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May 19, 1970

MEMORANDUM TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

This is a "thinking out loud" memorandum.

I think there was a weakness in the paper's coverage of the student strike wave. This is that none of the line articles on the strike brought out the transitional character of the slogan for a Red university (in this case, for an antiwar university).

The articles mentioned partial gains that could be won and defended: e.g., abolition of ROTC on campus. But these merged without any distinction into gains that cannot be won except for brief periods without a mass upsurge of the working class, and cannot be defended on a long-term basis short of a socialist revolution: e.g., student-faculty control of education.

The articles were enthusiastic about winning "full, or in most cases partial control of the university" and about "an orientation of reaching out to involve the labor movement, Third World communities, and the GIs." But they did not point out that the first requires the second.

I believe it is especially important that this factor be noted because of the illusions and consequent frustrations that students inevitably feel when they participate in a big battle, only to find the victories trickle out over the course of time. It seemed to me that many of the French comrades reflected this frustration when they would say, "but we won the universities, we already did that, now we have to win the workers." What they really meant is that they didn't win the universities because capitalism remained in power. Their error is to make an artificial separation between the struggle for student control and for working class control.

Articles in the paper that point out the transitional character of the fight for Red (antiwar) universities will also serve to point out the relations between the universities and the ruling class. They will be good educational pieces on the need for a socialist revolution.

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