NEW LEFT NOTES
Room 206
1608 West Madison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612

RETURN REQUESTED
Second-class postage rate paid in Chicago, Illinois

Students for a Democratic Society 1608 West Madison Chicago, Illinois

SDS NEW LEFT NOTES

Vol. 3, Number 38 LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE December 18, 1968

Calvert's conference: legal defense for political dissidents

by Bernardine Dohrn
SDS Inter-Organizational Secretary

At Holiday Hills Corral Resort, on Eagle Rock Ranch in Wimberly, Texas, there gathered over 100 Texas lawyers and law students and some 50 "movement people" to provide a more organized legal defense for the New Left in the state. Greg Calvert of Austin MDS and SDS, and Martin Wiginton, formerly active in liberal Democratic politics, organized and planned the conference. The problems raised during the meeting point to serious political naivete and liberalism regarding the question of radical defense.

NWC Liberalism

1. The New Working Class Politics advocated by the organizers of the conference places primary emphasis on the highly educated, technically trained sections of the population. While everyone agrees that we must organize in most sectors of the population, it is impossible to programmatically distinguish New Working Class perspective from social democracy or liberalism; it is used as a rationalization for continuing academic, professional bourgeois lives. In place of militant aggressive expressions of the radical potential of the student movement ("Seizing buildings at Columbia will not build the revolution"), they advocate the search for new concepts, reminiscent of Marcuse at his non-struggle best.

Rather than seeing the organizing of teachers, etc., as part of a consciously working class movement, the NWC theorists find it necessary to reject the revolutionary potential of the working class. The New Working Class, because of its training in the multiversity, is capable of understanding its oppression and the necessity for socialism.

Political Differences Squashed

Similarly, they felt it necessary to exclude political opposition in the planning of this legal conference. Thus PL, myself, and Mike Klonsky, and SDS people outside of Austin (including regional travellers Bartee and Margie Haile) were originally told that we could not attend or participate. Political differences were squashed or obscured during the entire legal conference. The fact that a proposed statewide governing body for Texas movement legal defense was to be composed of 2/3 "movement people" was supposed to be sufficient to assure "good" politics. Never mind the questions Defense for who? Around what strategy? How does the movement defend itself? Who decides? Why is it relevant to a defense strategy to understand the class nature of the law and the courts? How do we use propaganda around defense?

Although the conference organizers proposed that the newly created staff apply for foundation financing (the Ford Foundation was mentioned), they quickly moved to the position of "with no strings attached, of course" when politically attacked for that type of funding.

2. The SDS people at the conference expressed no conscious political understanding of defense. Now it's clear that the movement needs the resources of lawyers. But the planning and the running of this conference systematically rejected any discussion of our political strategy for defense—for a perspective about the movement's defense of itself which includes, as one part of that defense, legal defense. Legal defense was talked about with all the "right" rhetoric: political defense, aggressive and creative use of law, the courtroom as a forum, etc. Nowhere the recognition that we can learn from the history of the Left that defense by liberals can be worse than no defense at all; that control of the defense arm of the movement at a time when we are increasingly in the courts is a powerful political location.

Class Function of Law

It seems clear that the legal defense which we organize will, at best, reflect the stage of our own political development. Until we understand America as a class society, we will not understand the class function of law. Rather than understanding political repression as only the most visible (visible to us) part of the iceberg of daily, ongoing repression—we respond with the same civil libertarian outrage as TV viewers who are shocked by police brutality. As the movement recognizes the enemy and the serious terms of the struggle, we will view our own defense as part of the people's defense—a fight for survival. Until we have that consciousness, we will look to the law and to lawyers for protection of "dissidents".

Two good things emerged from the conference. 1) Surprisingly large numbers of lawyers and law students made themselves available and visible to movement organizations. 2) It was agreed that the case of Lee Otis Johnson, of Dallas SNCC, convicted of a phony dope charge and sentenced to 30 years, would be the major focus of the defense organization. Political repression has been very heavy for certain sections of the movement in Texas: SNCC members, the soldiers at Ft. Hood, and the staff at the Oleo Strut face daily harassment and serious felony charges. It is these organizations which demand immediate legal support, bail money, publicity. For SDS in Texas and elsewhere, we have much work to do to develop an understanding of the politics and the necessity of self-defense and collective movement defense.

Business International: epilogue

by Carl Oglesby

I never got any direct feedback from Business International on my report of our meeting with them (New Left Notes, August 12), although I did hear that they were unhappy about it, thought I'd betrayed them. But they did respond to a piece on the multinational corporations which I published in Interplay magazine (November 1968). The November 29, 1968 issue of their $180 - a - year weekly newsletter, Business International, reviewed all five stories in the Interplay symposium and approved of two, one by Long Island University economist Sidney Rolfe (a consultant to the International Chamber of Commerce) and another by Antonie T. Knoppers, Senior VP of Merck & Co., the big drug firm. The other three pieces suggested more or less politely that the multinational companies were imperial Trojan Horses. French economist Pierre Uri, for example, came straight to the point—"The multinational companies are, basically, American corporations" — and recommended European self - protection measures like a tax on US investment. This miffed the BI man ("A good European may be Mr. Uri, but a poor internationalist"), but his thunderbolts were reserved for me.

The piece is titled "A Disturbing Letter for the CEO" (I can't guess what the CEO is) and, though unsigned, begins with the salutation, "Dear Mr. Chairman and Mr. President." The passage goes as follows:

"Then there is Mr. Carl Oglesby, a luminary of the New so-called Left, who presents a historical pastiche designed to show the international company as a creature of American Imperialism. The beast is bloody in tooth and claw, and is hand-fed by the CIA and State Department. Yet in the midst of his staccato diatribe, Mr. Oglesby commits a revealing backslide: 'Perhaps there are transnationalizing forces at work which will result, in some vague long haul, in the final denationalizing of a globally responsible ruling class of corporation managers.' The blend of idealism and authoritarianism in that sentence tells a lot about the New so-called Left. If, Mr. President, your company is having problems in its campus recruiting, you should draw the article to the attention of your recruitment section; it offers some valuable insights into the ideas shaping the image of business among the young."

I should hope so.

Elitist Self-Indoctrination

Just a few comments:

1. I was struck by the anonymous critic's inability to follow the argument at even the simplest level. His resume makes me seem to have argued that some imperial principal—the CIA, the State Department — employs the international company as an agent of its imperial designs, so that the economic is subordinated to the political. I argued nothing of the kind, of course. Why should it have been impossible for anonymous to have written instead: "...American Imperialism as the creature of the international company," which at least would have put horse and cart together in the order my diatribe clearly proposed? I think we confront here an interesting example of the power of elitist self - indoctrination.

2. In the sentence which anonymous quotes from my essay, I fail to see the remotest hint either of idealism or authoritarianism, and am intrigued by the fact that anonymous does. I was merely conceding in passing the best consummation of what I take to be the modern imperialist's dream. And that dream, to be sure, is both idealistic and authoritarian, but only from the imperialist's point of view.

New So-Called Left

3. Relatedly, note the peculiar form, "New so-called Left." The scoffing so-called usually goes up front, not in the middle. Is it our Leftness which the corporate liberals want to deny? Precisely. Since they cast themselves in the role of progressives, the current Johnny Appleseeds of industry, technology, and mass - consumer affluence, and since we New so-called Leftists continue to harass their campus recruiters, it follows that we are actually the opposite of what we claim to be. San Francisco's freaky liberal Mayor Alioto, panicked by his inability to control, co-opt, repress, or even understand the rebellion at SF State, is saying the same thing these days, but less coyly. He calls us fascists.

Columbia demands "Free Gus"

by Mark Rudd

Tuesday, Dec. 17, in a perfectly planned and executed guerrilla operation, over 500 people stormed and snuck their way into a closed gang of kangaroo tribunals set up to try Gus Reichbach, member of the Columbia SDS steering committee and law student.

Columbia officials chained all doors to the building, employed 25 security cops and approximately 25 helmeted city cops, blocked off the Broadway sidewalks and entrances, held another 175 in buses near the campus, and had them hiding with walkie-talkies throughout the building. Still, SDS managed to open the tribunal, using diversions, smokebombs, guerrilla cunning, and the correct revolutionary line of Chairman Mao Tse-tung: "Trust the masses, dare to struggle, dare to win."

The Five Stooges

Ostensibly the tribunal, made up of three law professors and two law students, was to try Gus for participating in a demonstration on Sept. 18, in which SDS blocked registration, and for using force in the demonstration (Gus was clubbed by security cops so he was charged with using force. Actually, the three professors had already signed public statements calling the demonstration "lawless" and the demonstrators "criminal." Even as significant was the fact that the five stooges had been appointed by the administration, the prosecutor, and were taking their orders from it. Over 2,000 students had signed petitions demanding that no reprisals be taken against Gus, showing the extent of support for SDS and its politics.

First order of business for the newly-opened tribunal were the arguments of the University's counsel, which included property rights of the trustees, the sanctity of the 1810 charter, and the fact that students sign all their human rights away when they

(continued on Page 3)

SLAP and the "national collective"

by Jared Israel
Boston SDS, PL

The strategy of SLAP, the Student Labor Action Project, is gaining support. Though it lost the Boulder NC vote, SLAP had such a clear majority among the non-delegates that even its opponents thought it would win. That support reflects growing numbers who see two key questions for SDS. First, whether we build a student base that increasingly understands and is committed to fighting the imperialist system. Second, how to relate to the nearly one-half of the work-force exploited in basic industry—manufacturing, transportation, and communications. This basic working class can and needs to smash capitalism, state and all. Students and also ex-students like school teachers, who can be won to fighting imperialism, need a movement which sides openly with workers. Tactically:

➡ We should ask of on-campus struggles how they can help build pro-worker, anti-ruling class politics among students. For example, how can we defeat the view that the campus should be a haven "safe" from the "reactionary people outside?" Students are force-fed this idea. It can lead to pacifist liberalism, i.e., reasoning with administrators for favors, or militant liberalism, i.e., trying to pressure them for favors. After graduation, this ties in with the phony "professionalism" which teachers, for example, get sold. Many NY teachers who "struck" against the black people were "only" trying to be "safe" from the "reactionary mob outside."

Workers' Struggles

➡ We should organize strong support for the struggles of workers—black rebellions, on- and off-campus strikes, parents' fights for decent education, etc. These should be discussed (speakers, leaflets, fund-raising) in a big way on campus. This can help crack students' anti-worker ideas.

Try to link on-campus fights with workers' struggles. For example, if a university is expanding into working people's homes, SDS could demand: a) no university expansion against workers; b) large-scale enrollment of black and white working class kids with special provisions; and c) an end to flunk-out. Thus SDS could fight racism IN PRACTICE, raise very sharply the class nature of the school, and involve many non-SDSers. Moreover the struggle would be very much explainable to and supportable by the "outside community," the workers. That's how you get to where SDS is at at San Francisco State—incredibly sharp struggle against racism, with mass backing.

Don't Avoid Militancy

➡ In our discussions with workers and students we should attack all the ways the rulers set the people fighting each other, especially racism. Don't just write off people the rulers have tricked—explain things. Show them what's wrong with racism—that it's unjust, that it divides the people, that it sets whites against the most oppressed people, the blacks, precisely the people who can provide the most reliable core and leadership for struggle. Draw people out and use their own experiences to make these points.

➡ We must constantly take our case to the people. DON'T AVOID MILITANCY BECAUSE THAT WILL "TURN OFF THE WORKERS." Explain how it's in their class interest! During anti-ROTC campaigns, leaflet workers explaining: a) for which class the war is fought; b) the officer's role in getting workers' kids' asses shot off; c) how ROTC tries to buy off students with the rotten carrot of an easier time if they side with the rulers vs. the people.

➡ An SDS Work-In should be organized again this year. On the job, we should raise all the ideas of the student movement, discussing the war, racism, etc. We should try to build lasting ties—that can facilitate support-work or linking up workers' and students' struggles later on. BUT THE MAIN EFFECT WILL BE ON US. Past summer Work-Ins helped participants combat their fear of the people. We got a clearer idea of how workers live, how to raise radical and revolutionary ideas with them, saw the effects of leaflets and discussions on their thinking. We learned somewhat how to link on-the-job experiences with the political points we wanted to make.

Spectacular Liberalism

SLAP developed out of the practical activity of many SDSers (including PLers) and the sharp debates of the last three years—against "new working class" strategy, "Institutional Resistance," etc. SLAP's authors and many others have learned:

➡ To reject the losing strategy of "violence in the streets." This bullshit is a replay of last year's National Office strategy—"Institutional Resistance"—the theory behind some baseless "guerrilla street actions," always easily dispersed and squashed, which taught nobody anything at all. Like its predecessor, "street violence" is at best a way to tell the rulers you're angry. That's just as passive as begging politely. Only with a base, based in political understanding of the need to fight, can we ATTACK and EXPOSE the rulers. "Violence in the streets" often has as its goal cross-class youth-organizing based on:

➡ Personal-cultural liberation. Or, Doing - Your - Own - Thing - IS - The - Revolution. This view upholds pot and pop-art as being THEMSELVES revolutionary. "Violence in the streets" fits into the picture as a psycho-cultural act, the individual doing his big-bang thing against Repressive Reality itself. When real struggles emerge, proponents of this view switch back and forth between arbitrarily chosen confrontation and setting up militancy - sapping counter-institutions. Personal-cultural liberation, getting what YOU want instead of serving the PEOPLE is the essence of bourgeois socio-political theory. The street violence-personal-cultural liberation syndrome is liberalism made spectacular.

Right-Wing Caucus

These and similar theories circulate in the right-wing caucus, mostly National Office (NO) and regional office people, the so-called "national collective". The right-caucus moves noiselessly, marvelously unself-critically from one losing strategy to another. It provides no useful leadership for chapters. Thus the right-caucus passed its Mobilization - Committee - oriented, politically vague proposal for regional election day demo's, at the Boulder NC. A sharply anti-imperialist proposal for a mass election day demo in Washington, clearly differentiated from the rotten Mob crowd, was defeated. Running most regional offices and the NO, the right caucus managed to produce no decent literature, only a dribble of politically weak, hysterical-sounding junk. Boston (4,000 took part), Iowa and a few other areas had good demo's based on the Washington proposal's politics. The rest, organized by the right-caucus, fizzled. Opposition to negotiations, without which we fade into liberalism, and other key themes were suppressed in these areas. These demo's failed to involve the numbers brought out in New England. Thus, in NY, a right-caucus-led demonstration of a few hundred (!) billed as "violence in the streets," didn't even resist the cops! When the demo's were reported, of course, there was no right-caucus self-criticism. (Not to mention that there was no attempt to explain the success in Boston. In fact, the Boston demo was presented in NLN as having been built by a) the Old Mole and b) a wall poster—neither of which had been issued by SDS, neither of which had the demo's politics. The right-caucus realizes that truth and self-criticism endanger their continued ability to mislead.)

Hatred for PL

Only two things unite the right. First, opposition to building SDS along the lines of the worker-student alliance. Second, and this looms largest for them, hatred for the Progressive Labor Party (PL) and all who reject the right's lousy politics. The "national collective" stinks at fighting the rulers. It's somewhat better at fighting PL, using lies, smears, and behind-the-scenes baiting ("PL wants to make you a soulless robot!"). To develop the organization, it offers: politics as steady and fertile as the Saharan sands; elitist maneuvering to STOP PL; and that brings us to Les Coleman.

Coleman's NLN article about the SLAP debate, printed awhile back (NLN, Oct. 18), comes on cool. It's politically relevant to review how Coleman (a "national collective" leader) actually functioned at Boulder.

Discontentism

In the labor workshop, Coleman "backed" SLAP—though his reasons were unusual. Coleman said we should organize people to "express their discontent." In some way, this would link the "feeling of discontent" with actual revolution. In the process, he argued, a minimal class awareness (??) on the part of students about workers was also good. This abstract thinking needs discussion.

SLAP supporters in the workshop rejected Coleman's arguments. We argued that pouring out discontent-in-general is not in itself revolutionary. It can lead many places, except it doesn't lead to people seeing the need to smash imperialism. People develop revolutionary politics when they see, based on fighting and exposing the rulers, and patient discussion, THE CLASS BASIS OF THEIR DISCONTENT.

Pure - and - simple "discontentism" gets us back to the philosophy of doing - your - own - thing, discussed earlier. "Discontentism" leads one day to passive cop-out, the next to passive, pop-art street battles. Coleman wants students' anger focused against "Authority" not letting you do what you want. With "discontentism" we've got a pop - art movement, entirely imaginary, with rhetoric but no politically clear base, which makes no sense to most people.

Path to Revolution

Instead of getting people to gush incoherent discontent, revolutionaries should organize and join people in struggles against the ways imperialism attacks them. While these are NEVER automatically revolutionary, by taking part we can learn and teach millions how the imperialist system works; the power of collective struggle; that the state serves ONLY the bourgeoisie; the necessity of fighting divisions; the key role of the working class; that we must smash the bourgeois state and set up a state run by the revolutionary workers and their allies. That's how we can get from here to revolution. Coleman's "discontentism" is a booby trap.

Second, we said that the notion of minimal (???) class awareness on students' part is NOT SLAP's idea. The way Coleman explained it, this "minimal" business means we should get students to sympathize with workers and support their struggles without trying to relate that alliance to questions like racism, Vietnam, etc. Bullshit. We should raise as sharply as possible, with both students and workers, all such issues—SLAP doesn't aim at an opportunist alliance!

Having thus "backed" SLAP in the workshop, Coleman openly opposed it in plenary. Finally, with SLAP defeated in the vote, Les burst out with "WE BEAT THE BASTARDS! WE BEAT THE PL BASTARDS." Or words to that effect.

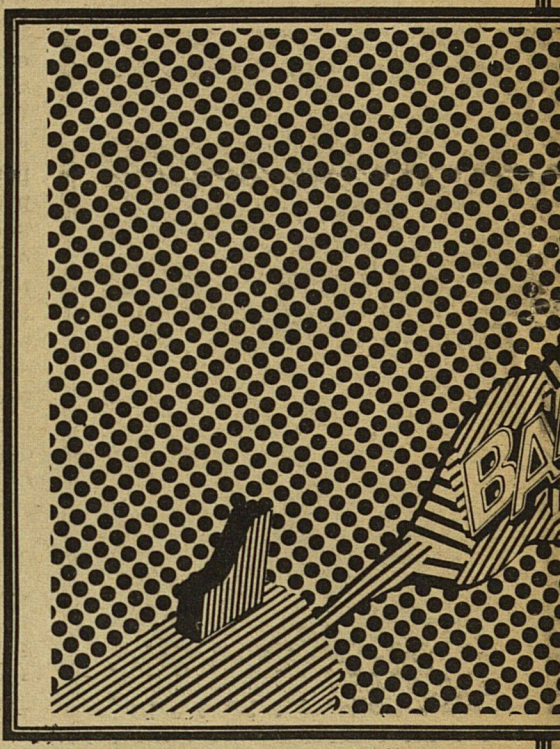
In his NLN article, Coleman, friendly - come - lately, reassuming the demure approach, considers SLAP from an "objective" standpoint. Listing four reasons SLAP supposedly lost politically, Coleman endorses none. Then he says the real reason was that people feel SLAP advocates (read: PL) are destroying chapters. Les, of course, refuses to take sides in these factional matters.

Get PL

By pretending innocence of partisanship while actually stating many attacks on SLAP, Coleman reveals the essence of his political principles: change your stand like a chameleon, but: GET PL!

SLAP was not in fact politically defeated. Most people in the room ended up supporting it. True, most delegates didn't, but many, many of these were off-campus, motherfucker types, regional or national office people. SLAP won over most people politically.

Similarly, Coleman's claim that SLAP lost because its advocates are chapter-wreckers is nonsense. Coleman and his "national collective" allies have been after the left in SDS for quite some time. They are very uptight these



days precisely because a) many chapters (for instance, San Francisco State!) are developing strongly with worker-student alliance politics and b) "STREET VIOLENCE" is a fizzle.

As for Coleman's other arguments, he says SLAP's analysis is wrong (rather, it "seemed" wrong "to many" —for he's only an observer!) and at the same time that it "seemed" unclear. He can't have it both ways. It's also contradictory to argue that the tactics "seemed" liberal, but that, also, EVERYONE agreed with them! Coleman was the main leader of the anti-SLAP forces at Boulder. So, of course, he's putting forth his own arguments. Until he gets straight which of several mutually contradictory assertions are true, defends them, and tells us about his strategy, why waste NLN space with an answer?

NLN's failure to print certain important articles, the right-caucus' anti-SLAP fight at the NC, the NIC's decision to keep stalling the WORK-IN pamphlet, Klonsky's firing of Al Camplejohn, a printer, as a "PL agent", because he supports the worker-student alliance, and articles like Coleman's hypocritical anti-SLAP piece—make it clear that the right-caucus is willing to hurt the organization badly to "GET PL!"

They'll lose.

False factionalism and ideological clarity

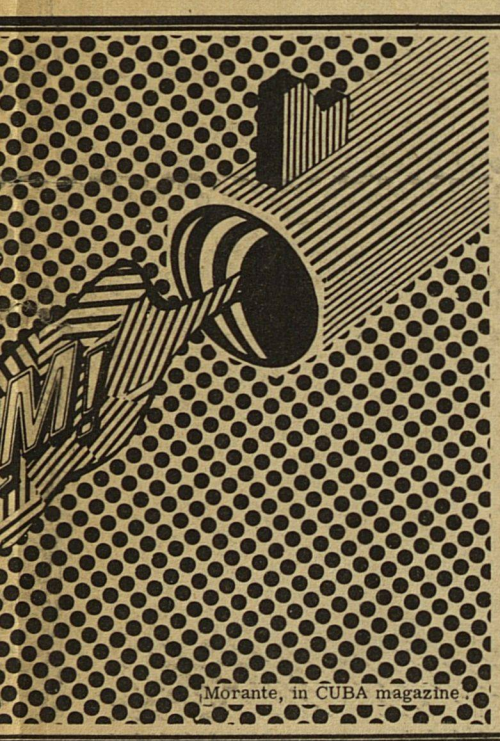
by Les Coleman
Chicago Regional SDS

As the ideological struggle in the organization sharpens, as we move to self-consciously define our work and struggles as part of a working class struggle, there is a great danger that the resulting factionalism will obscure rather than clarify the ideological questions we must face.

Factional struggles advance the search for ideological clarity when the factions represent both real positions and actual forces or groupings in the organization. It is in this light that we should read the highly imaginative second section of Jared Israel's article in this issue of NLN. His position obscures the differences revolutionaries have with the Progressive Labor Party about what course the student movement should take to make itself an explicitly class-conscious, pro-working class force. If this article reflects the faction fight which PLP now is pressing on the organization, we should not accept that definition of the debate.

Mythical Groupings

In the Israel article the fight stacks up between PLP and their supporters on one side and several mythical groupings PL poses, most notably the NO/NWC/UAW/MF/NC/MOB/CP alliance, on the other side. (For the uninitiated, those initials stand for National Office New Working Class Up Against the Wall Motherfucker National Collective Mobilization Communist Party conspiracy.)



Now it is undoubtedly true that certain people in the national office, people in the regional offices or regional travelers, people who call themselves New Working Class, Mobilization staff and spokesmen, folks from the Motherfucker group in New York, many people of a variety of stripes, and god knows who else, all have disagreements with positions that PLP puts forward and vote from time to time against PLP proposals at NC's—like the SLAP proposal. It just flat isn't true that every type of disagreement with PLP is part of what Israel has linked together as one large alphabet soup anti-PL factional conspiracy in the sky!

Anti-Working-Class Tendencies

For a beginning, there are three points which must be made crystal clear about those who disagree with PLP in one way or another.

1. There are those who disagree with PLP and, even more crucial, those who take no positions at all because they have no self-conscious clear position on the ideological questions at stake. In some cases those who passively disagree with PLP or take no position at all reflect deep-rooted anti-communist and anti-working-class tendencies in the organization. By tendencies I mean the unself-conscious but deep rooted fear and class bias which are the results of the brainwashing of capitalism and the material (i.e. middle class and ruling class) origins or roots of the student movement. It is important to make clear that these tendencies, through passivity and the taking of no position, do in fact result in taking a variety of positions which hinder the development of a class conscious youth movement. That is one of the many reasons it is necessary and healthy to wage ideological battles, to focus on political education, and to push the organization to develop a self-conscious pro-working class position. It is also important to stress that these tendencies are not in fact organized factions or groupings.

We can, I believe, win major victories against those tendencies. What is perhaps most important for all of us to learn is how to correctly engage in ideological struggles. We must fight our tendencies to remove the debate from the day to day struggles in which we are engaged. We have to find ways in practice of insuring that the search for ideological clarity is rooted in ongoing programmatic work, and we must seek to clearly define the issues so that they are relevant to that work.

Blind Factionalism

2. There are those people who are "anti-PL in their guts", anti-communist and anti-working class and who explicitly organize anti-PL groupings around that position. They are willing to make unprincipled alliances—anti-PL at any price, false unity coalitions—and try to do so. A number of those who act in this fashion are found among old-guard SDS leadership and organizational careerists who still linger on the fringes. Many of us have struggled very sharply to destroy that position. Many of the principal proponents of that position have been successfully denied a base in the organization. It must be made clear that where attempts to opportunistically use false factionalism to create an anti-PL grouping exist, as in the Boston area, a primary task of every principaled person is to smash that position. For PLP to accept that false definition of factionalism and give it further credence and life in the organization is to take a step backward.

3. By lumping all opposition to PLP together—and flat lying about a lot of people's positions to do it—PLP poses as the pro-working class force in the organization and all other forces as anti-working class. And then those who have disagreements with PLP but who are committed to building a working class revolution in this country are not able to fight out the CONTENT of their differences but the form. Are they for or against PLP? That can lead only to blind factionalism, not ideological clarity.

Street Militancy

After positing the existence of a national conspiracy against PLP, Israel characterizes the mythical faction by violence in the streets politics, personal cultural liberation and their alleged anti-working class position on SLAP.

The tendency to substitute street militancy for political education must be fought. Some demonstrations around the elections, for example, substituted militant rhetoric for political education and clear political objectives. At the same time one should condemn the "I am too politically pure for the struggle" attitude that PLP took during Democratic convention demonstrations and in some places, notably Chicago, during election demonstrations. In a self-criticism paper circulated by the elected coordinators of the election demonstration in Chicago, we also noted that the local "PL faction" stayed away from the planning of the demonstration and did not help build for the demonstration, then tried to disrupt the demonstration by handing out leaflets telling folks a series of lies at the demonstration itself. The PLers may have actually not known that what they said were lies because they had taken no part in working on the demonstration and did not know what it was all about. Their strategy was clear: counting on the short preparation time to make obvious predictions (political education would be inadequate, numbers small), and then discrediting those who worked on the demonstration later, saying "Aha! our criticisms were true". Removing yourself from the context of ongoing work makes it impossible to wage real ideological struggle. Trying to do so promotes false factionalism.

Lying Opportunism

The cult of personal liberation leads to a no struggle ethic. The substitution of the beautiful community for collective struggle often finds its theoretical underpinnings in Marcuse with an assist from Calvert. We must see our struggle as doing whatever is necessary to fight against the chains of necessity —against the system of capitalism and the state which protects it. We must try to be decent human beings, and hold to the principle of democracy and decentralization we are fighting for. I am not a part of any faction which condones privileged individualism and the no struggle line.

Now for the SLAP proposal that the mythical faction composed of all initial groups except PLP has dedicated its life to fighting against. I'm not sure who it was "jumping up and down yelling 'We beat the bastards'", as Jared says, but it wasn't me. If all the people who voted against SLAP (a 2 to 1 majority) were part of an organized faction I would not want to be part of it. The attempt to pose opposition to SLAP as all one great big faction is clearly also the attempt to pose PLP as the only pro-working class tendency in the organization. To lie (say about my position in the workshop which did not support the SLAP proposal but argued for a pro-working class approach that Israel totally misrepresented), to pose the factions the way he does, that is opportunism.

Stupid Polemic

There were bad reasons that people voted against SLAP, but there were also good ones: the concept "student-worker alliance" was a mechanistic substitution for the concept of the class struggle. To try to make people understand the class struggle in the world by saying they should ally with industrial workers because they have the power is not the correct way to proceed. Consequently, there was no analysis of contradictions in this society around race and youth, which must come from a broader understanding of class struggle than that of worker vs boss. We cannot devise a strategy for a youth movement, or relate correctly to the black liberation struggle if we do not understand the class contradictions around youth and race. This of course does not mean that we think youth is a class, or that transportation, production and communications workers are not a key power force in the society. That is stupid polemic.

Revolutionary Phrasemongering

We should not be obligated to accept an incorrect and potentially harmful strategy for the youth movement, because our own strategy is not fully developed. This is what Israel's opportunistic false factionalism would lead us to.

The SLAP proposal did correctly say that we must link student struggles with other working class struggles, but given as the guiding rule of the youth movement it often becomes merely mechanical.

Lenin, writing in 1908 about the necessity of working with students, wrote:

"The revolutionary slogan—to work towards co-ordinated political action of the students and the proletariat—here ceases to be a live guidance for many-sided militant agitation on a broadening basis and becomes a lifeless dogma, mechanically applied to different stages of different forms of the movement. It is not sufficient merely to proclaim political co-ordinated action, repeating the 'last word' in lessons of the revolution. One must be able to agitate for political action, making use of all possibilities, all conditions and, first and foremost, all mass conflicts between advanced elements, whatever they are, and the autocracy....(It is a) harmful mistake when people refuse to reckon with the actual situation that has arisen and the actual conditions of the particular mass movement, because of a slogan misinterpreted as unchangeable. Such an application of a slogan inevitably degenerates into revolutionary phrase-mongering."

It is true that false factionalism must be avoided. But we in SDS must not continue to avoid serious ideological struggle. We must constantly try to enunciate a strategy for our movement which could lead to a working class revolution, to the destruction of imperialism. This NC will no doubt be an important one in setting the terms for ideological struggle in the organization. At the same time, the key principle of ideological struggle is that it go on in the context of real programmatic work.

Free Gus

(continued from Page 1)

sign on with the University. Perfect. Next, the lackeys proved that Gus was at the demonstration, that the demonstration had blocked some unstated student from Philadelphia from registering, and that Gus Reichbach and the infamous Mark Rudd had grabbed at cops' sticks. All this time the audience was growing more and more amused at the tribunal. Finally, the defense was literally forced to present its witnesses on "facts" (whether Gus blocked anyone, whether he hit first or was hit first, etc.). The intention of Gus and his lawyers had been to present a justification argument first, namely, that the demonstrations against IDA and the gym, against the University's support for imperialism and its racism, were just and that Gus' and the other demonstrators' actions in spring and fall were right and necessary. They presented witnesses on the University's ties to the military, its deceit and unresponsiveness, and its racist expansion policies.

Tribunal Illegitimate

The tribunal ended with a statement by Gus demanding that the tribunal dissolve itself because it had prejudged the case, because it was illegitimate, and because no one had the right to discipline him for what had to be done. He also called for a march to a nearby tenement vacated by Columbia to open the tenement for use by community people. Hundreds of demonstrators left the stuffy courtroom shouting "no more expansion" and marched to the house, where they were pushed away by the New York blue meanies. That night, several hundred people did dorm organizing, explaining what had gone on, and "making propaganda."

In short, the tribunal was used perfectly to expose not only the University's unfairness and obvious political repression, but also its basis in the ruling class power relationships behind the university and its bourgeois conception of property rights. This exposure was an extension of the political struggle into the courtroom which must be done everywhere in the country where the movement is facing repression.

PRESS RELEASE

issued Dec. 16 by NY Labor Committee

1. Merger of SDS with CP dissidents, National Mobilization Committee
2. Expulsion of Progressive Labor Party members from SDS

The continuing factional dispute inside of Students for a Democratic Society has taken an incredible turn. The anarchist-National Office staff coalition plans to merge SDS with the most right wing parts of the movement, the National Mobilization Committee and the so-called left caucus of the Communist Party. The merged organization will have as its purpose the organizing of "youth-as-a-class."

The merger plans an SDS-Mobilization committee joint demonstration in Washington at Nixon's inauguration, another bloody and senseless confrontation with the police. Several members of the National Interim Council of SDS, including Jeff Jones of N.Y.C., have been publicly backing this demonstration. This is to be followed by the formation of a joint organization with Mobilization and the CP caucus, ostensibly to "defend the movement" (the National Lawyers Guild will serve as a front for the merger), at the December 27-31 SDS National Council meeting in Ann Arbor. Complete merger of the three groups is projected for the June, 1969 convention.

These merger plans have not been brought before the SDS membership, largely because of the deserved unpopularity of the Mobilization and the CP in the movement. Both are sell-out reformist organizations. The Mobilization, for example, invited Mayor Lindsay to address their anti-war picnic last April, at the very time his cops were beating student strikers at Columbia.

The biggest obstacle to the three-way merger is the influence of the Progressive Labor Party in SDS, and such allies as Fred Gordon, SDS National Education Secretary. Gordon has been held captive in his office for being mildly sympathetic with PL. New Left Notes, a paper he supposedly edits, has been forcibly prevented from printing any material besides that which represents the opinion of the National Office-anarchist clique.

Attempts to oust PL have been going on since Progressive Labor united with the anarchists to throw out the NY SDS Labor Committee several weeks ago.

The Labor Committee maintains that any expulsion of PL members, like the expulsion of the Labor Committee, violates the anti-expulsionary clause of SDS and is not binding on anyone.

The Labor Committee defends PL's rights within SDS despite the fact that PL joined the anarchists in the futile attempt to silence the Labor Committee. We are forced to defend PL without the aid of Progressive Labor itself, because PL members refuse to make an open battle within SDS, but instead are seeking to win themselves support within SDS by launching further attacks upon the Labor Committee.

The Labor Committee reaffirms its position on the recent teachers' strike: that the community control movement is being organized by the shrewdist forces in national and municipal governments, including Mayor Lindsay, McGeorge Bundy and his Ford Foundation, in order to sidetrack the struggles of blacks for jobs, housing, schools, etc., into a struggle against the teachers and then other predominantly white working class unions. It maintains that community control is a fraud, and that the solution to the problems facing the people of N.Y.C. can only come about by a class-wide attack on these problems. The majority of SDS is falling into the trap carefully laid by the government in supporting the sabotage of the Ford Foundation and the Office of Economic Opportunity against working people, black and white, in the city.

The Progressive Labor Party, while it took the position of condemning the defense of the teachers' union against this government attack, at least understands that community control is a diversion from the real fight of the ghetto. But in attempting to win the favor of some members of SDS, PL has refused to commit the SDS Labor Project, an organization it now leads, to the anti-community control perspective it allegedly holds.

If SDS is to be stopped from becoming an organization of NO politics and continued senseless confrontation, then all those within it who oppose this direction must openly fight the National Office attempt to gag all opposition to it within SDS. It is incumbent upon the Progressive Labor Party to act in the principled manner of the NY SDS Labor Committee in refusing to recognize and in fighting all such exclusionary procedures.

N.Y. Students for a Democratic Society
Labor Committee

Labor Committee statement: pure and simple trash

by Bernardine Dohrn
SDS Inter-Organizational Secretary

Immediately before this National Council meeting, frenzied accusations of conspiracies and alleged purges—classic red-baiting tactics—are spread throughout the movement. But seldom does this tactic take the form of a public press release full of lies about the organization's political differences. The Man himself could not have done better.

The Labor Committee is an organization formed by former members of West Side CIPA in NYC and recently expelled members of PLP. They began last spring around the issue of the transit fare, leafletting every day to raise general consciousness about the inadequate organization of society under capitalism.

The Labor Committee sees itself as the intellectual vanguard which will bring ideas to the working class; not as a movement which will ally with the working class, nor as a movement which is and is becoming a conscious working class movement.

Intellectual Vanguard Must Seize Power

They oppose constituency organizing; it leads to fascism. The role of the student movement is to show how things could work better. "Transitional programs" such as "Tax the landlords, not the people" and "Fight higher transit fares" will quickly show all strata of the working population that the left has the ideas which can organize production and distribution better than the present rulers. They predict that the economic crises within advanced capitalism will abruptly produce a crisis where the rulers are unable to continue—and that mass consciousness and the intellectual vanguard must be prepared to seize power (not repeat France).

The Labor Committee rejects a dynamic and dialectical analysis of political struggle. They reject the revolutionary potential of the student movement by assigning it the role of elitist carrier of ideas. They do not see racism as a fundamental contradiction, and support the racist NY teachers' union. They accuse opponents of bringing on fascism while they leaflet America until a crisis "comes" which will open the possibility of seizing state power. They reject the inter-relationship Third World struggles (the war in Vietnam is not a major issue) and the fight within advanced capitalism.

SDS Disclaims Pro-Strike Position

This fall the Labor Committee issued leaflets in the name of SDS supporting the teachers' union in the NY schools crisis. Columbia SDS and the NY regional assembly had condemned the racist teachers' strike and demanded that the Labor Committee not continue to produce pro-teachers' union leaflets in the name of SDS, contrary to the position taken by the membership.

When the leaflets continued, the Columbia chapter "expelled" the Labor Committee—to publicly disclaim leaflets claiming to represent the position of SDS. Neither individual members nor the ideas of the Labor Committee were ousted from participation in SDS. The "expulsion" was to discredit the Labor Committee as spokesman for SDS.

Labor Committee Still Using SDS Name

Later, a NY regional assembly dissolved the NY SDS regional labor committee—which had become the organization called the Labor Committee—and set up a new regional committee on labor.

As can be seen from the Labor Committee's press release, they are still using the name SDS Labor Committee.

Opportunistic Lies, Opportunistic Repudiation

The so-called merger (referred to in the press release) and the projected "expulsion" of the Progressive Labor Party are both pure and simple trash. Fred Gordon stated this position first in the organization—at the NIC in November and since in public meetings during his travels around the country. That the New York Labor Committee should repeat those lies ought not to come as a surprise. A partial repudiation of the Committee's restatement of these lies now is as opportunistic as the lies themselves.

Gordon comments

by Fred Gordon
SDS Internal Education Secretary

The press release of the "New York Labor Committee" (which continues to use the name "SDS" although it has been dissolved as an SDS committee) is an example of obnoxious opportunism. The censuring of this group by Columbia and New York SDS is justified. The "Marcusites", as they call themselves, supported the racist New York teachers' "strike" in the name of SDS—although SDS at Columbia and in the regional conference voted to oppose the "strike" and finally censured the committee for continuing to use SDS's name in support of it. Shanker, leader of the racist "strike", went on TV praising SDS because of the Labor Committee's stand!

"National Collective"

What the Marcusites say about the "national collective" and its relationship to me is distorted. Of course, a "national collective" does exist. Containing most of the elected national leadership, its politics are defined most clearly by its anti-communism. Furthermore, I have met political suppression in trying to represent worker-student alliance views in the literature program. In particular, Mike Klonsky and Bernardine Dohrn and the NIC have exercised political censorship over the printing of an excellent Work-In pamphlet, although the Work-In was an official SDS project, passed at an NC, and was highly successful. It also seems likely that they will prevent the printing of a pamphlet that I have written. But to say that I am "held captive in the National Office" is absurd. In fact, political censorship by the "national collective" was soundly voted down at the New England Regional Conference and will, I am sure, be opposed sharply at the December NC.

The Trotskyist manner of operation of the New York Labor Committee could be used by the "national collective" to try to suppress the discussion of key questions which the Marcusites in a distorted way touch upon: an alliance with the Mobe; the concept of "legal defense"; and the question of whether the "national collective" will be allowed to suppress ideological struggle from the top. We should guard against this possibility.

New Left Notes

New Left Notes is published weekly (except June and July, when publication is bi-weekly) by Students for a Democratic Society, 1608 West Madison Street, Chicago, Illinois 60612 (312-666-3874). Second-class postage is paid at Chicago. Subscriptions are $1 per year for SDS members and $10 per year for non-members. Signed articles are the responsibility of the writers. Unsigned articles are the responsibility of editor David Millstone. New Left Notes is affiliated with UPS and Liberation News Service.

STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Mike Klonsky, National Secretary; Fred Gordon, Internal Education Secretary; Bernardine Dohrn, Inter-Organizational Secretary

National Office: 1608 West Madison, Chicago, Illinois 60612 (312-666-3874)
Chicago: 162 North Clinton, Chicago, Illinois 60606 (312-641-0138)
Michigan: Post Office Box 625, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107 (no telephone)
New England: 125 Green, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139 (617-864-3126)
New Jersey: Box 376-C, Newark, New Jersey 07101 (no telephone)
New York City: 131 Prince, New York, New York 10003 (212-674-8310)
Niagara: 308 Stewart Avenue, Ithaca, New York 14850 (607-273-0535)
Philadelphia: 262 South 45th, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104 (215-382-8084)
Southern California: Box 85396, Los Angeles, California 90072 (213-667-2345)
Texas - Oklahoma: Box 1941, Dallas, Texas 75221 (214-824-1837)
Washington, DC: 3 Thomas Circle NW, Washington DC 20005 (202-332-1387)