a political party have to be designed for the highly centralized, industrialized Hell called North America, not for the jungles and mountains of Latin America. Under the circumstances in North America the execution of the Beast will not take place according to the strategic dictums of Mao, Guevara, Castro, or Debray, but according to the strategic dictums of the May-June events in France.

The image and activities of a political party must not be just associated with the gun. To take control of the black community a political party will have to educate and organize the people around the issues of housing, the rotten school system, unemployment, the debilitating welfare system, taxation, medical care, demeaning jobs, the war and the draft, and government representation, as well as self-defense.

This will not be a an over-night job but a job that will be accomplished only with a long term perspective. A revolutionary lives for tomorrow, not for today. The Bloods must be politically educated as well as politically agitated.

A second mistake made by the Panthers was the electoral alliance, or coalition, entered into with the Peace and Freedom Party. The justification for the alliance is that the reformist-minded Peace and Freedom formation is a revolutionary party. The initiation of the alliance around the defense of Huey P. Newton was correct. But the transformation of this alliance into an electoral coalition was incorrect.

The Peace and Freedom Party obtained over 100,000 signatures in California to achieve ballot status by basing itself on the rising antiwar and anti-Johnson sentiment in the country. The party's

subsequent evolution was not marked by any conscious effort to build a revolutionary party, but was marked by reactions to the actions of the two major capitalist parties.

When Johnson dropped out of the presidential race thousands of people who had registered Peace and Freedom re-registered as Democrats. At the California convention last March no attempt was made to pick a presidential candidate until it was clear who was going to be nominated by the Democrats and Republicans.

Owing to the influence of the Independent Socialist Clubs and liberals the program of the California Peace and Freedom Party ignores the basic economic and social differences between the Soviet Union and the United States. It equates Soviet foreign policy with the foreign policy of American capitalism, and calls both imperialist.

At their national convention in August Peace and Freedom adopted a program limited to reforms of the capitalist system. Such a program cannot possibly build an anticapitalist movement. This type of program opens the way to being co-opted or outflanked by the capitalist parties. Programs such as this also produce illusions about being able to get real change through the ballot box.

The adhesive tape that has kept the many factions in Peace and Freedom together is the electoral alliance with the Black Panther Party and, now, the presidential campaign of Eldridge Cleaver. The centrifugal nature of this party is expressed by the fact that each statewide Peace and Freedom unit gets to pick its own vice-presidential candidate.

In contrast to this confusion and illusion-ridden campaign stands the electoral campaign of the Socialist Workers Party. The campaign of Fred Halstead and Paul Boutelle is designed to educate people about the nature of this society by way of the Vietnam war and the Afro-American liberation struggle. The Halstead and Boutelle campaign points out the necessity of socialist solutions to the problems plaguing North America. Their goal is to build a mass socialist movement to accomplish this solution. The use of the ballot by Halstead and Boutelle is designed to build and organize protests in the streets, not substitute the ballot for mass action. It is this type of unequivocal and uncompromising campaign that is laying the groundwork for revolutionary change.

Because of the ramifications of the Panther-Peace and Freedom alliance it will be dealt with later on.

The Slogan: Black Control of the Black Community

Out of the debate over the concept of black power, coupled with the actions of the people, has emerged a working definition of black power: Black Control of the Black Community. The struggles to remove the occupation army, the police, to take control of the public schools, to have a voice in the welfare system, and to take over other operations in the black community, invariably lead to the demand for black control of the black community. This control is negated by the social, economic, and political force that is exercised over the ghetto by the white exploiter.

The question is, can this domination be destroyed short of a revolution. We don't think it can. Some radicals consider the demand for black control to be reformist and opportunist. They see it as substituting the white-eye administration with a neo-colonialist administration. They take the election of black mayors in Gary, Indiana and Cleveland, Ohio to be proof-positive that this demand can be met this side of capitalism. Even some of the bourgeois figures, like Eugene McCarthy, have come out for some concept of community control.

But what we're concerned about is not the verbal lip-service of capitalist politicians but the revolutionary dynamics that are set into motion by raising the slogan Black Control of the Black Community. Black control doesn't mean control by one black person, but control by black people collectively. The black masses do not control the offices of mayor in Gary and in Cleveland. These offices are controlled by the white capitalist power structure. This power structure can grant tokens, but not collective control.

The people have to form their own independent organizations to take collective control over the community. To make Carl Stokes act in their desired manner cannot be done through the Democratic Party. Since Stokes and Hatcher belong to the political parties of the vultures in power, they have to act in the desired manner of the vultures, not the people. This is why Stokes called in the National Guard to occupy the black community last summer. Any illusion that black people run Cleveland should have been destroyed at that time.

Another example is the school system. Community control of the schools cannot be handed down through some decentralization plan of the vultures, it has to be taken by the people and operated through their own organs of power. The idea of the people building and operating their own organs of power is the revolu-

tionary logic of the demand for black control of the black community. It is this revolutionary logic that is key to all transitional demands, that is, demands that help bridge the gap between the present consciousness of the people and the necessary revolutionary solution to their problems. The ten-point program of the Black Panther Party is a transitional program. All transitional demands and programs look mild and moderate until placed into the water of living reality.

Take this revealing quote from a speech given by Mayor Hatcher of Gary: "There is much talk about black control of the ghetto. What does that mean? I am mayor of a city of roughly 90,000 black people, but we do not control the possibilities of jobs for them, of money for their schools, or state-funded social services. These things are in the hands of the United States Steel Corporation and the County Department of Welfare of the State of Indiana. Will the poor in Gary's worst slums be helped because the pawn-shop owner is black, not white?" Aside from Mayor Hatcher's superficial understanding of the concept of black people running their own communities, it is obvious that if black people are going to take control of Gary they will have to step outside the bounds of the system of private property and organize to collectively run the United States Steel Corporation.

Black people in Detroit will have to deal with the Chrysler and Ford auto plants if they really want to run their own community. Cuban control of Cuba took a socialist revolution to accomplish it. Nothing less than that will accomplish black control of the black community.

The Question of Alliances

Now we come back again to the question of alliances. If we know where we want to go, then all of our alliances will serve to help us achieve that goal.

While fighting the struggle for self-determination here at home, revolutionary black nationalists have sought to link-up their cause with that of Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans fighting for the same demands abroad. The common factor of white oppression also unites Afro-Americans with Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, and Indian Americans here at home. These alliances formed on the international and national levels are of the highest caliber, alliances involving revolution, the destruction of the white capitalist oppressor. Such a revolutionary alliance was symbolically forged between the revolutionary vanguard and the Latin American vanguard when Carmichael appeared at the OLAS conference last year.

So far the alliances that we have considered are those between the revolutionary vanguards of the black, brown, red, and yellow peoples. As opposed to these long term alliances we should launch into a discussion of short term alliances. The former might be labeled strategic alliances, whereas the latter are tactical alliances.

A tactical or short term alliance might involve participation in a demonstration against the war in Vietnam, or the building of a legal defense committee to defend victims of a frame-up or the rights of radical political organizations. Tactical alliances usually unite diverse political forces around a single issue,

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or into what is known as a united front.

The Student Mobilization Committee is an example of a single-issue coalition. In this organization people of varying political persuasions, from pacifism to revolutionary socialism, are united in an effort to end the war in Vietnam by bringing the troops home now. NBAWADU, the National Black Anti-War Anti-Draft Union, was a coalition of black organizations and people who wanted to organize the black community against the war and the draft. It was built mainly through the student strike of last April 26.

Last December antiwar alliances were built to stage a week of demonstrations against the draft. In February of this year a coalition was built to support Professor Harry Edwards' call to boycott a track meet held by the lily-white New York Athletic Club.

Two years ago the Fort Hood Three Defense Committee arose to defend the rights of three GIs who refused to go to Vietnam. Because one of the GIs was an Afro-American, and another a Puerto Rican, nationalists and black power advocates participated in the defense.

After the brutal attack on Leroy Jones by Newark police during the rebellion last year an Ad Hoc Committee of Afro-American Artists and Writers was formed. This committee's function was to raise funds for the legal defense of Jones and rally public support for him.

All of the above united-front alliances and coalitions were established to fulfill a specific purpose or carry out a specific action. These alliances did not involve any attempt to gloss over the political and ideological differences of the participants.

Many times, white radicals and black militants confuse this single-issue type of alliance with a strategic alliance, or political bloc.

A case in point is the defense of Huey P. Newton. From a specific alliance to defend Newton, the Panther Party's working relationship with Peace and Freedom evolved into a political alliance that is supposed to aid in the liberation of the black nation.

A specific alliance with the Peace and Freedom Party to defend Newton is justifiable. In fact, each and every organization that is willing to defend Newton's constitutional rights, even if they do not agree with Newton's political views, should be incorporated into a legal defense organization. Such a defense organization should include black liberals as well as white liberals. In this way the task of raising funds and getting

publicity would be made much easier.

To take up the question of strategic alliances between black and white revolutionaries, using the BPP-PFP alliance as an example, you have to deal with the nature of this society. What is also at stake in such alliances is how to further the fight against racial oppression.

Granting that the society has a capitalistic nature, a nature based on the right of private property being the most cherished of all rights, then the society is essentially divided into a class of owners and a class of the propertyless. (In this context, property does not mean a shirt, a pair of trousers, or a house, but property that affects the lives of hundreds of thousands and millions of human beings, such as banks, factories, real estate, and government and higher financial institutions.)

The class of owners constitutes what is known as the bourgeois or capitalist class. In the age of imperialism, where a few powerful capitalist nations have carved up the world, the capitalists form combines and trusts which monopolize one particular industry or a set of different industries. Henry Ford II is an example of a monopoly capitalist who specializes in automobiles. The Rockefellers are a monopoly capitalist family running oil companies like Standard Oil, and banks like Chase Manhattan.

The class of the propertyless is known as the workers, or working class. A little less than one quarter of the 80 million membered working class in the United States is organized into economic defense organizations called trade unions. These unions are now run in a high-handed manner by bureaucrats and labor toms who used to know what it was like to be a worker.

In this country you not only have this class division but a race division as well, where whites collectively oppress blacks. As was mentioned before, this black labor force forms a pool of cheap labor for the benefit of the monopoly capitalists. Black people make up what is known as an intra-colonized nation.

Flowing from this analysis, the two main social forces that can move in a revolutionary political fashion against the capitalist power structure are black people as a people and the working class--both black and white.

Any political party that programmatically stands in the zone between the capitalists and the workers is building its base on sand, and it will eventually be swept into the dust heap by the forward march of history. The Peace and

Freedom Party is a contemporary example of such a party. Programmatically, the 1948 Progressive Party of Henry Wallace is its predecessor.

The Peace and Freedom Party is the worst electoral expression of white middle-class liberalism and faint-hearted radicalism. Such a party, with no working class base or working class program, will wind up pleading to the monopolists for social change rather than looking toward the mobilization of the people.

This comes out explicitly in the way Peace and Freedom and a lot of white radicals perceive racism in this society. Many radicals see racism as a dirty, nasty, bad idea that has somehow permeated society. It is a dirty, nasty, bad idea that has to be expelled from the psyches of white people. To these radicals organizing in the white community comes to mean organizing this amorphous group of people called "white people" around their guilty racist consciences.

One of the motivations for running Eldridge Cleaver as the presidential candidate of Peace and Freedom is to help the white community fight its racism. Therefore, for some people, support to the Black Panther Party becomes not an act of political solidarity, but an act by which a white radical shows that he or she has overcome his or her racist conscience. This is just another sophisticated version of white paternalism, smacking of the missionary complex. This is the same approach the ruling class uses, attacking the effect, white racism, not the cause, white racist oppression as a tool of rule for the North American capitalist class.

What did the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders blame as the cause of the urban rebellions? Why, white racism. In the words of one of the chief commissioners, U.S. Senator Fred Harris: "When my colleagues and I on the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders concluded that the deepest cause of the recent riots in our cities was white racism, we went as directly as we knew how to the heart of the matter." The heart of the matter is white capitalist society, upheld by racist institutions, one of them being the Democratic Party, to which Mr. Harris belongs. Mr. Harris fights white racism by supporting Hubert Horatio Humphrey for president.

The most ridiculous effort to be set afoot is this "Give a damn" campaign of the Urban Coalition. Psych yourself into wearing a "Give a damn" button and you've KO'd racism. What quackery! North America may be in the atomic age technologically, but politically it is still in the stone age.



HUEY P. NEWTON

The ruling class approach to racism, designed to buttress its rule, becomes that of the middle class, since the middle class has no approach of its own. This approach may mobilize a few nuts in suburbia, but not white workers. The class approach is the only sane approach to the problem. It is this approach that will bring about the decomposition of this class society with the subsequent destruction of the vultures and their racist institutions.

The only way the psyche of the white worker will begin to rethink the question of racism is when he begins to see how it goes against his own self-interest. The redneck knows that black armed self-defense will have direct consequences for him, whereas the policy of nonviolent resistance allows him to continue his racist aggression.

At the present juncture, the way sections of white workers will radicalize will be through issues such as opposition to the imperialist war in Vietnam. The white worker will not oppose the Vietnam war on moral grounds alone or because of pacifist principles, he will come out and oppose the war when taxation, rises in the cost of living (inflation), and use of his relatives as cannon fodder make it impossible for him to continue to support



HUEY P. NEWTON

the war. His "patriotism" goes out the window when his pay-check can't make ends meet.

While the North American worker bitches in front of his television about the war, it is only when he decides on some direct action that his radical education begins. In the streets he meets the repressive apparatus of the state and deepens his understanding about the Vietnam war.

As he comprehends the nature of the Vietnam conflict, he begins to transfer some of that understanding to the North American scene. He learns that it is not H. Rap Brown, but conditions, that breed black rebellions. Through further anti-war action in the streets and in the plants against the bootlicking trade union bureaucrats, he sees the need for solidarity with the Afro-American struggle. This solidarity is not born out of any soul-searching, but out of actual struggle against imperialist wars and misleadership in the union movement. Thus, it is such things as the Vietnam war and its economic consequences that will detonate the pent up anger and frustration of white workers, not "white racism."

The example of France is most illustrative at this point. It was the street actions of the French students that detonated the dam and allowed the 10-year backlog of grievances of the French workers against the Gaullist regime to spill over across the nation.

In the May-June events, the French students and workers understood each other because they were both talking the same language: power. If this power had been achieved, France's neo-colonialist setup in parts of Africa would have collapsed. It is when the North American white worker starts speaking the language of workers power that he will begin to understand the rebellious students and the captive Afro-American nation. And it is at that point that the Yankee empire will crumble as if it were made of sand.

The above is just a brief sketch of one of the many possible ways in which North American workers will be forced to take up the cudgels of revolution. This description dealt with the nature of this society, and the dynamic struggles that will be set loose when the masses begin to move against it.

Revolutionary Black Socialists and the Struggle for Self-Determination

When we say that the nationalism of the oppressed peoples in this epoch inevitably flows into socialist channels, that is not based on a pragmatic understanding of the Chinese, Korean, Cuban, and Vietnamese revolutions. This asser-

tion is rooted in a comprehension of events stretching over the first half of the 20th century. That comprehension begins with a digestion of V.I. Lenin's work on imperialism, and Leon Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution.

Lenin's work simply deals with the fact that capitalism has reached its highest and last stage — imperialism. This is where the world has been completely carved up by the Japanese, European and North American capitalist nations. It is a stage that is marked by the export of investment capital, which is utilized to strangle and stunt the development of the colonial nations through using the mineral and natural riches of these continents for the benefit of the advanced capitalist countries.

The question of how to deal with this imperialist state of affairs is answered in Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution. Trotsky argued that, given the atrophy of the colonial bourgeoisie because of its dependence on the landlords and foreign imperialists, the task of achieving national independence and self-determination lay upon the shoulders of the workers in an alliance with the peasantry.

In other words, as applied to pre-1917 Russia, this theory showed that it wasn't the Russian bourgeoisie that was going to lead the peasantry in the struggle against the landlords, nor reclaim Russian independence from the French and British imperialists, but that these two tasks would be accomplished by the Russian working class allied with the peasantry in a socialist revolution. It was this analysis, called the permanent revolution, which Trotsky laid down in 1905, that correctly forecast the nature and character of the Russian Revolution of 1917. It is this theory that has correctly described the nature and character of every successful revolution in the colonial world since World War II.

The application of this theory to the wilderness of North America produces the inevitable conclusion that the enchained Afro-American nation will achieve its complete liberation, i.e., self-determination, only through a socialist or anticapitalist revolution. Because the enchained black nation resides in the belly of the Beast, the consequences of a successful revolution by Afro-America will mean the liberation of this entire planet from capitalist exploitation and misery. To accomplish this deed, the physical, spiritual, and ideological armament of Afro-America must be of the highest caliber.

Concerning the ideological weapons, if they are not immune from the virus of bureaucracy, neo-colonialism, and imperi-

alism, then we are standing on a false foundation. Pseudo-revolutionaries are the product, and sellouts or aborted revolutionaries are the results of an infected ideology. Under the guise of nationalism and socialism, a lot of setbacks and atrocities have been perpetrated on the people. Witness the so-called nationalist governments in Africa, or the so-called Communist parties of Latin America. Using the pretext of "defending" socialism, the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia. Under the guise of nationalism, the interests of black people have been sold down the drain only too often.

On account of all of this, the tools of revolutionary Marxism, including the theory of the permanent revolution, are necessary in developing a revolutionary theory and program. To be a consistent nationalist, one has to become a revolutionary socialist or Marxist. Revolutionary nationalists are of the Che Guevara, Amilcar Cabral (Secretary-General of the PAIGC, African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, a guerrilla organization struggling to liberate "Portuguese" Guinea on the coast of West Africa) school of thought. Reactionary nationalists are of the Chaing Kai-Shek, Moise Tshombe school.

Black revolutionary socialists in the Young Socialist Alliance represent the growing number of nationalists who are becoming conscious Marxists, not just pro-Marxist or pro-socialist as the case may be.

The conscious black Marxists are in the very vanguard of the struggle. They are trailblazing toward the day when the black vanguard becomes consciously Marxist and the black masses achieve socialist consciousness as a result of the unfolding of the national and class contradictions in American society.

The black Marxists seek to build a cadre that will help educate and construct a black vanguard that is capable of organizing the struggle for self-determination. At the same time, black Marxists, through the Young Socialist Alliance, participate in the construction of a revolutionary vanguard for the millions of workers that will one day achieve socialist consciousness as a result of the aggravation and intensification of the class struggle. Both these tasks correspond to the dual oppression of Afro-America, speaking to the question of building revolutionary political formations that will untie the Gordian knots of national





oppression and class exploitation. Achievement of these goals requires the steeling of ourselves for a protracted struggle.

The job of black revolutionary socialists is to Afro-Americanize Marxism. Marxism is a social science that has strategic value the world over, but it has to be applied to each concrete situation. Fidel combined the revolutionary tradition of Maceo and Marti, two 19th century Cuban patriots, with the tradition of Marx and Lenin to forge the ideological armor of the Cuban Revolution. Revolutionary black socialists must combine the traditions of Martin Delaney, Nat Turner, Marcus Garvey, and Malcolm X with the traditions of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and Cannon to forge a suitable ideological armor. This can best be done through using the international revolutionary socialist heritage of the YSA.

The Young Socialist Alliance has inherited the reservoir of knowledge and experience gained over the past fifty years in North Americanizing Marxism. The combination of this heritage with the heritage of 400 years of struggle by Afro-America against white racist aggression and oppression will produce an invincible weapon.

When this ideological armor is constructed and organizationally reflected in the struggle of the people, the ending of 400 years of white racist oppression will be just around the corner. In this Hannibalian task, we can't afford to lose, we have a world to win!

Tasks

This analysis of the struggle for black liberation points to the following tasks which the Young Socialist Alliance should concentrate on during the coming year:

1. Young Socialists should continue and deepen their campaigns in support of 1) the struggle for black control of the black community and 2) the formation of a black political party. Both of these concepts point toward the long-run goal of mobilizing the masses as a necessary condition for revolution.

The demand for black control of the black community can mobilize masses of black people in struggle against the ruling class on issues such as schools, the welfare system and police occupation of the black community.

A mass independent black political party is the vehicle through which the struggle for black control of the black community can be organized. Such a party is needed to unite the struggles on all the issues which concern black people and

to pose an alternative to the parties of the capitalist rulers. It can have the perspective of taking power within the black community.

2. The YSA should support and participate in those organizations which are struggling for black liberation on the campuses, in the unions, in the antiwar movement, among black GIs, and in the schools.

Young Socialists should support and help build the Black Panther Party as the most important organization presently taking steps in the direction of building a black party.

3. During the coming year, the struggles for black control of the schools will deepen. It is around this issue that the most substantial organization of the masses of black people is taking place. This fight, which is mobilizing people in the community around demands which put them in conflict with the Republican and Democratic city administrations, can be important in laying the basis for an independent political party.

Young Socialists should actively support these struggles — especially those taking place in the high schools.

Black high school YSAers should participate in high school struggles for black control of the schools, for a black curriculum, and for the right to carry out political activity in the high schools. Black YSA high school students can help build Afro-American clubs in the high schools as well as recruit high school students to revolutionary socialism.

4. The struggles of black students on college campuses are also intensifying and becoming more political. Black YSAers on campus can help build Afro-American student organizations, participate in the growing number of campus-based struggles, and recruit black college students to the ideas of revolutionary socialism.

5. Young Socialists should actively support defense campaigns for black political defendants by participating in defense committees, by helping to build united front defense rallies and demonstrations, by raising money, and distributing defense pamphlets and buttons.

Those national defense campaigns that Young Socialists should continue to support include the cases of Huey P. Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, H. Rap Brown, the TSU Five, and the Queens 17.

Also of importance are the many local cases of the Black Panther Party.

6. Young Socialists should take part in the general discussion going on within the black liberation movement over perspectives for the struggle. This can be done not only through informal discussion and at public meetings, but through the expanded circulation of the Militant and the Young Socialist and YSA pamphlets and literature.

7. YSAers should educate themselves through classes and individual reading on the history and theory of the black liberation movement. This should include an understanding of black nationalism, Afro-

American history, and the history of nationalist movements in other countries. YSAers should be familiar with the works of Malcolm X as well as the writings coming out of the present day struggle, including such papers as the Inner City Voice, the Black Panther Party paper, books on the struggle such as Eldridge Cleaver's Soul on Ice, and such pamphlets as Vernon and Browne on black separatism.

8. Young Socialists should help to build the ranks of the revolutionary black Marxist vanguard by recruiting Afro-Americans to the YSA.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS AND THE FIGHT AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR

American Young Socialists have been leaders in the antiwar movement since it began with the April 17, 1965 March on Washington to End the War in Vietnam. The historic fight against the imperialist war in Vietnam has been one of the most important areas of activity for us since that time.

Over the past several years the antiwar movement has had an impact on the American people far greater than many, even active participants in the movement, realize. Tens of millions of Americans see a concrete alternative to the war policies of the ruling class in the demands put forward by the antiwar movement. While the war itself, and its effects at home, create doubts and confusion among millions, the organized antiwar movement can articulate the opposition of these millions, and help them clarify their own thinking on this question. The statements of antiwar leaders, and the leaflets and pamphlets distributed by the millions, have educated and convinced large numbers of Americans about the need to oppose the war, and have offered them a way to do it.

The antiwar movement has also, through its policy of nonexclusion, dealt heavy blows to the witch hunt mentality and anticommunist hysteria that existed in the 1950's and even into the early 1960's. Because the capitalist class uses anticommunism as a justification for its aggression abroad, this achievement of the antiwar movement has weakened the ability of imperialism to mask its true aims.

Moreover, the very existence of the movement itself, in the middle of a shooting war, has reaffirmed the basic right of opposition to the government's war policies. The rulers of this country would like nothing better than to outlaw all

dissent and opposition during a war, but the antiwar movement has made that impossible. And it will be even more difficult in the future to convince the American people that it is somehow "illegal" to oppose the government in time of war.

The movement on an international scale has served as a catalyst of the growing radicalization that is taking place. The first political act of many young people is the decision to join in an antiwar march, or to attend a meeting of the antiwar movement. Once involved in the movement, many begin to see that the war is not an isolated "mistake" of foreign policy, but it is a part of a perfectly consistent imperialism that is willing and ready to intervene in any country of the world. This role of the antiwar movement as a catalyst in the youth radicalization was most clearly demonstrated in France, where united actions against the war in Vietnam were able to draw together young radicals into a powerful revolutionary movement. It is important to remember that it was government repression of a student demonstration against the war in Vietnam that touched off the chain of events of last spring in France which culminated in a general strike of more than ten million workers.

Above all, the antiwar movement has the potential to mobilize the American people on a scale that can force an end to the war waged by the United States against Vietnam. The example of the successful opposition of the French masses to the Algerian war proves that it is possible to force an end to an imperialist war. To accomplish this in the United States would be an accomplishment of historic importance, and it is this perspective that we should keep foremost in mind when organizing and leading the antiwar movement in action.

Vietnam and the World Revolution

Since February of 1965, when Lyndon Johnson opened his second term in office by ordering the bombing of North Vietnam, the war in Vietnam has been the central focus of world politics, and of the international revolutionary struggle.

Revolutionaries in colonial countries have watched Vietnam carefully and have understood that Vietnam is the battle-ground for the entire colonial revolution. As Che Guevara wrote in 1967, "There have been limited confrontations on all continents...but obviously, at the present moment, the contradictions are centered in the territory of the Indo-chinese peninsula...."

The workers' states -- countries where capitalism has already been overthrown (Cuba, China, North Korea, the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries) -- have been divided on how best to deal with American aggression in Vietnam.

The imperialists have also been divided on how the problem should be handled, although they do not disagree that it is the most pressing problem they have to deal with.

The Communist, socialist, and other radical movements in the capitalist countries have also been forced to clearly develop, explain, and take action on their positions on the Vietnam war and the international antiwar struggle.

What is there about the brutal conflict in that small country that so dominates the entire world political scene?

Following World War II the focal point of the world revolutionary struggle shifted from the industrialized countries to the colonial world. Capitalist economies were severely shaken by the economic crisis of the 1930's and the devastation of the war itself. But, through the combination of the absence of revolutionary leaderships capable of taking advantage of the situation to make the revolution, and massive economic transfusions to Europe by U.S. capital, the capitalist economies were able to survive the crisis and stabilize themselves.

But imperialism could no longer maintain complete control over the colonial world. From 1945 on the colonial revolution erupted in country after country, from Indonesia to the Philippines, and from Algeria to the Congo. The first great breakthrough since the Russian Revolution was achieved with the success of the Chinese Revolution in 1949. In 1954 the French were defeated by the Vietnamese at Dien Bien Phu. In 1959, under the leadership of Fidel Castro and Che Gue-

vara, the Cuban Revolution was successful. Today it is the Vietnamese Revolution that is fighting towards final victory.

The struggle in the colonial countries, which most often begins as a fight for land reform and national independence, can only be successful if it moves against capitalism itself. Imperialism, and the native capitalist class through which it rules, has a vital stake in preventing any change in the status quo, and in preserving its control over the military, political, and economic life of the colonial world. When any movement threatens to involve the masses in militant action, even though it may be directed towards the most obviously needed democratic reforms, imperialism sees that movement, quite correctly, as a direct threat, and moves to stop it. As a result, the colonial revolution is forced to go beyond just limited reforms and proceed in an anticapitalist and pro-socialist direction if it is to be ultimately successful. The imperialists know full well that a successful revolution will put an end to their exploitation of any colonial country, and intervene to the full extent of their ability to defeat that revolution and preserve their right to maintain their profitable relationship with the colonial world.

With the weakening of the European capitalist powers in the Second World War and the increasing dominance of American capital on a world scale in the post-war period, the responsibility for the containment of the colonial revolution -- wherever it occurs -- has shifted to the United States. American imperialism is, in fact, the self-proclaimed cop whose duty it is to maintain capitalist law and capitalist order throughout the world.

For four years the center of the conflict between the colonial revolution and the protector of world capitalism has been Vietnam. The United States is fighting the war in Vietnam for stakes substantially larger than just the territory of Vietnam itself. The imperialists have set a military priority on maintaining a ring of bases surrounding China from which they hope sometime in the future to be able to launch their military campaign to restore China to the "free world" of capitalist investment and trade. Vietnam is a key link in that chain.

Success in Vietnam is also a political necessity in order for the United States to demonstrate to the whole world its ability to play the role it has abdicated to itself. If Vietnam should "fall" to the Vietnamese it would serve as a tremendous inspiration to revolutionaries everywhere. It would confirm the revolutionary perspective that imperialism can be defeated through resolute

armed struggle by the masses in the colonial world. On the other hand, victory for the United States would be a setback for the entire world revolutionary movement.

The worldwide conflict between two antagonistic social forces is centered in Vietnam today. The outcome of the struggle will have a profound effect on the whole next phase of the world revolutionary struggle. It is the understanding of this full significance of the outcome of the war in Vietnam that has guided the participation of the Young Socialist Alliance in the antiwar movement since its beginning. We have understood that to have an incorrect evaluation of the importance of the defense of the Vietnamese Revolution, or to have an incorrect analysis of how to defend it, means going wrong on the major political question of the day.

Internationally, the response of the different tendencies in the radical movement to the needs of the Vietnamese is the acid test for evaluating their program today. Any tendency that fails this test will be repudiated by revolutionaries everywhere.

Moscow and its allied "Communist" parties throughout the world have been caught in a tight bind. Their illusory goal of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism has led them to press for compromise settlements, and to try to persuade the imperialists to come to an agreement. For the CPs like the Communist Party in the United States, this has meant supporting and encouraging that section of the ruling class, exemplified by Eugene McCarthy, which thinks that the risks in Vietnam outweigh the gains that can be made for imperialism. For the Soviet Union itself, this policy has meant betraying the Vietnamese Revolution by failing to provide the Vietnamese with the kind of military equipment and technical aid that could make it impossible for a single American plane to violate the air space of North Vietnam with impunity, and would make it even more costly than it now is for the U.S. to maintain its occupation of South Vietnam. While some aid has been provided, it is meager in comparison to what is needed and what is available in the Soviet Union, and even so has been forthcoming only because of international pressure on the Soviet bureaucracy. It is clear that Moscow and its supporters would much prefer it if the Vietnamese would accept a "compromise" settlement and stop rocking the boat of relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world.

In Europe, where the pro-Moscow organizations have mass followings in several countries, and consequently have the power and authority to conduct mass anti-



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war actions that could seriously affect U.S. imperialism, they have completely defaulted on the job of leading such a campaign. Instead, they have put forward the nebulous and abstract slogan of "peace in Vietnam," which they counterpose to the demand for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops, and solidarity with the Vietnamese. They have attempted to divert the struggle from a mass political opposition into sending bicycles, medicine, and other token aid to Vietnam. They have consistently blocked united front protests because of their thoroughly reformist political position and their fear of allowing their members to come in contact with revolutionary students.

The Maoist regime in China, and the groups that follow its line, have not provided a positive alternative leadership for the international campaign in defense of Vietnam. While criticizing the Soviet Union for failing to provide adequate aid, China has followed the same treacherous policy. The Maoists have also consistently refused to even talk about building a united front to aid the Vietnamese Revo-



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lution. They consider it unprincipled to join in a fight against imperialism with tendencies with whom they disagree on other matters. By this sectarian and abstentionist stance, they provide the Moscow oriented tendency an excuse for not participating in united front actions, and only make it easier for Moscow to avoid giving meaningful support to the Vietnamese.

The Social Democratic tendencies on a world scale have been equally great betrayers of the Vietnamese Revolution. One of the few exceptions has been the Japanese Socialist Party, which has been active in the antiwar movement in Japan. In many countries where they are the ruling party, as in England, they have given open support to the war; elsewhere they have been completely divorced from the antiwar movement, as has the Socialist Party in this country.

Counterposed to these tendencies is a rapidly growing force of organizations and individuals who are consciously opposed to the reformism of the Social Democrats, the betrayals of Moscow, and the sectarianism of Peking. This growing tendency is based on a clear understanding of the importance of an international movement in defense of the Vietnamese Revolution. It is within this tendency that Young Socialists in the United States, and our comrades throughout the world, have provided initiative and leadership. It is this movement of revolutionary forces that has inspired and built the antiwar movement.

The internationalism of Cuba places that country alongside of this antiwar struggle throughout the world. The Cubans have openly criticized both Moscow and Peking for their failure to form a united front. Che Guevara expressed this internationalist outlook in the slogan "Create two, three, many Vietnams." Che's picture, along with that slogan, has been carried on antiwar demonstrations throughout the world.

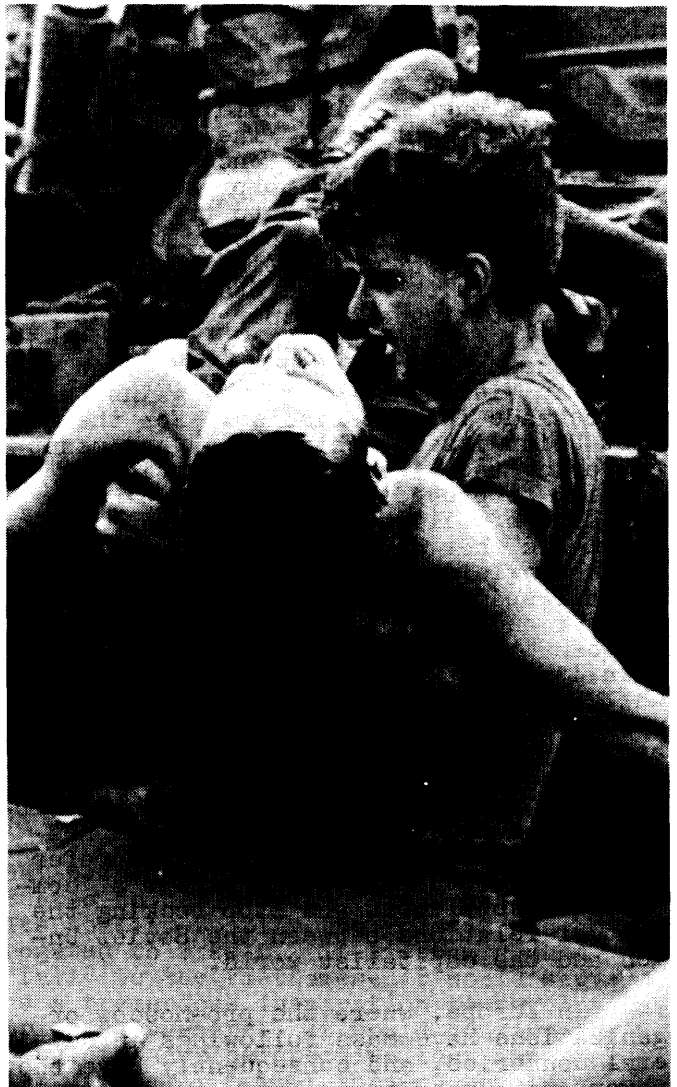
The Antiwar Movement in the United States

The international antiwar movement utilizes a different strategy and different tactics in each country, which vary with the political situation of the country involved. In the United States the movement is composed of many groups and individuals with widely varying levels of political understanding. But in the united mass antiwar actions that have been so successfully carried out, it has been made clear that the overriding and unprecedented characteristic of the movement is its willingness to take action against an imperialist war while that war is being fought, as part of the international movement against the war. The antiwar movement in the U.S. is anti-

imperialist in action.

At the same time that the movement is objectively anti-imperialist, it is subjected to tremendous pressures from those sections of the movement that think the war can be ended by strengthening that section of the ruling class that has doubts about the effectiveness of the war in preserving imperialism's place in the world. These class-collaborationist tendencies are opposed to the independent mass actions of the movement. They counterpose to those actions approaches such as supporting liberal Democratic Party politicians, and they counterpose to the demand for immediate withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam the policy of supporting negotiations as a way to end the war. The pressure on the antiwar movement from this side has increased substantially in the most recent period because of the presidential elections and the Paris "peace talks."

The antiwar movement is not homogeneous. Views range from those of the revolutionary socialists on the left to young people who are only beginning to





move away from liberal politics and towards independent mass action. In addition, new forces are constantly entering the movement. As a result, disputes and debates on political issues are constantly recurring within the movement. We will examine some of these disputes later on.

The organizational forms of the antiwar movement reflect these political realities. If there were in this country a mass working class party, one not totally rotten with reformism, the fight against the war could be organized by that party and carried out under its political leadership. But because such a mass working class party does not yet exist, the antiwar movement has evolved through independent committees in local areas, and united front formations on the city-wide, regional and national levels.

These independent committees, whether they are known as the Committees to End the War in Vietnam, Student Mobilization Committees, or by a particular event around which they were originally organized, reflect the objective need for an organizational form that brings people together who want to work actively against the war but are not yet ready to commit themselves to one or another political organization. While these committees have their periodic ups and downs, as long as the antiwar movement continues to grow these committees will be an important vehicle for antiwar action.

The united front committees that exist in many areas, and involve other groups along with the student antiwar formations, are valuable because they broaden the possibilities of action, and thus strengthen the student committees. At the same time, the students often provide the initiative for the actions of the united front groups, are usually the left wing of these coalitions, and add militancy and manpower for the united activities.

On the national scale the Student Mobilization Committee is the expression of the militant, student section of the antiwar movement. The SMC has achieved international stature as a result of its organization for the April 15, 1967 antiwar demonstrations, the October 21, 1967 Confrontation at the Pentagon, and the April 26 Student Strike last spring in which more than one million students participated in this country alone.

The National Mobilization Committee, the adult coalition which in the past worked with the SMC on actions, has suffered severe strains as a result of the pressure of the 1968 presidential campaign and the Paris talks. This was demonstrated by the statement of a number of the officers of the NMC, including

Dave Dellinger, a pacifist, in support of the negotiations in Paris.

The recent actions at the Democratic Party convention can be understood in this context. Officers of the NMC participated in demonstrations in Chicago during the Democratic Party convention in spite of the fact that it was clear beforehand that it would be impossible to prevent the demonstrations from being seen as pro-McCarthy actions, regardless of the intent or political position of the demonstrators. We opposed the demonstration for this reason, and we proposed instead actions in commemoration of the bombing of Hiroshima earlier in August, and the actions called by the SMC for October.

Given the context of the demonstration -- occurring simultaneously with the culmination of the McCarthy campaign -- no amount of militancy on the part of the demonstrators could have altered the fact that the demonstration would be seen as an attempt to influence the decision of the Democratic Party. Because the demonstration was relatively small, the cops were able to launch brutal and vicious attacks on the antiwar youth, and to successfully deny them their constitutional right to protest the war. This confrontation, while it did succeed in exposing the completely reactionary and undemocratic nature of the Chicago city government, including Mayor Daley and his cops, resulted in senseless and useless injuries and victimization of hundreds of young people. The lack of clear political direction at the demonstration is shown by the fact that the individual who emerged as the hero of the whole affair was none other than Eugene McCarthy.

If this type of demonstration were to become the norm of the movement, it would discourage the masses of Americans who are against the war from participating in antiwar actions, and it would lead to the demoralization of the antiwar activists.

As an alternative to this dead-end approach, we propose the building of mass actions, in the streets, independent of the politics of the ruling class, and organized in such a way as to make it difficult for the cops to successfully attack it. Through the mobilization of large numbers of Americans, as was done in April of 1968, we can produce victories, not defeats, for the antiwar movement.

The future of the National Mobilization Committee is unclear. It is not certain that it can return to its role as a national antiwar coalition, with the participation of the student section of the movement. What is clear, however, is that after the elections, if not before,

the antiwar movement on a national scale will create some organizational structure in order to coordinate the actions of the movement. Whatever form this structure takes, it will be the student wing of the movement, through the independent antiwar committees on campuses and the SMC, which will be the most dynamic and radical force within it.

GIs and the Antiwar Movement

The increase in antiwar sentiment and activity within the armed forces has brought the whole question of the relationship of the antiwar movement to the GIs to the fore. This is a question that has been discussed in the movement since its inception. The attitude of the antiwar movement has developed consistently towards an understanding of the importance of the soldiers as a social force with the potential power to stop the war. When the movement first began, the predominant line of thinking was that of the traditional pacifists who self-righteously accused individual soldiers of being "guilty" of sharing responsibility for the war. This attitude was the result of their view of opposition to the war as an individual act of conscience, some kind of personalized rebellion, rather than an essentially political act, based on a political analysis, and requiring a judgment as to how best to win over majority support for one's position.

But as the antiwar movement drew in large numbers of young people who saw bringing the troops home as a realizable political goal, and consequently were searching for possible allies of the predominantly student movement, the attitude toward the GIs began to change.

As is true of all the major political disputes within the antiwar movement,

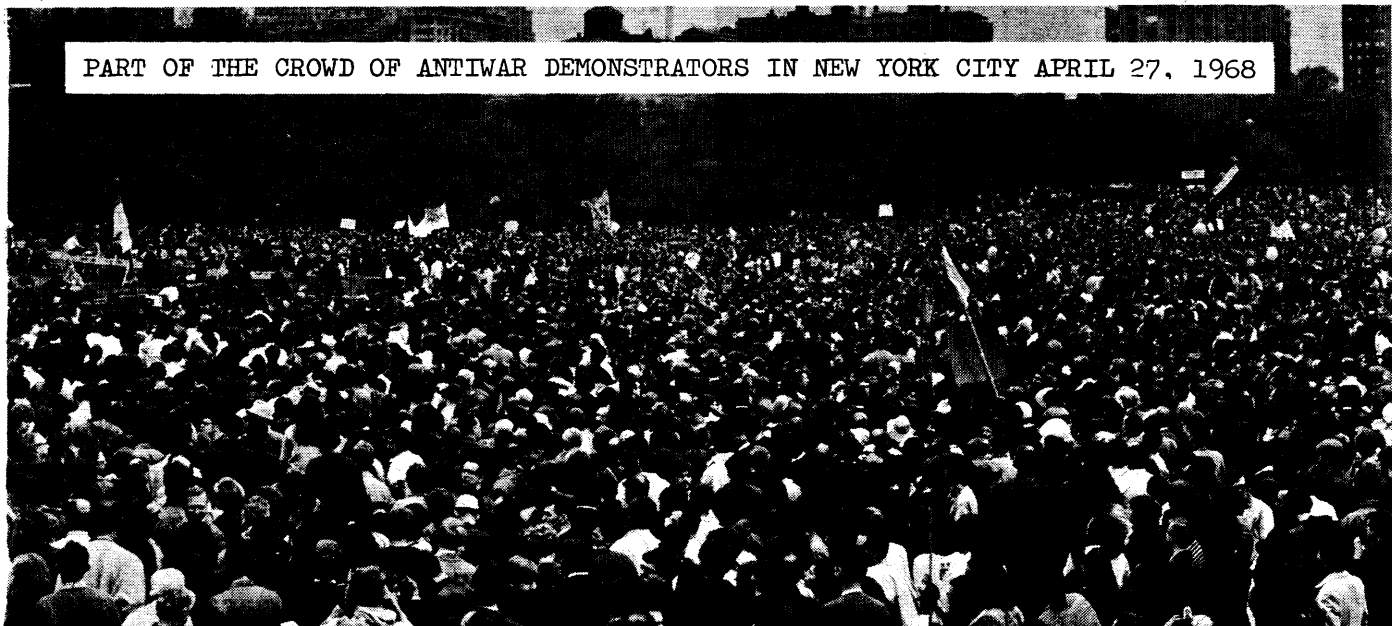
the evolution of the discussion was guided by objective events on the one hand, and the conscious participation of the socialist wing of the antiwar movement on the other hand.

Our position, put forward since the antiwar movement's inception, is that GIs are a crucial sector of the society to orient toward because of the tremendous leverage they have by virtue of their strategic role in society. To illustrate: while the ruling class can afford to continue the war in spite of demonstrations by a hundred thousand students, it would be impossible for them to ignore a similar action by a hundred thousand soldiers.

We think that the antiwar movement will have a profound effect on the GIs if the attitude of the movement is one of convincing soldiers that their interests are the same as those of the antiwar movement.

Imperialism needs a large standing army to be able to respond to threats against its interests all over the world, and it must draw upon the working class as a whole for manpower. GIs enter the army with the same doubts about the war as most civilians have, and many are openly opposed to it. While the ruling class likes to create the impression that draftees are removed from social conflict and immune to pressures and appeals from other sectors of society, this is simply not true. American soldiers are in touch with their families and friends, with the news of antiwar protests as reported in the news media, and are often in direct contact with antiwar organizations through the leafletting by antiwar groups, and widely circulated GI-oriented newspapers. In addition, there is an increasing number of active antiwar soldiers who are in contact with a wide layer of other

PART OF THE CROWD OF ANTIWAR DEMONSTRATORS IN NEW YORK CITY APRIL 27, 1968



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GIs.

Our position on the armed forces and antiwar work directed towards soldiers has been presented to the antiwar movement by young socialists active in antiwar committees and to the movement as a whole through pamphlets and in the Young Socialist and The Militant. The YSA published a pamphlet, GIs and the Fight Against War, in 1967. In his introduction to the pamphlet Fred Halstead wrote, "More and more the U.S. military force in Vietnam is composed of citizens who have enlisted under the hot breath of the draft. These are not mercenaries who have sold their souls. They are U.S. citizens who have a right to think for themselves and who do not lose that right because they are forced to don a uniform."

Important developments have convinced large numbers of antiwar activists of these views. The first major development was the case of the Fort Hood Three, which broke in the summer of 1966. These three soldiers refused to obey their orders to go to Vietnam and were court-martialed for it. This case received wide coverage in the press and was actively supported by the organized antiwar movement. The importance of the case was that it made clear that, just like everywhere else, there was substantial opposition to the war within the army, and this opposition was symbolized by the three soldiers involved.

A second very important case was that of Howard Petrick, a member of the YSA, who was drafted into the army and continued to express openly his antiwar and socialist views. For this he was threatened with court-martial. Because of the defense effort that was launched the army brass was forced to back down from this threat, and Petrick was given

an undesirable discharge from the army which is now being appealed. The Petrick case posed clearly the question of civil liberties and the right of free speech for soldiers. Petrick, unlike the Fort Hood Three, was not charged with disobeying an order. The pamphlet entitled Free Speech for GIs, published by the Committee to Defend the Rights of Pfc. Howard Petrick, convinced many antiwar activists that there were many GIs opposed to the war, and encouraged other soldiers to fight for their legal rights to discuss the war and to disagree with the war policy of the government.

Currently, an important legal defense is being built for two GIs who have been threatened with court-martial. They are both members of the Young Socialist Alliance. Allen Myers, stationed at Fort Dix, New Jersey was charged with violating a post regulation by distributing a leaflet prepared by the Philadelphia SMC. Walter Kos, at Fort Bragg, N.C., is being charged on a similar basis for passing out a GI newspaper. These cases deal with the constitutional right of GIs to distribute antiwar literature. Defense of these cases, and others like them, can concretely show that the antiwar movement has the same interests as the GIs.

The defense cases mentioned here are only several of what has been a whole series of cases involving soldiers who have been persecuted for opposing the war. Others include the cases of Andy Stapp, Howard Levy, Ronald Lockman, and many others that are less well known.

While these cases were early indicators of the fact that the army was not monolithic and immune to pressure, developments in the past year have shown that significant numbers of GIs oppose the war and many are making their views known.





This deep antiwar sentiment, deepened by the controversies in the presidential campaign, and the frustration of hopes for success of the Paris "peace talks," has begun to appear in the form of organized actions of protest by GIs themselves.

Some recent developments include:

*A demonstration is being organized for October 12 in San Francisco by a group of active-duty soldiers in the Bay Area.

*At Fort Hood, Texas 60 black soldiers staged a protest against their possible assignment to Chicago to suppress demonstrations outside the Democratic Party convention.

*In Vietnam, prisoners in the Marine brig at Da Nang and the Long Binh jail near Saigon have staged protests against regulations which they think are unfair (such as saying "Sir" to guards); a major element in this development was rebellion by black GIs against racism in the prisons.

We can expect much larger and more frequent organized expressions of dissent in the armed forces in the future.

One of the most important and effective sustained activities is the publication of various GI antiwar newspapers that have appeared in the last year or two. These papers vary widely in political outlook and in the extent to which they actually reflect the feelings and needs of the soldiers. Two of the best of these papers are Vietnam GI and Task Force.

What perspective can antiwar GIs and student activists who support them have about future developments in the armed forces? The pressures that produce organized protests among soldiers will continue and intensify. In addition, as draft calls continue at a high rate, more individuals who have some organizational experience in the antiwar movement or in the black struggle will find themselves in the army. Although the U.S. army is not the Tsar's army of 1917 in Russia, it is a certainty that the expressions of antiwar sentiment will expand even more rapidly than in the past years. This additional section of the population opposed to the war adds great social weight to those already protesting and therefore greatly expands the possibility of forcing an end to the war.

The approach of young socialists to this development is clear. We do not advocate, and we don't think others should advocate, that soldiers should deliberately violate military regulations or commit any other illegal acts. Actions that violate regulations subject individuals to victimization by the brass, who watch carefully for a chance to punish and isolate dissenters in the army. Secondly,

illegal acts are neither necessary or effective at this time. The best response from the soldiers who oppose the war will be to actions which they can participate in without being subjected to court-martial or other punishment. Such activities as leafletting, circulating petitions, demonstrating, holding public meetings, etc., are all perfectly legal within army regulations and the U.S. Constitution even though local army authorities may try to stop them. It is through such actions that the largest number of soldiers will become involved in active opposition to the war, and it is this that will have the most powerful impact.

The Antiwar Movement, Labor, and the Afro-American Struggle

The antiwar movement is paralleled by, and related to, the struggle of Afro-Americans and the labor movement. While the growing number of strikes by trade unions, and the militant actions of blacks are not explicitly antiwar, the very fact that they occur and are deepening in the midst of the war gives them the effect of weakening the position of American imperialism in Vietnam, and further deepening the crisis faced by the ruling class in this country.

The one thing that has dominated the attitude of the masses of Americans towards the war in Vietnam has been the refusal to sacrifice for the war, and the refusal to subordinate their demands to support for the war.

The standard of living of American workers is being eroded through inflation and tax increases, both of which are intensified by the war. As a result, workers have to fight harder to preserve their standard of living, let alone make any improvements in it. The past two years have seen a sharp increase in strike activity.

The struggle of the Afro-Americans is deeper and more radical than that of the labor movement. Almost every Afro-American organization has taken a stand in opposition to the war in Vietnam. These positions vary from solidarity with the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (a position taken by SNCC and the Black Panther Party) to a liberal position of calling for an end to the bombing (advocated by the NAACP and SCLC). Some organizations have participated to varying degrees in the actual work of antiwar coalitions during the preparations for mass actions. The various black student organizations that have been formed in the last year or two on almost every college and university campus have also been involved to one degree or another in antiwar actions. In the high schools, large numbers of black students participated in the April 26, 1968 Student Strike.

The mass actions of the antiwar movement have made it impossible for the union bureaucrats and Negro Uncle Toms to use the war in Vietnam as an excuse for not engaging in militant actions. In fact, the pressure has been so great that many have felt it opportune to make statements critical of the war.

The goal of the antiwar movement is to reach out to these layers of the population who, along with the GIs themselves, have the raw power to stop this war, power which the students by themselves lack.

Issues Facing the Antiwar Movement

The antiwar movement has been, since its inception, the scene of political disputes covering a wide range of questions. We consider the discussions within the antiwar movement to be crucial for the future of the antiwar movement itself, as well as being one of the best opportunities we have for presenting our program and winning recruits to socialism.

Underlying the disputes in the movement is the central question of whether the movement should head in the direction of mobilizing masses of Americans against the war independently of the ruling class and its policies, or whether the antiwar movement should be oriented towards becoming a pressure group for (and consequently being dependent on) liberal capitalist politicians. The socialist wing of the movement, along with many of the activists in the high schools and on the college campuses, have been supporters of the first orientation. The liberals, along with their allies in the Communist Party and other reform-minded groups, have consistently fought for the second approach.

A clear expression of the difference in approach was the McCarthy campaign and its influence on the antiwar movement. The McCarthy campaign, as McCarthy himself stated, was designed to redirect energy used in marches and protests and use it "constructively" to organize support for him in the Democratic Party. There can be no doubt that McCarthy was able to disorient (at least temporarily) many activists who thought they could find the road to peace by supporting the liberal capitalist politician McCarthy.

While McCarthy and his fellow Democrats clearly saw his campaign as an alternative to the mass street actions of the antiwar movement, many activists did not see the contradiction that exists between independent actions in the streets and liberal pressure politics, and they continued to support actions of the antiwar movement while simultaneously working for McCarthy.

Counterposed to the McCarthy campaign and all similar "peace" crusades stands the Halstead and Boutelle campaign as an example of the kind of electoral activity that antiwar militants should support. The Halstead-Boutelle campaign has been the only campaign that has built the antiwar movement rather than competed with it. The candidates themselves, and the program they stand for, urge full support to mass actions against the war. Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle have been among the most vigorous supporters and organizers of the antiwar movement.

While the Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle have been successful in winning many antiwar activists to the campaign, at the present stage of political development of the antiwar movement it would be a mistake for the movement as such to engage in any kind of electoral activity. The basis of the antiwar coalition is unity in action against the war. Any attempt to involve the movement in electoral activity will split it, and aid only the opponents of mass action.

Those who support Halstead and Boutelle are only a part of the total number who oppose the war and are willing to join in actions against it. Many militant antiwar activists are opposed to any electoral activity, others support the Peace and Freedom Party, liberal Democrats, or the Communist Party campaign. For any antiwar group to make support for Halstead and Boutelle a condition for joining an antiwar demonstration, or belonging to an antiwar committee, would only reduce the numbers that would participate.

"Single-Issue Vs. Multi-Issue"

The antiwar movement and the struggles of labor and Afro-Americans are all part of a deepening, interconnected, mass struggle against imperialism. As the working class and black struggles increase in intensity, they cannot avoid dealing with the most pressing question in American politics today -- the question of the imperialist war in Vietnam. We encourage the deepening of these struggles and work for it in every way open to us.

However, advocacy of a "multi-issue" program for the antiwar movement by the liberals and the reformists has nothing in common with these real struggles. Rather it is a smokescreen designed to hide a rightward move away from mass action against the war, and a confrontation with the ruling class on that issue. When a grouping, led by pacifists and the Communist Party, under pressure from the McCarthy campaign and the Paris talks, wanted to blunt the edge of antiwar protest, they walked out of the Student Mo-

bilization Committee saying they objected to its single-issue approach. They organized the "Radical Organizing Committee" which has yet to "organize" much of anything. Rather than building a "multi-issue" mass movement, they were successful in creating nothing more than a small, ineffective, reformist organization with no clear perspective and an almost non-existent following. Young Socialists are always ready to discuss and act on multi-issue programs. We think our program of revolutionary socialism is the answer to the world imperialist crisis. We do not, however, advocate the antiwar movement adopt this program because only a sector of the movement could accept it and such advocacy would weaken the mass anti-imperialist thrust of the antiwar movement.

The Draft

How to oppose the draft has long been a point of debate in the movement. As the opposition to the war grows, anti-draft sentiment will increase as well, and should be encouraged. It is necessary, however, to distinguish between two kinds of political activity that have both been referred to as "antidraft." The first, which we support and participate in, is the massive and militant demonstrations aimed directly at draft boards and induction centers. Picket-lines, street rallies, and educational leafletting in front of induction centers are also important parts of antiwar and antidraft activity, when the approach to the draftees is clearly one of support for them, rather than antagonism and hostility.

However, there is a second type of opposition to the draft that is quite different from mass actions. That is the focus on the individual who, as an act of conscience, refuses induction and consequently submits to prison or exile. While we support the legal rights of these men, and are opposed to their imprisonment, we do not advocate such an act because as an individual act it is completely ineffective in helping to mobilize the masses of Americans opposed to the war. At this time refusal to be drafted or to go to Vietnam is not a mass phenomenon, but the act of a few individuals without mass support. Various attempts by different groups to organize antidraft "unions" of draft resisters have invariably failed, even though antiwar and antidraft sentiment is on the rise. This is the clearest indication of the ineffectiveness of this kind of activity. The fact is that refusal to be inducted subjects individuals to long jail terms from which they are isolated from the fight against the war. Thus the government is successfully able to imprison some of the most militant and determined antiwar fighters. Such an individual act also provides ammunition to those oppo-

nents of the antiwar movement who charge that the movement is made up of people who oppose the war because they themselves don't want to fight.

Withdrawal Vs. Negotiations.

The question of whether the antiwar movement should call for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam or whether it should support negotiations has been one of the most thoroughly discussed questions in the movement. The debate has been rekindled by the Paris "peace talks." The socialist wing of the antiwar movement has consistently fought for the withdrawal position, making it clear that the United States has absolutely no right to negotiate anything in Vietnam.

The opposition to this has come from those who want to lead the antiwar movement in the direction of a pressure group for liberal politicians who are for negotiations but cannot accept the demand for immediate and unconditional withdrawal.

The demand for withdrawal has the most appeal to American soldiers and their families who know that GIs continue to die while the Paris talks stalemate -- and who remember that negotiations dragged on for years while American soldiers continued to fight and die in Korea.

The talks in Paris are an attempt on the part of the Johnson administration to take the steam out of the antiwar movement and co-opt the demand of liberal critics of the war.

The clear-cut demand for withdrawal is the clearest expression of support for the right of the Vietnamese to determine their own future, and is at the same time the demand that can most successfully mobilize masses of Americans in opposition to the war.

Mass Action

The key to the growth and effectiveness of the antiwar movement to date has been its ability to draw out large numbers of people in militant street actions against the war in Vietnam. It has been the impact of tens and hundreds of thousands of Americans visibly opposing the war that has done the most to shake up the rulers of this country, and to help push into motion wider layers of society. There are, however, sectors of the antiwar movement who, for various reasons, are made uncomfortable by these mass actions and proclaim that "mere numbers" are meaningless. In this category are the pacifists who think that they can wield a greater influence in a smaller movement, and who see political acts in terms of the individual rather than mass



action. Also in this camp are those ultraleft political groups who cannot see that the mass antiwar movement is, through its actions, objectively anti-imperialist, and who think that smaller but "more radical" actions would have a greater impact. Also at various times lining up in opposition to mass action are the liberals and their allies in the Communist Party who oppose mass actions because they contradict their line of electoral activity on behalf of liberal capitalist politicians.

The success of the antiwar movement, its continued ability to mobilize large numbers of Americans against the war, and the impact this movement has had, stand as the best refutation of the position of those who oppose mass action.

Role of Young Socialists

The Young Socialists, as part of the international socialist wing of the antiwar movement, have a special obligation to build the American part of the international movement in defense of the Vietnamese Revolution.

This means, above all, mounting massive protest actions, independent of the

politics of the ruling class. Within that movement we want to fight for the correct positions on the questions discussed above, in order to enable the movement to be most effective. The political fights that we have conducted have been decisive at certain political crossroads for the continued growth of the antiwar movement.

Our antiwar activity is at different levels. Young Socialists are activists in the antiwar committees on campuses and in high schools throughout the country, and often are in elected positions of leadership. As antiwar activists and leaders we want to continue to be the best builders of the movement, the most serious and enthusiastic campaigners for the antiwar committees. Unlike some elements of SDS, and groups like the Du Bois Clubs, we have absolutely no fear of becoming "over involved" in this movement because we understand its overriding historical importance and the opportunities it presents to win young people to socialism. Without the spark provided by the Young Socialist Alliance, antiwar actions in the past would have been smaller and much less effective.

As the socialist wing of the movement we have intervened at crucial times with our political program. We have presented our position in the antiwar organizations as well as through our publications such as the Young Socialist and our pamphlets, all of which are important parts of our antiwar activity. Young Socialists have often been the initiators of proposals for mass actions which might otherwise not have occurred.

In short, our political and organizational participation in the movement has been decisive in building mass independent antiwar actions, and this will be true in the future as well.

What can we expect will be the evolution and development of the antiwar movement in the next period? The remainder of the 1968 election campaign will take place under the absolutely unprecedented condition of mass opposition to a war in process, and to the policies of both the Republicans and Democrats toward the war. While there will inevitably be a development of support for Humphrey as the "lesser evil" the Democratic Party will be unsuccessful in its goal of returning antiwar youth to the fold. Nixon and Humphrey will be forced to engage in a campaign where they will have to face antiwar demonstrators at virtually every stop. Many of these actions will be quite large, and Young Socialists, in collaboration with other groups such as the Student Mobilization Committee, will want to join in initiating such actions and participate wholeheartedly in them.

3 国際反戦会議

ANTI-WAR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



The Student Mobilization Committee, along with other sections of the international antiwar movement, has called for an International Week of Solidarity - against the War in Vietnam and with American GIs, from October 21-27. In some areas actions will be held on November 2. While the coalitions of antiwar groups that have organized such actions in the past have been strained by political divisions accentuated by the McCarthy campaign and the Paris talks, these coalitions can be revitalized and new ones built on the basis of the unprecedented support that antiwar actions will receive this fall. The Student Mobilization Committee actions will also be the opportunity for the antiwar movement to make major steps forward in the direction of strengthening ties with GIs who oppose the war. A major feature of activities this fall will be attempts to organize the kind of actions that soldiers will want to participate in.

We can be confident that we will be successful in rebuilding and strengthening the antiwar coalition in preparation for actions this fall. We can also be confident that these demonstrations will be large and militant, and will express the repudiation by the antiwar movement of the policies of Humphrey, Nixon and Wallace. One key factor in this process will be continuing to build the Student Mobilization Committee. Through the SMC's initiative large, militant actions will be built. This means that one of the main tasks of the YSA will be build-

ing SMC on a national scale.

Following the elections we can expect that there will be opportunities to organize mass actions on an unprecedented scale. As the war continues, there can only be growing antiwar sentiment and an increased willingness on the part of broader layers of the population to join in these protests. On this basis we can take the initiative in drawing together broad coalitions to organize these actions independently of the machinations and manipulations of the ruling class.

As long as the war continues the objective base for an antiwar movement will exist in this country. This movement has already had a profound impact on the American political scene -- an impact that cannot and will not be forgotten. The antiwar movement has made permanent and irreversible changes in the political consciousness of large numbers of Americans, and has helped set in motion forces that will not be easily quieted.

With the line of action presented in this report we can build a movement capable of bringing the war to a halt. And insofar as we are successful in building such a movement we will strengthen the international revolutionary movement of which we are a part, and bring closer the time when we will be able to abolish the cause of war itself -- capitalism -- and begin to construct a socialist America.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPTS OF THE YSA (by Mary-Alice Waters)

Introduction

During the last year and a half the YSA has experienced a rapid growth. Hundreds of new members have joined our ranks, new locals have been formed in many cities and on campuses across the country, and our influence has grown rapidly. The pace of the radicalization, accelerated by the Vietnamese revolution and the Afro-American struggle, has also greatly increased the size of the entire radical left wing in the United States, relative to the late '50s and early '60s. It has brought new recruits to almost all of the existing radical organizations, and helped create new organizations -- all the way from SDS to the Affinity Groups.

YSAers are in daily contact with, work with, cooperate with, and often compete with all these various organizations. When we agree on certain activities we build together. When we disagree, we argue out the politics and try to convince others that we are correct. Our areas of disagreement and agreement are constantly shifting, but one question over which we disagree with all the existing youth groups and radical formations is that kind of organization needed to successfully lead the struggle for the social transformation of the United States. The other youth organizations all have at least one common feature -- they are not organized along the same lines as the YSA.

As the YSA expands, and works out new ways of maximizing the growth of the revolutionary socialist youth vanguard in the United States, we of course look around at what other organizations are doing and see if they have anything good that we can also utilize. We have no qualms about borrowing good things from other sources. At the same time, it is important that we have a clear conception of what kind of organization the YSA is, and what kind of organization we want it to be, so that we know how to take advantage of the opportunities we have for unparalleled growth and expansion.

This contribution to the discussion is not intended to be a thorough or exhaustive study of our organizational norms and concepts. It is written more in the hopes of clarifying a few ideas and discussing a few of the questions that we are all thinking about.

Where Do Our Organizational Concepts Come From?

The debate over organizational forms has been going on in the revolutionary movement for more than a century, and it has never been considered a minor or insignificant debate. Lenin and the other Bolshevik leaders of the Russian social-democracy were willing to split their party over the question of what kind of organization was needed.

Like the other major questions facing the revolutionary movement, the differing theories of organization -- small secret bands versus a mass party, politically all-inclusive discussion groups versus a politically homogeneous combat party, democratic centralism versus anarchism, etc.-- have been tested in practice over the years, and many lessons have been learned. Many lives have been lost due to unnecessary mistakes and incorrect policies, but a wealth of experience has been drawn together throughout the world revolutionary movement, including our experiences here in the United States.

Organizational questions are not abstract. An organizational form is not an end in itself, but derives from the political goals, the program of the group, and the organizational question is itself a political question of the first order. No organizational form is immutable; it must correspond to whatever is needed at any particular stage of the struggle, in order to advance the political goal of the group. But, at the same time, our organizational norms are as important as our political program, and we do not change them lightly or without thought.

The YSA is an organization that strives to win the new generation of radicalizing American youth to the political perspectives of revolutionary socialism, to the struggle for the socialist transformation of the United States and the world.

Secondly, we participate day by day in the political struggles of our generation, working to advance those struggles in a socialist direction, and attempting to train ourselves as revolutionary politicians who are politically solid and tactically adept at avoiding the errors of opportunism or sectarianism. Thirdly, we recognize that as

youth organization we alone are not capable of organizing the vanguard of the American working class and Afro-American national minority leading to a successful conclusion in the struggle for socialism. For that historic task a workers combat party of the Leninist caliber is necessary, and our work is aimed toward helping to facilitate the building of such a party. To that end we collaborate with and have fraternal political ties to the Socialist Workers Party, the only revolutionary Marxist party in this country, and the only organization that shares our political goals.

To accomplish our primary goals the YSA has decided to organize itself according to the principles of democratic centralism, the organizational form developed by Lenin in building the Bolshevik party in Russia, and adapted to U.S. conditions by the Socialist Workers Party.

What is Democratic Centralism?

Democratic centralism is not a static concept and does not lend itself to rigid definition and application regardless of time, place and circumstance. In its 40 year history, the Trotskyist movement in the United States has forged its own form of the Leninist concept in the heat of struggle under concrete American conditions. The YSA, as a youth organization, has adapted this form to its needs.

The YSA is a combat organization, in that we do not discuss and debate for the intellectual titillation involved, but to decide how to act, to fight to achieve our goals. In order to be effective we have to fight in a unified way, and for that reason we strive for political homogeneity, i.e., not for a monolithic organization that eliminates all differences and tolerates no disagreements, but for an organization based on a concrete political program around which there is fundamental agreement. As a youth organization that recruits many members through its activities, we don't demand that everyone who joins be able to expound and defend a revolutionary Marxist position from A to Z. We've never recruited anyone like that yet. But we are proud of our organization, and we expect members to have a basic loyalty to the organization and want to build it, and through the process of building our own organization, making our own mistakes and correcting our own mistakes, we learn a great deal about revolutionary politics.

Fundamental to the concept of democratic centralism is the principle of majority rule. That is, after a free and open democratic discussion in which all opinions are expressed, a vote is taken. The position of the majority of the organization is the position that is implemented in action. The minority is free to maintain its disagreements, but a single face

is presented to the public. The centralist aspect of democratic centralism is expressed in the fact that a democratically elected leadership is empowered, and instructed by a convention, to ensure the implementation of the decisions of the membership, and has full authority to act and speak in the name of the membership between conventions. Obviously, the decisions of the leadership are subject to approval or disapproval by the conventions of the organization, and the leadership is subject to replacement.

These practices maintain the internal democracy of the organization, and still safeguard the organization's ability to act in the most effective manner, i.e., with unity.

Why Democratic Centralism?

The need for an ideologically homogeneous and democratically centralized organization flows from the perspective and actuality of deepening social crisis and sharpening class conflict which makes imperative the revolutionary solution of basic social problems. If only a Leninist combat party is capable of organizing and leading the working class and its allies to the conquest of power in the main fortress of world imperialism, then everything we do must be aimed toward helping to build such a party. This is one reason for the democratic centralist organizational form of the YSA — to show in practice how to fight for and build toward the revolutionary transformation of society. We educate others by our example, and we learn ourselves in the process.

Secondly, democratic centralism is the organizational reflection of our revolutionary politics. It is a revolutionary form of organization, as there would be no need for both centralism and democracy unless a revolutionary fight were envisioned. On the other side, a democratic centralist organization with a reformist program is a contradiction of terms. The degeneration of the Russian Bolshevik party from a democratic centralist organization into a bureaucratic centralist party paralleled the abandonment of a revolutionary program by that same party and its adoption of the reformist course of "building socialism in one country." In a similar way, the history of the revolutionary movement is full of examples of individuals whose rejection of Marxism rapidly entailed a rejection of democratic centralist norms. And for good reason. If you reject the revolutionary potential of the working class, and the need for the socialist transformation of all society, you have no reason to subordinate even the most infinitesimal differences of opinion to that of a majority of those other individuals with whom you are working toward that common goal.

To illustrate the organic connection between organizational forms and the purpose for which an organization exists, it may be helpful to look at a few other examples.

Trade unions are the basic economic defense organizations of the working class. They have to wage difficult battles against the ruling class in order to even maintain the standard of living of their members, and are often faced with violent measures taken against them. Their main weapon is their unity in action and strength in numbers. From these factors the mass industrial union arose, embracing millions of workers and winning significant union battles.

They were organized along basic industrial lines. They demanded total unity when the majority decided to act (i.e., no scabs), but in principle no one was supposed to be excluded for political views, race, religion or any other similar factor. In the best of the unions, full internal democracy was assured, and democratic control over the leadership was guaranteed. Those were the organizational norms that provided for the greatest unity and strength in action, and assured that the leaders would lead the fight in the best interests of the rank and file. The norm that exists today, a union that is highly bureaucratized, centralized, and undemocratic, corresponds not to the needs of the working class, but to the narrow interests of the labor bureaucrats. New upturns in the class struggle will automatically entail internal fights against the union bureaucrats and the creation of a new leadership that represents the interests of the rank and file. The emergence of DRUM, the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, is a good example of this.

A second example of the relationship between organizational form and political purpose would be the antiwar, united front type coalition formations that have played a central role in the fight against U.S. aggression in Vietnam over the last four years. Their purpose is to mobilize masses in action in the streets around the single issue of an immediate end to the war in Vietnam. No one is required to agree on any other question, not even how to bring about an end to the war, and in fact the strongest coalitions have been those in which there has been the fullest freedom to express diversity of opinions not only on how to end the war but the goals and tactics of planned actions.

The norm of non-exclusion has been the keystone to the strength of the antiwar movement because, with such enormous diversity of opinions on every issue but the war, exclusion on the basis of any other issue would wreck the coalition.

A third example, on the other end of

the spectrum from a democratic centralist type organization would be a socialist discussion club. In such a group there need be agreement only on the desirability of debating socialist ideas, and the willingness to set the time, place, and topic for discussion. To demand agreement on any other question or discipline in any action would negate the purpose of the organization.

For instance, SDS, while not a socialist organization, has many members who consider themselves socialist. They are engaged in the "struggle for human freedom." But they have no internal agreement on what will guarantee human freedom or what means are necessary to achieve it. Thus there is only limited range for unity in action, and of course no basis for any disciplined action. The result is that even when SDS agrees to sponsor or call some activity, only a small proportion of the membership normally participates. And visa versa, when a big section of the organization wants to do something like participate in antiwar actions, the leadership, acting on its own, abstains totally or expresses an opposite point of view.

How Is the YSA Organized?

To start off on the most basic level, membership in the YSA is a free individual decision on the part of each person who wants to join. Thus, the YSA, as a voluntary organization, has the right and responsibility to define the conditions for membership in the organization. The provisions for membership are outlined in article III of our constitution, and set forth very clearly. First and foremost, membership is based on acceptance of the program and agreement to follow the politics of the YSA and engage actively in its work. In other words, membership is a function of fundamental agreement with our program. This is quite different from SDS, for instance, where anyone can be a member even if the person disagrees with everything SDS stands for and does. Fundamental agreement does not mean that every individual must agree 100% with everything the YSA has ever done or said. But if an individual disagrees basically with very many aspects of the YSA program he or she will find it very difficult, over time, to loyally build the organization and participate in the activities which derive from our basic program.

Membership also supposes a level of significant activity and financial support to the organization. Those not actively engaged in the work of the organization are not really qualified to make decisions on political perspectives or the implementation of these decisions. We are not arm-chair socialists, and we discuss in order to decide and then act. Nor are we an organization with two classes of citizenship -- thinkers who decide and activ-

ists who implement their decisions.

Financial support is considered a basic condition of membership because the organization cannot function without funds. A revolutionary organization cannot basically rely for money on any source outside the membership since it risks being cut off at any crucial juncture. Support coming from non-members is a bonus to be used but the financial base of the organization cannot be built on such bonuses. The degree of financial commitment to the organization is always a measure of political seriousness.

Membership is based on willingness to carry out the democratically arrived at decisions of the organization, even if an individual doesn't agree totally with those decisions. This is an aspect of our organizational norms that is often most difficult for radicalizing students to understand. They sometimes feel uncomfortable with it because it cuts across "individual freedom." But in an organization where membership is based on fundamental political agreement, and whose purpose is to help lead the American working class and its allies to a socialist victory, there is no more democratic form of organization.

Democracy is not a 'good' for some abstract, moral reason. Both democracy and centralism are essential for practical political reasons. Democracy -- the democratic process of collectively thinking out and formulating policy -- is the only way to maintain a correct revolutionary position over a period of time since no individual or small group of individuals will always be right and always evolve the correct positions. Democracy is no absolute guarantee that an organization will remain revolutionary, but without democracy it is guaranteed the organization will degenerate. Secondly, democracy is the only way to realistically maintain centralism which is ultimately based on the political agreement and commitment of the membership.

But if every individual is free to act as he wishes, even after the majority has decided a course of action, then in reality the concept of the democratic rule of the majority is being flaunted. Votes would be meaningless except for the abstract value of knowing what someone thinks about something, since everyone would do what he or she wanted to do anyway. An organization without internal discipline is fine if its purpose is to knit booties for poor children. But if your purpose is to be part of the leadership of the working class battles for victory over the most powerful, ruthless and centralized ruling class in the history of mankind, then an organization that does not base itself on the principles of democratic centralism is simply not serious about the task before us.

Another item under the membership section of our constitution outlines the procedure for every individual who joins the YSA to be voted on by either the local he or she is joining, or, if an at-larger, by the NEC. While this may seem unnecessary, especially since virtually everyone who wants to join is accepted, there are good reasons for it. Membership confers certain rights and obligations that we consider serious. Most importantly, membership confers the right to participate, on an equal basis with every other member, in making political decisions and determining the program and policies of the organization. The organization has the right to prevent individuals or groups of individuals who disagree with the basic ideas and purpose of the YSA from determining our policies and actions. The most democratic method of doing this is to determine by majority vote who are members and who are not, who has the right to vote on YSA decisions and who does not. Furthermore, if membership is not controlled by the members of the organization, we have no grounds to ask for disciplined activity from someone who never wanted to be a loyal member in the first place and never agreed to accept any of the obligations of membership.

The Local

The basic unit of the YSA, the normal functioning group, is the local. The overwhelming majority of YSAers belong to one local or another, although we also have a growing number of at-large members who live in areas where there are too few members to form a local. At the present time the size of the locals ranges from five to about 100 members, so each local has maximum flexibility on how best to organize itself. At one time, the constitution set a limit of 50 on the size of any local, but we changed that in 1966 as we realized that many locals would rapidly grow beyond that without necessarily wanting to divide.

Each local elects its own executive committee and organizer and they are responsible to the local as a whole. The local determines its own membership, decides on local implementation of national policies, and carries out all the normal responsibilities and functions of the organization, such as literature sales, education, fund raising, and other activities.

In several areas of the country there are clusters of locals springing up close together, which keep in close touch with each other and coordinate many of their activities. The larger locals have usually been able to free some comrades from other activities in order to spend time traveling to new campuses helping to recruit at-large members and establish new locals. This type of activity has been instrumental in the growth and expan-

sion of the YSA in the last months and has helped many new locals get on their feet and start functioning, and it is essential that we continue and increase this kind of expansion.

At the same time, however, it would be a mistake at this time to shift from this less formal kind of area-wide collaboration and cooperation to a more formal regional apparatus. A formal regional structure presupposes several strong locals and a developed and experienced political leadership in each region of the country. There must also be the resources to maintain a regional organizer, and regional executive committee, to hold regional conventions -- in addition to maintaining the high level functioning of the locals themselves and the national organization. To move too fast in the direction of establishing formal regions might, rather than help maximize recruitment and growth, turn out to be an organizational albatross, draining so many resources that it hindered our expansion, and if done prematurely, hindered the normal development of local leadership.

The most important next step is to increase the size and functioning of the national office, so that national field organizers can be on the road a high percentage of the time, supplementing and reinforcing the comrades who are concentrating on trailblazing and recruiting in each area, and helping to strengthen the national cohesiveness of the YSA.

Especially as we grow it is important that each new local see itself as an integral part of a national organization and in fraternal solidarity with the international revolutionary socialist youth movement. The YSA, unlike organizations such as SDS, is not a federation of local units, each with its own position and each carrying out its own political line and balance of activities. We are a national organization which decides policy on a national level at each convention and at National Committee meeting between conventions, and the same national policy is implemented by all locals. There are, of course, tactical variations in the application of our policy from one area to another, but our strength lies in our national cohesiveness and unified action. Just as one individual carrying out his own policy is isolated and relatively ineffectual, so one group on one campus or in one city can have only negligible effect, as compared to a national organization.

We have seen this many times in our own recent experiences. When the YSA decides to help build an antiwar action or conference we do so as a national organization, implementing the same policy everywhere in the country. When simultaneous actions take place everywhere, from Atlanta to Seattle, each one reinforces the

other and the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts.

Another concrete example of the tremendous effectiveness of a national organization was the work we did to build the Committee to Aid the Bloomington Students, to defend our comrades under attack at the University of Indiana. By acting nationally, and focusing all our work on defending our members, we helped build one of the best defense committees in recent U.S. history and succeeded in winning a total victory over the witchhunting prosecution of Bloomington, and setting an example for our entire generation. Needless to say, no one local of the YSA could have accomplished that task.

By extension, of course, the battle against world imperialism is an international task, and international fraternal collaboration among revolutionary socialist youth organizations is very important. The strength of the antiwar movement on an international scale, spearheaded by precisely these organizations, is but one example. One of the key tasks of the YSA as an organization is to increase our knowledge of the international socialist youth movement and strengthen our fraternal relations to groups like the former JCR, the German SDS, FUPI in Puerto Rico, the JGS in Belgium, the YS/LJS in Canada, and many others.

Conventions

The national convention is the highest body of the YSA. It settles all questions in dispute and its decisions are binding on all members of the YSA between one convention and the next. While the convention is in session it can make literally any decision it wants about the character and policies of the YSA.

We have learned over time and through practice that it is unwise for national conventions to try to set tactics or discuss the minutiae of various campaigns or projects as in such a discussion the more general political questions tend to become obscured rather than clarified. Thus, the job of the convention delegates is first and foremost to set the over-all political direction and outline the main tasks to be accomplished in the various areas of activity being carried out.

Conventions are delegated bodies, elected on the basis of one delegate for every five members in each local. In that way even the most distant locals from the convention site are assured of voting strength proportional to their weight in the organization nationally, and every member of the YSA is equally represented. Secondly, the delegates are elected on the basis of political positions, so any political disagreements in the organization are proportionally represented. If, for

example, two opposing antiwar resolutions were submitted to the organization nationally, one outlining a perspective for building antiwar coalitions and mass actions in the streets against the war in Vietnam, and the other condemning mass actions and the building of antiwar committees, and stressing community organizing instead, those two opposing line resolutions could constitute the basis for a political division in the organization. Both resolutions would be discussed and voted on in each local. If in some local the members were split 50-50 or 60-40, between the two perspectives, the local would divide into two caucuses and each would elect the number of delegates it was entitled to.

It is also entirely possible for a counter-resolution to be submitted by a single individual, or one or two individuals, who have no significant support in the country. If the resolution fails to win enough votes in any local to gain a delegate to the convention, then the counter-resolution need not be considered by the convention. If this were not the case, any individual, or a whole series of individuals, representing nothing but themselves, could dominate the convention's time and prevent the organization from taking up the serious business before it.

Every point of view is assured a fair hearing at the convention. However, the delegates are not mandated to vote at the convention the way they voted in the local. If, after hearing the arguments at the convention, a delegate changes his mind, he can change his vote. If this procedure were not followed there would be no point in holding conventions because everyone's vote would be determined before the discussion began.

In addition to setting the political perspectives for the organization nationally, it is the responsibility of the convention to elect a national leadership, the National Committee, with responsibility for implementing the decisions on a national scale. The National Committee is the highest body of the organization between conventions, and meets periodically to review the work since the last convention and discuss plans for the coming months.

The National Committee is not simply a body that is primarily geographically representative. It is a body that represents the political leadership of the organization. The convention, in selecting the National Committee, tries to assure adequate representation of leadership in all the various areas of work being carried out by the YSA.

Our concept of leadership is that of a team, functioning together despite individual peculiarities, strengths and weak-

nesses. Our attitude is the opposite of the "new left" anti-leadership mythology. We elect our leaders and assure they are responsible to the organization. If a leadership is not selected and elected, that does not eliminate leaders. It simply means that they emerge under conditions where they are responsible to no one but themselves, and subject to no democratic control by the organization. If no leadership responsibility has been delegated, then no one can ask for an accounting from those who really have been responsible. A good example of this is the way SDS operates. Even though a position paper on the "new working class" was rejected by the delegates to last year's SDS convention, SDS leaders still frequently push this line of analysis publicly.

The newly elected national leadership meets immediately following the convention to determine the best division of labor within the body. That is, only a portion of the national leadership can be freed from responsibilities in one local or another in order to devote full time to the national needs of the organization, such as the press, and day to day national political direction. The National Committee elects an Executive Committee to function in this capacity of day to day leadership, and elects the national officers of the organization who are directly responsible to the National Committee.

The national conventions of the YSA, and their discussion periods, are structured and organized to provide for the greatest democracy possible. Between conventions, the centralist side of the democratic centralism concept takes on greater weight.

Before going on to compare our organization's forms with those prevalent amongst our opponents and the "new left," it might be helpful to briefly define a couple of other terms that are part of our day to day organizational vocabulary: fraction and committee.

A fraction is exactly what the term implies, i.e., a fraction or percentage of the local, encompassing all those who are involved in a certain area of work. For example, most locals have antiwar fractions, bringing together people from different campuses, high schools, and areas of work, all of whom are involved in the antiwar work of the local. The fraction is not a policy making body, but rather discusses the implementation of policy decided by the local as a whole. The head of the fraction is elected by the executive committee (like other executive committee actions, this is subject to approval by the local as a whole) and is responsible to the exec for the fraction as a whole. The fraction can make recommendations to the executive committee for action, but cannot determine political

orientation by itself.

A committee of the local, such as the education committee or financial committee, is different. It is a selective body, not automatically composed of all individuals involved, but of those designated by the executive committee and the local to be responsible for that area of work. A committee elects its own chairman, and makes policy decisions, which are of course subject to approval by the local, and it may also be responsible for implementing the decisions. On a national level, the best example of a committee is the national antiwar steering committee, which is responsible to the National Executive Committee for directing the antiwar work.

Opposing Organizational Concepts

Many of our organizational concepts become somewhat clearer if they are compared to the norms of other organizations, such as the Communist Party, the social democracy, or SDS.

The Communist Party or Stalinist model, which also bears certain resemblances to the Democratic Party method, is one of centralism minus democracy. The degeneration of the Soviet Union brought with it also the political and organizational degeneration of the party that had led the revolution, and was the leading force in the Soviet state. Internal democracy was eliminated as political tendencies and factions were permanently barred. The expression of views different from those of the leadership meant immediate expulsion from the party and, in the '30s in the Soviet Union, also frequently brought a death penalty. Leaders, while still formally elected, were in reality appointed from the top down and the material privileges of the party bureaucracy gave added incentive to conformity. The Communist parties outside the Soviet Union rapidly followed suit as the Third International was dragged down by the Stalinist undertow.

While critics of Leninism often try to equate Stalinism and democratic centralism, the one is the antithesis of the other. The Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky was a party designed to lead the working class to power in Russia; Stalin's party was designed to strangle the spreading world revolution and protect the interests of a narrow bureaucratic caste.

The classical model of the social democratic party is the "all inclusive" organization, in which numerous near autonomous factions vie with each other in a permanent contest for organizational control as each goes its own way in public political action. There is no programmatic unity, and no discipline. Rather each tendency is free to publish its own paper or maga-

zine, engage in its own actions, and try to recruit to its own faction. While in principle all factions are welcome, in practice any revolutionary tendency that develops is rapidly excluded in one fashion or another.

Organizationally, SDS is a variant on the social democratic model, but with some interesting adaptations in the anarchist direction. It is the place where you see many of the anti-authoritarian attitudes of the "new left" carried to anti-organizationalism, even if it is their own organization. The premise on which SDS participatory democracy rests is that any leadership is bad because it tends to smother individual incentives and prevent each person from fully expressing himself. Thus, meetings without chairmen or agenda are considered preferable because they supposedly assure the greatest individual freedom of expression. While the excesses of the early days of "participatory democracy" in SDS have in most cases been overcome, the underlying premise remains.

As most of us who have sat through such meetings know full well, "participatory democracy" is neither participatory nor democratic. While everyone may be able to speak, the meetings are usually dominated by one or two articulate individuals who have some position they are pushing. As far as the democracy is concerned, since no votes are taken the consensus is established most often by the same articulate individuals, or by those who are interested enough (or able) to stay until the bitter end of the meeting. Far from guaranteeing each individual the greatest voice in making decisions, it insures that decisions will be made and implemented in the most undemocratic fashion, with no one being responsible to anyone for what happens. Participatory demagoguery is a more accurate description of the SDS method of organization.

There is another premise underlying SDS's organizational concepts that is worth commenting on because it is a common error. That is the idea that somehow, those of us living in the heart of world imperialism in the last half of the 20th century can escape that environment completely, that we can construct an organization which is unaffected by that environment and which will be an embryo of the future society where human freedom will expand to dimensions which are to us almost inconceivable.

However, the basic fact is that our organizational concepts must be conditioned by the enemy we are fighting. If we disregard the nature of the enemy, we will never be able to destroy him. Secondly, anyone who begins by rejecting the fact that being determines consciousness, and not visa versa, has a long way to go

before arriving at revolutionary conclusions, much less a revolutionary organization and strategy.

As Che Guevara pointed out, socialist man is an ideal that we all strive toward. We believe that the norms of relationships in socialist society will be superior to those which exist today and we work toward implementing those norms as

rapidly as possible. But that is quite different from thinking that the revolutionary organization under capitalism is the embryo of socialist society, of the socialist state. Its character is determined not by the future society it hopes to build, but by the present system which must be destroyed before that future can become a reality for all mankind.

November 16, 1968

INTRODUCTION TO THE REVISED YSA CONSTITUTION

(Adopted at the 1966 convention)

The first constitution was adopted at the Founding Convention in April, 1960. The delegates to this convention came from many different backgrounds in the socialist movement, and many of them had no experience with the way in which a revolutionary-socialist organization actually functions. Consequently their constitution was an educated guess at what would be workable--the errors of which the new constitution attempts to correct.

The changes in the constitution have been based on our concrete experiences. They are part of the process of growth of the YSA. The 1962 YSA Convention amended the constitution to include an age ceiling. At the 1963 Convention the YSA took a step forward by changing its Statement of Purpose. The timeliness of this particular change was driven home by many of the experiences of the witch hunt in Bloomington. Without changing our principles, we adopted a new statement which reflected more accurately the national as well as international roots of our political heritage. The new statement was also more appropriate for public use and for our campus units trying to get official recognition.

The experience of the YSA in dealing with specific problems related to the constitution led to another major alteration at the 1965 Convention. On that occasion we eliminated references to proportional representation of minorities on the NC and the NEC. The experience of having a disloyal member of the Robertson minority on the NEC taught us that this provision was a foolish obstacle to a responsibly functioning national center. In several instances the disloyal Robertsonites passed along internal matters to opponent organizations. Consequently a "dual NEC" developed with the majority NECers meeting separately to discuss the major problems and carry out the work. The sections on proportional representation had left the door open to putting the organization in jeopardy and to a necessary "winking" at a section of the constitution to prevent this.

These changes, however, did not eliminate many of the extraneous sections or correct all of the faults of the founding constitution.

At last year's Convention, the constitutional commission pointed out that many more amendments were necessary. Not only were there several sections that the commission thought to be wrong, but there were many that simply did not belong in the constitution if it was to serve its major purpose, that is briefly and clearly define membership--its requirements, rights, and basic duties--and define the relationship between and the responsibilities of the various bodies of the YSA. The incoming NC was instructed by the Convention to rewrite the constitution. In order to accomplish this task the drafters of the new constitution began by pruning--that is deciding what a constitution is not and what problems are not within their province to solve.

1. A constitution is not a statement of principles or a codification of our traditions and procedures.

For example, in drafting the new constitution the provision for granting fraternal votes to National Committee members at conventions was deleted. Fraternal votes to NCers is a tradition that we have practiced and undoubtedly will continue to practice, but it is not a defining feature of membership or of the relationship between YSA bodies. It is a procedural matter for the convention to decide.

Likewise, it will continue to be the norm for the YSA to have representation of political minorities on the NC and NEC. This is a good tradition, but it is foolish--as we found out in 1964 and 1965 --to make it part of the constitution as a formal requirement.

2. A constitution is not a collection of tips for organizers or locals; nor should it be a substitute for any needed

local by-laws.

One section of the old constitution states that chairmen of all meetings and committees shall have voice and vote and that the nay vote shall be taken first in calling the question. Clauses of this type do not set the boundaries on membership or define the relationship between bodies. They more appropriately belong in a local organizer's handbook than in the constitution--although the concept of taking the nay vote first is probably too weird to belong in either.

3. It is not the function of a constitution to foresee all types of future needs of the YSA.

For example, the founders of the YSA included two sections on district and regional organization apparently expecting rapid growth of the YSA. Regional and district organization will eventually be necessary but details like these are better left to a future convention to add when the pace of growth makes it necessary and the outlines of what a region and district would be and what functions they would carry out emerge.

4. A constitution is not a listing of actions that individuals and bodies may do.

If the constitution were to list all of the activities that comrades are allowed to do the list would become infinite and would mean turning the constitution into a manual of our organizational traditions. An attempt was made to include

only provisions defining what comrades must or shall do. If an action is not contradicted by the constitution that means it is not unconstitutional. It may be wise or foolish, right or wrong, but that is up to the bodies concerned to decide, not the constitution.

The draft also deletes sections that were too rigid or formal. Experience has demonstrated, for example, that there is no necessity in outlining specific duties for the National Chairman and the National Secretary. In fact it is an obstacle to a rational division of labor within the National Office. Also it is too easy to violate provisions like this. The National Secretary, for example, has not always been the person responsible for the administration of the national office as specified by the constitution. It is much better to eliminate irrational provisions and abide by the constitution than it is to keep these provisions and continually violate them. It is important that the YSA have a constitution that we do not take with a grain of salt. The NEC tried to draft a document that is simple enough to be understood, flexible enough to be workable, and rational enough to be treated seriously.

No constitution will solve any more than a small handful of the problems an organization of our type faces. It cannot do the impossible--that is solve major political and organizational problems or be beyond the need for interpretation. But a good constitution is an important part of the YSA's structure.

YSA National Office
January 26, 1966

CONSTITUTION OF THE YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

Article I Name

The name of this organization shall be the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA).

Article II Statement of Purpose

"The Young Socialist Alliance is a nationwide revolutionary socialist youth organization, uniting young workers and students around the banner of socialism and dedicated to the building of a revolutionary movement which can lead the working people to socialism. The YSA bases itself on the principles of Marxism as developed by Lenin and Trotsky, and on the traditions of the American people represented by such leaders as Sam Adams, Frederick Douglass, Wendell Phillips, and Eugene Debs. We believe that socialism can be initiated only as a result of struggle of the working class and its allies against the capitalist exploiters, which culminates in the creation of a new type of state, a workers' state. Socialism will mean that for the first time in history, man will control his own creation--society--rather than be controlled by it. The dynamic of socialism involves a continual expansion of human freedom in all spheres: in politics, economics, culture and in every aspect of personal life."

From the "Where We Stand" Declaration of the YSA adopted at the 1963 Convention.

Article III Membership

1. Membership shall be open to anyone under the age of twenty-nine who accepts the program and agrees to follow the policies of the YSA and engage actively in its work.

2. An applicant for membership shall be voted on by the local unit of the YSA in the area where he resides. In those areas where no unit exists, an applicant shall apply to the National Executive Committee (NEC) and if accepted shall become a member-at-large. A former member of the YSA shall apply to the NEC for readmission. The NEC has the authority to make exceptions in individual cases to the 29 age limit.

3. Every member shall belong to a local unit if such exists in the area. Exceptions to this policy may be made only by the NEC. Members-at-large shall be directly responsible to the NEC.

4. Each new member shall pay one dollar

initiation fee which shall be forwarded to the National Office. Membership dues are a minimum of one dollar a month, all of which shall be sent to the National Office.

5. Any member more than one month in arrears in dues ceases to be a member in good standing. Only members in good standing may vote or hold office in the YSA. Any member more than three months in arrears may be dropped after notification.

6. A member desiring to leave one locality for another must apply to his local unit for permission. A National Committee (NC) member desiring to leave one locality for another must also apply to the NEC for permission. A letter of transfer must be sent to the local unit of the locality to which the member moves. If no local unit exists in the new locality, the member shall also apply to the NEC for member-at-large status. A member-at-large wishing to transfer must apply to the NEC.

Article IV Local Units

1. Five or more members in a locality, upon application, may be chartered by the NEC and become a local unit of the YSA.

2. Each local unit shall elect an organizer and such other officers as are necessary to carry out the financial, secretarial, and educational functions of a local unit and to circulate the YSA press.

3. Each local unit shall elect an executive committee to act with the full authority of the local unit between meetings, and undertake such other work as assigned by the local unit. The organizer of the local unit shall be a member of the executive.

Article V National Convention

1. There shall be a delegated National Convention of the YSA at least once every two years.

2. The National Convention is the highest governing body of the YSA and its decisions shall be binding on the entire membership.

3. The National Convention shall be called by the National Committee which

shall provide for a preconvention discussion period of at least 90 days.

4. The National Executive Committee shall issue a call at the start of the preconvention discussion period. The NEC shall also issue internal discussion bulletins containing resolutions and discussion material that are submitted by members and bodies of the YSA. The NEC may set a deadline for acceptance of such material.

5. Local units have the responsibility to provide adequate time in meetings for discussion on resolutions submitted during the preconvention discussion.

6. The election of delegates to the National Convention shall be conducted by the local units. A member must have joined the YSA prior to the convention call in order to vote. The ratio of delegates to membership shall be determined by the National Committee.

7. In the event of a political division, delegates shall be elected on the basis of a proportional representation system as set by the NC in the convention call. A political division exists when there is a division of the vote on conflicting resolutions.

Article VI National Committee

1. The National Committee (NC) shall be the highest body of the YSA between conventions and shall have jurisdiction over all YSA bodies and publications. The NC shall be elected by the National Convention. The National Convention shall also elect alternates to fill vacancies in the NC in the order decided upon by the convention.

Article VII National Executive Committee

1. The NC shall elect from among its members a National Executive Committee (NEC). The NEC shall act on behalf of the NC between meetings of the NC and be responsible to the NC.

2. Among the normal functions of the NEC shall be the supervision of the National Office, national publications, and the appointment and supervision of the national staff.

Article VIII National Officers

1. The NC shall elect a National Chairman, National Secretary, and such other national

officers as it finds necessary.

2. All national officers shall be directly responsible to the NEC.

Article IX Discipline

1. All decisions of the governing bodies of the YSA are binding upon the members and subordinate bodies of the YSA.

2. Any member or body of the YSA may bring charges against any member for violation of the Constitution, program, or policies of the YSA.

3. Written charges shall be presented to the accused member in advance of the trial. Charges shall be filed in the local unit where the accused is a member and shall be heard by a committee it sets up for this purpose.

4. Charges brought against members of the NC or members-at-large shall be heard by a committee the NC or NEC sets up for this purpose.

5. The NC or NEC may decide to act directly in a case in which event its intervention shall supercede any local proceedings.

6. Any member subjected to disciplinary action has the right to submit a written appeal to the next higher body, up to and including the National Convention. This appeal must be filed with the NEC within fifteen days after the action being appealed. Pending action on the appeal, the decision of the disciplinary body remains in force.

Article X Miscellaneous Provisions

1. All decisions of the YSA shall be made by a majority vote.

2. Amendments to this Constitution shall be made by majority vote at the National Convention.

We socialists are freer because we are more complete; we are more complete because we are freer.

The skeleton of our complete freedom is already formed. The flesh and the clothing are lacking. We will create them.

Our freedom and its daily maintenance are paid for in blood and sacrifice.

Our sacrifice is conscious: an installment payment on the freedom that we are building.

The road is long and in part unknown. We understand our limitations. We will create the man of the twenty-first century—we, ourselves.

We will forge ourselves in daily action, creating a new man with a new technology.

Individual personality plays a role in mobilizing and leading the masses insofar as it embodies the highest virtues and aspirations of the people and does not wander from the path.

It is the vanguard group which clears the way, the best among the good, the party.

The basic clay of our work is the youth. We place our hope in them and prepare them to take the banner from our hands.

Che, SOCIALISM AND MAN



JOIN THE YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE!

PO Box 471 Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10003

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