

organizing for the socialist revolution



**INTRODUCTION
TO
THE
YOUNG
SOCIALIST
ALLIANCE**

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Introduction

The Young Socialist Alliance is the largest and fastest-growing radical organization on America's campuses. The material printed in this pamphlet provides a clear statement of what the YSA is and where it is heading.

The first four articles were originally presented as resolutions by the YSA's National Executive Committee to the Tenth National Convention of the YSA, held in New York in December 1970. The four resolutions were passed overwhelmingly by the Convention and constitute the basic orientation of the Young Socialist Alliance.

"After the May Upsurge: Young Socialists and the Student Movement" analyzes the political situation in the U.S. in light of the unprecedented student strike and general antiwar upsurge of May 1970 and presents the strategy YSAers will carry out to win the leadership of the student movement. It also dissects the politics of the other major organizations vying for leadership on the left: the Communist Party and Young Workers Liberation League, Progressive Labor Party, SDS, and the remnants of the "New Left."

The resolutions on the antiwar movement, the women's liberation movement, and the Black liberation struggle go in more detail into the YSA's strategy for participating in these movements and continuing to build them as independent mass movements directed against this oppressive capitalist society.

The article "Chicano Liberation and Revolutionary Youth" is the National Executive Committee's report to the Convention on the Chicano movement. Approved by the Convention, it puts forward the YSA's analysis of and strategy for the Chicano liberation struggle. "Chicano Liberation and Revolutionary Youth" is reprinted here from the February 1971 issue of International Socialist Review.

The article on "The Organizational Character of the YSA" was written as part of the discussion preceding the Eighth National Convention, held in 1968. It provides a concise explanation of the organizational structure and functioning of the YSA.

The Constitution of the YSA is printed here as amended by the Tenth National Convention. The Introduction to the Constitution was written in 1966, and remains a valid statement of how YSAers look at the Constitution.

After the May Upsurge:

Young Socialists and the Student Movement

The 1970s will be a decade of profound crises for American capitalism and of unprecedented opportunities for revolutionary socialists. We in the YSA are optimistic about the prospects for organizing masses of people in struggle against the U.S. ruling class and its government in Washington. Our experience in 1970 has confirmed our view that the current radicalization, which began in the 1960s, can lead to the elimination of capitalism in the stronghold of world imperialism through a socialist revolution in the United States.

The May Upsurge

In May 1970, two government actions--the invasion of Cambodia and the massacre of students at Kent State--touched off the largest student general strike in history. The invasion of Cambodia by U.S. forces represented a decision by the Nixon administration to extend and intensify the war in Southeast Asia. The murder of the Kent students symbolized the attempts of the ruling class to silence one of the most dynamic and effective opponents of Washington's war plans, the student movement.

The combination of these two events, which were followed by the gunning down of Black youth in Augusta, Ga., and at Jackson State, in Mississippi, triggered a nationwide student upsurge which threw the entire country into a major social crisis, producing shock waves which have not yet subsided.

The size and scope of the campus actions were unparalleled. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, headed by Clark Kerr, reported on the extent of the May campus upsurge: major protests occurred on 1454 campuses (out of a total of 2551); and 550 campuses had strikes which completely halted the normal functioning of the schools.

One of the most significant features of the upheaval was the creation of new

forms of struggle by the mobilized masses of students. For the first time in history, striking students "opened up" their schools as antiwar universities. Students began reconstituting their schools, turning them into instruments of struggle against the war. Taking control of the school facilities, students used them for reaching out to involve other sectors of the population in the antiwar movement. The process of attempting to reach out beyond the campus demonstrated an understanding by students of the need to link up with more powerful social layers in order to win their aims. This understanding represents a new advanced consciousness among thousands of students about the student movement's role in fighting for social change.

The form of organization which spontaneously emerged in the struggles of May was the broad-based, representative strike committee which called and presented proposals to mass meetings and coordinated strike activities. At many schools, these committees involved the entire university community and served to organize the new functions of the antiwar university.

These important new forms of struggle have become permanent acquisitions of the student movement because, while the strike was only temporary, it lasted long enough for the concept of the antiwar university and democratic strike councils to engrave itself in the consciousness of the millions of students who took part. Future upsurges will tend to follow the pattern established in May. In this sense we can say that May 1970 was the "1905 of the student movement"--new organizational forms of struggle emerged and were tested for the first time, just as the first soviets emerged and were tested in the 1905 Russian Revolution, and in 1917 became the organs of the new state power. Universities run by the strike committees will not become organs of state power, but they will emerge again to play a crucial role in helping to organize masses outside the campus into anticapitalist action.

The YSA learned important lessons in the May events. First, the events expressed the tremendous depth of the youth radicalization and revealed young people's increasing lack of confidence in the government's ability to solve the problems facing American society. While the radicalization is deepest among youth, the widespread sympathy and support for the students' objectives expressed in other sections of the population and the strike's impact on the rest of the country offered impressive testimony to the extent of the radicalization in society as a whole.

Second, the May events dramatically illustrated once more that the war in Indochina remains a central driving force in the radicalization and the central issue in U.S. politics. In spite of Nixon's elaborate schemes for "Vietnamization," U.S. imperialism is gripped more tightly than ever in the vise of trying to maintain its world domination on one side and trying to maintain social peace at home on the other. The war in Vietnam and the antiwar movement are the sharpest expression of the dilemma Nixon faces.

Third, the May strike revealed more clearly than ever before the increased social weight and power of the student movement in today's neocapitalist society. The impact of the students' actions, both directly on the government and through their influence on other social sectors, provided conclusive evidence of the decisive role students can play in detonating major social explosions. The May student strike stamped its impression on the entire society, serving notice to America's rulers that they must take account of the reaction of students in any of their future plans.

Fourth, the development of antiwar universities confirmed in action the YSA's strategy for the student movement, that is, the use of the university as a base to organize other sectors of the population into anticapitalist struggle. This proved to be an attractive idea to masses of students once they had gained a sense of their own power in the first days of the strike.

Finally, the student upsurge graphically illustrated the power of independent mass action. The student strike, which arose completely independently of the "dove" capitalist politicians, forced Nixon to adapt his plans and helped educate masses of people that they can succeed only by taking action on their own without relying on the capitalist politicians who pose as their leaders.

Another aspect of the strike as massive independent political action was the rejection, on the overwhelming majority of campuses, of any ultraleft actions or forms of organization which would narrow the base of the strike, such as

limiting participation in the strike committee to the traditional campus radicals. This stands in sharp contrast to the SDS-led campus struggles of 1968-1969.

The YSA's understanding of these lessons enabled us to play a leading role in the May events. YSAers helped initiate and participated in strike committees on many campuses, working to mobilize students and to deepen their understanding of the antiwar university. Where it was possible, we helped organize citywide and regional coordination of the strike. We were the only group able to act as a national organization in our support of and participation in the upsurge. The Militant, to a limited extent, served the function of a national strike newspaper, giving the only national coverage and analysis of the events as they were happening.

We went on a campaign footing to build the strike and explain the concept of the antiwar university. At the same time, we reached the broadest possible layers of the population with the ideas of revolutionary socialism.

The pattern established in May illustrated the potential for the next upsurge to succeed in drawing in the participation of the organized working class, high school students, the Third World communities and masses of women. The May events produced the first significant break in the trade union bureaucracy's monolithic backing of Nixon's war policy, a break which expressed itself, for example, in the labor-student demonstration called in New York City at the initiative of trade union officials as a response to "hard hat" attacks on antiwar demonstrators. While the May strike fell short of touching off a generalized social upheaval, it came close enough to let the ruling class see the outlines of a social revolution in this country. The capitalists were so frightened by what they saw that the threat of another May has become a permanent factor for them to consider before making any major moves in their continuous campaign to crush the world revolution.

Nixon's Offensive

During May, the ruling class counterposed campaigns for capitalist "peace" candidates and doorbell-pushing for legislation such as the Cooper-Church and Hatfield-McGovern bills to the independent mass action organized by the students. In typical fashion, they attempted to disorient the mass movement and divert its independent struggle back into the arena of the Democratic and Republican parties. While the majority

of students did not shed their illusions about the possibility of winning their demands through capitalist "peace" candidates, the attempt to divert their struggle met with little success during May.

Once the strike had been effectively ended by the pullback from Cambodia and the closing of the schools, the ruling class launched a two-pronged counterassault designed to eliminate the threat revealed in May. First, the U.S. rulers used the fake debates of the capitalist campaigns for the November elections to play down the issue of the war and to try to draw students back into "the system." Second, they conducted a propaganda campaign against "campus violence" and initiated a drive to restrict students' rights to organize political activity.

During every election campaign, the ruling class puts up "alternatives" to try to make the American people think they have a choice and to give them the illusion that they control the government. Maintaining these illusions is, of course, one of the primary functions of elections in a bourgeois democracy. Because of the deepgoing and widespread nature of such illusions among the masses of people and the resources the capitalists put behind their campaigns, election periods have always been difficult times for organizing mass independent political action. There was virtually no independent political action in 1964 when nearly everyone stampeded into supporting the "lesser evil" of Lyndon Johnson against Goldwater. The support of many antiwar activists for Congressional "doves" in the capitalist parties during the 1966 elections seriously hampered the development of the then new antiwar movement. In 1968, the Kennedy and McCarthy campaigns were successful in recruiting the energies of thousands of young people away from mass action into playing the two-party shell game.

Considering this pattern, the striking feature of the 1970 elections was not that they were able to dampen independent struggles but that they were far less successful than previous elections in this respect. There are three reasons for the relatively limited effects of the 1970 elections.

First, Nixon's phony gestures at "winding down" the war succeeded in silencing opposition among the "doves," who endorsed his maneuver with grotesque servility.

Second, virtually all of the liberal candidates caved in under Nixon's and Agnew's pressure and adopted a patriotic "law and order" pose, denouncing student "extremists."

Third, more young people than ever

before have begun to see through the fraud of capitalist politics. These radicalizing young women and men perceive the futility of supporting a capitalist party "lesser evil" and look instead for ways to express their opposition independently.

Far from "swinging to the right," (as the bourgeois press reported in an orgy of wishful thinking), young people in fact rejected the real shift to the right by the capitalist candidates.

Combined with the effort to draw students into the elections has been the second prong of the capitalist counter-offensive. Nixon's drive to de-politicize the campuses is aimed at silencing the student movement, which has consistently opposed his administration and his continuing aggression in Southeast Asia. Nixon hopes to divide and disorient the student movement in order to prevent another May. He has employed several tactics in this drive.

First, Nixon has launched a general propaganda offensive to discredit student radicals in the eyes of the American people. Characterizing students as "bums" and "thugs," the capitalist politicians and the bourgeois press have tried to associate a few isolated incidents of terrorism with the mass movements on the campuses. Falsely pinning the blame for violence on students, they have attempted to whip up hysteria about student-inspired "anarchy."

Second, Nixon sent, along with his own covering letter, an "Open Letter to College Students" from J. Edgar Hoover to 900 college administrators. In his letter, Hoover calls the attention of the administrators to the "extremist" groups which are most dangerous, fingering the YSA and the Student Mobilization Committee as prime targets for administrators to attack.

Third, the Nixon administration initiated a set of unconstitutional political guidelines through the Internal Revenue Service, threatening universities and colleges with the loss of their tax-exempt status if they allow campus facilities to be used for "political" activity, such as support of candidates for public office. These guidelines are designed to give college administrations an excuse to crack down on the student movement. In accordance with the IRS-backed guidelines, most colleges have issued their own guidelines restricting the political rights of students. These range from prohibiting the use of student funds for the antiwar movement to proscribing the sale of radical literature on campus.

Fourth, the Ohio Grand Jury indicted the Kent 25 in the most blatant example of the attack on students, attempting to

use the trial of these activists to white-wash the murder of four Kent students and intimidate the entire student movement.

The counteroffensive directed against the students in direct response to May has not succeeded in stifling struggles on the campus. In spite of the ruling class attempt to curb the radicalization, activity since May demonstrates clearly the potential for another upsurge in the near future.

The Struggle Continues

The struggle has continued and deepened in the movements for women's liberation, for Third World self-determination, and against the war. The revolutionary socialist movement has continued to grow in size and influence.

The women's liberation movement emerged as a major political force on August 26, when masses of women demonstrated in cities across the country for free abortion on demand--no forced sterilization; free 24-hour childcare, community-controlled; and equal opportunities in jobs and education. Campus feminist groups have grown and multiplied at a spectacular rate. Women's liberation conferences in Boston, Detroit, Washington D.C. and other cities drew hundreds of women to their sessions. In New York City, a citywide, action-oriented coalition has been organized, representing the advanced consciousness of growing numbers of women about the importance of united mass action in building an effective movement. In addition, new Third World women's liberation organizations have emerged and grown.

Nationalist consciousness among the oppressed nationalities in the United States has continued to spread since May. The national Chicano Moratorium, held in Los Angeles on August 29, drew 30,000 Chicanos to the largest antiwar demonstration ever held in that city. In addition, the election campaigns of La Raza Unida parties in Texas and Colorado registered substantial gains in winning support for independent Chicano political action.

The intensification of nationalist sentiment in the Black community is reflected by the participation of 14,000 Black people in the Congress of African People and the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention plenary session. These two conferences were held on the same weekend in September. Another reflection of growing militancy and political consciousness has been the struggle of the Cairo United Front in Cairo, Illinois. The Cairo United Front has taken a step forward from previous struggles by linking the concept of armed

self-defense by mass organizations representing the whole community to a mass action perspective aimed at mobilizing the Black community and building broad support for the fight against the white racist city and state police and vigilante groups.

The antiwar movement won a major victory in mobilizing tens of thousands of people in the October 31 demonstrations. In spite of the election pressure, Nixon's phony "peace" maneuvers and the defection of the capitalist "doves," mass actions were held in more than 40 cities, organized largely by the Student Mobilization Committee and the National Peace Action Coalition. The actions, while smaller than those in the fall of 1969, were the largest antiwar demonstrations ever held during an election period.

Moreover, in spite of the objective difficulties of the post-May period, the SMC has consolidated a base of hundreds of campus chapters and thousands of loyal, active members. The SMC is now better prepared than ever before to build mass actions and to give direction to the next antiwar upsurge.

The continued growth of antiwar sentiment in the rest of society was distinctly pointed out by the results of the November 3 referenda on the war in Detroit and San Francisco in which significant majorities voted for immediate withdrawal from Vietnam. (In Massachusetts, another referendum which gave three choices also showed an overwhelming majority opposed to the war.)

The 1970 Socialist Workers Party election campaigns were the most successful local campaigns ever run. They reached thousands of people with revolutionary socialist ideas, presenting an alternative to the two-party charade of capitalist politics. The SWP ran more candidates who spoke to more meetings, got more TV and radio time, and more general publicity than in any previous SWP campaign. The SWP candidates in a number of states were able to force their bourgeois opponents to confront them directly in front of large audiences. Many young activists who were introduced to revolutionary socialist ideas by these campaigns have joined the YSA.

All of these developments underscore the fact that the contradictions plaguing Nixon's administration have in no sense been resolved. To the contrary, they continue to intensify, threatening the ruling class with new and bigger upsurges like the one last May.

The war in Vietnam remains the central axis of the world conflict between the forces of capitalist reaction and socialist revolution. Nixon's renewed bombing of North Vietnam and the

bungled landing of ground assault troops near Hanoi make clear his intention to press ahead toward the imperialist objectives in Indochina rather than accept a defeat for imperialism, which is what the withdrawal of troops would mean. The continued prosecution of the war while the overwhelming majority of Americans oppose it fuels the deepening radicalization and keeps eroding the facade of "democracy" behind which the capitalists govern.

The threat of U.S. troops being sent into the Middle East, which came close to being realized during the Jordanian civil war, is the threat of a second Vietnam. Nixon was prepared to commit American soldiers to fight on the side of King Hussein, and he only decided against such a move when it became clear that Hussein's regime would survive the civil war without direct U.S. intervention.

The opposition to the war in Vietnam has provided fresh confirmation of the importance to the colonial revolution of resistance inside the imperialist countries. Domestic opposition to U.S. intervention against the Arab revolution can play the same crucial role in defending the Arab struggles. While the immediate threat of U.S. troops being sent has temporarily receded, there can be no doubt that Nixon is now laying the basis for a future invasion should Washington find such a move necessary. As long as GIs are not directly involved in a shooting war, the possibility of organizing mass actions in the U.S. is limited, but the YSA has an important task in winning support for the Arab revolution. By educating people about imperialist and Zionist objectives in the Middle East and hammering away at the threat of a second Vietnam, we can prepare the way for massive opposition to Washington's future attempts to use troops against the Arab peoples.

The job squeeze is closing off more and more opportunities for employment in the working class as a whole. Increasingly, well-trained technical workers and professional workers, such as teachers and engineers, are among those affected. A college degree no longer guarantees a job. After four years or more of training at the expense of thousands of dollars, graduates from universities are finding themselves "socially unnecessary." This process will accelerate the radicalization among graduates and among students themselves who can look forward to the same plight. The rising number of young graduates who are unable to find work, together with the runaway inflation which also hits hard at young workers and students, poses a serious threat to the "prosperity" of America in the 1970s.

The Nixon administration is faced by

proliferating and growing social movements organizing around demands which capitalism can satisfy only partially or not at all. Capitalism cannot end the national oppression of Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans. It cannot allow the complete liberation of women. It cannot cease to be imperialist. It cannot satisfy the demands of students, young workers, or young people in general. As these movements grow more powerful and the radicalization continues to deepen, we can expect recurring mobilizations, of which May 1970 was only the beginning.

Defense of the Movement

The reaction of Nixon and the ruling class to May has brought into sharp focus the necessity and importance of fighting for democratic rights under capitalism. The question of democratic rights and civil liberties assumes even more importance as the radicalization broadens. As the YSA moves closer to a central position in all of the mass movements, we will more than ever have to act in defense of democratic rights.

There are two main errors generally made within the student movement in connection with defense of the movement.

The first and most frequent is the mistake the liberals make of viewing civil liberties as a strictly legal or legislative matter. When their rights are threatened by legislative action, their response is to lobby against legislation they oppose or to campaign for politicians with "good records" on civil liberties. If a trial comes up, the liberals are inclined to rely exclusively on good lawyers, fearing that public defense activity will alienate the judge or jury.

The liberals' approach stems from their failure to understand that the Constitution, courts and laws are, like the state itself, instruments of the ruling class. As such, they are affected by shifts in the relationship of forces between the capitalists and their opponents in the masses. The American people enjoy democratic rights only because they have been won in struggle, and only by continuing the struggle can these rights be maintained and extended.

All lines of legal defense must be pursued in the fight for democratic rights, but only by waging a campaign of mass political action can we create a climate in which legal arguments will be effective.

The second error made by some sections of the student movement is the dismissing of the fight for democratic

rights as a "reformist" or "irrelevant" issue. Ultralefts such as the Progressive Labor Party argue that students must "go beyond" the struggle for rights and liberties which can be won because anything which can be won is not revolutionary. Such a sectarian refusal to participate in the defense of democratic rights ignores the responsibility revolutionaries have to lead this fight. The ruling class is constantly trying to restrict civil liberties. These liberties are important conquests of the class struggle, and the battle to defend them will remain a central part of revolutionary activity right up to the day the working class takes power.

We expect the YSA to become involved in more civil liberties battles and legal cases in the coming period for two reasons: 1) As the YSA becomes larger and moves toward becoming the dominant revolutionary youth group in this country, we will be singled out more often by the government and face more direct challenges to our democratic rights to function without restriction. 2) As the influence of the YSA within the radical movement continues to expand, we will more often be looked to for leadership and political direction by various forces under attack. When the rights of all students are threatened by government moves or right-wing activity, the YSA must play a leading role in defense efforts.

Because our resources are limited, we must allocate them in a realistic manner, deciding the extent of our active participation in different campaigns and defense cases as each one comes up. At the same time, we must understand that the revolutionary youth organization must always be in the forefront of the battles over democratic rights, and the YSA must do everything it can to support other defense cases.

Where possible, the YSA will want to take the initiative in organizing broad-based defense efforts in response to administration interference with such campus activities as selling newspapers, inviting speakers, and allocating student government funds as students see fit.

Nixon's campaign to de-politicize the campus by restricting student rights can be defeated with a determined response from the student movement. The deepening radicalization tends to weaken attempts by the state to restrict civil liberties and cut across any attempts to whip up support for a crackdown on the student movement. The only real guarantee of student rights, however, is a student movement that understands the importance of its democratic rights and the value of mass action.

High Schools

Today's high school students have spent their entire conscious lives in the midst of a thorough-going radicalization. They have grown up under the influence of the antiwar movement, the nationalist struggles for self-determination, and now the women's liberation movement--and high school students have become part of all these struggles.

An important factor radicalizing high school students has been the socially and politically repressive administrations in the high schools. High school students reject the concept that they are "children." They are beginning to realize that they are at least as capable of running their own lives as their elders who have made such a mess of the world. They are rebelling against a system which denies them their First Amendment rights, which presumably apply to all citizens.

High schools severely restrict the political activity of students in the schools, denying them to various degrees the right to publish and distribute leaflets and papers, to speak and listen to speakers from outside the schools, and to meet and form their own organizations in school.

In urban high schools, police are often stationed in the halls, making high schools resemble prisons more than educational institutions.

This means that every student who becomes politically active immediately confronts the school administration and its anti-democratic rules. As a result, high school students' attempts to organize around political issues become struggles for democratic rights as well.

In many cities, high school students make up a large and active component of the SMC. High school students were among the most active builders of the October 31 antiwar actions, and in many cities made up a majority of the demonstrators.

The significant turnout of high school women on August 26 demonstrations indicates the degree to which the women's liberation movement is growing in the high schools. High school women are organizing around the basic demands of August 26. They are also fighting against the particular forms of oppression they face as high school women: such as lack of birth control information and devices; tracking away from scientific and other "unfeminine" courses; expulsion or suspension if they become pregnant.

The profound nationalist sentiment

of the Third World communities has produced militant struggle by Black and Brown high school students. The fights by high school students for the study of Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican history in the schools, for the right to form nationalist organizations, against tracking and against racist school administrations are organically linked with the broader struggle for community control of the schools, giving the high school fights tremendous potential power and leverage.

The struggles of Third World high school students take on special importance in the major urban areas, where they are a majority of the high school population.

An important part of socialist activity in the high schools is the YSA's support of the Socialist Workers Party election campaigns. By having SWP candidates and their representatives speak in the high schools, by organizing high school campaign support groups, and by participating in high school student government elections through Young Socialist slates, along with our participation in high school SMCs, women's liberation groups, and nationalist organizations, the YSA will continue the fight for high school rights and win more and more high school militants to its ranks.

Like their counterparts on the college campuses, high school students in growing numbers are receptive to the ideas of revolutionary socialism. Because of the strategic importance of this sector of society, the YSA must pay special attention to the recruitment and education of high school members.

Opponents of Revolutionary Socialism on the Left

As the organization striving to become the leadership for all radical youth, it is necessary for the YSA to clearly understand the political positions of the other organizations vying for the allegiance of the newly radicalizing youth, and the social forces these organizations represent.

In looking at the broad spectrum of organizations on the left, it becomes clear that what separates the different radical groups are more than merely superficial differences, although these differences may not be immediately understood by newly radicalizing youth.

The YSA is the only radical youth organization which understands the dynamic of the antiwar, Third World, women's liberation and student movements and how they pave the way for the entrance of

other social forces, including the organized working class, into anti-capitalist struggle culminating in the socialist revolution. The YSA's opponents among the radical youth organizations have either abstained from today's struggles, or have sought to divert them into a reformist or ultra-left course.

In a period of deep radicalization, almost every radical group or tendency tends to grow in size. The following groups, however, are the most significant groups on a national scale.

The Communist Party and the Young Workers Liberation League

Although we have not directly confronted them in the main arenas of our activity during the immediate past period, the Communist Party and the Young Workers Liberation League have been and continue to be our main opponents within the radical movement.

The pro-Moscow Stalinist movement in the United States, as around the world, identifies the interests of the world working class with the interests of the ruling bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. The Stalinists see as their main tasks working to ensure the continuation of "peaceful coexistence" between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world and furthering the immediate diplomatic interests of the Soviet rulers, in order to prevent an invasion of or war against the USSR. This perspective lies behind their policies of class-collaboration and reformism in the capitalist countries--policies which have betrayed countless revolutions and caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of revolutionary militants. Because of their history of betrayals and their continuation of these same policies today, the pro-Moscow Stalinists have found themselves to the right of the student movement and the other mass struggles of the current period. Masses of new radicals around the world correctly identify the pro-Moscow Communist parties with class collaboration in the capitalist countries and support to the policies of the parasitic bureaucracy in the East European and Soviet workers states. Young radicals look to other forms of struggle and organizations to bring about social change.

Over the past decade the CP in this country has been unable to construct and maintain a viable youth group capable of carrying out their political line in the student movement. The CP has launched and dissolved a number of youth organizations, including the DuBois Clubs; the current Stalinist youth group, founded in February 1970, is the Young Workers

Liberation League.

Despite these problems, the CP has significant political influence in sectors of the Third World liberation, antiwar, and trade union movements. The YWLL has grown in some areas and has a membership roughly equal to that of the YSA.

Why do the Stalinists continue to be a powerful force on the left? First, their political program and organization represent the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy in the world working class movement. Until a political revolution in the Soviet Union and the East European workers states restores socialist democracy, the existence of a bureaucratic caste in these countries provides a social basis for the existence of Communist Parties throughout the world. Because of their political agreement with these Stalinist regimes, and their political acceptance of the anti-Marxist ideas of Stalin, we categorize these parties as Stalinist.

The existence of mass Communist parties in many countries, especially in Western Europe, lends added authority to the Stalinists claim to speak for socialism.

Although today only a fraction of its former size, in the 1930s and 1940s the CP in the United States was a mass party. This past enables it to maintain a large periphery and material resources.

The Communist Party and the Mass Movements

The CP's strategy for the developing mass movements is guided by its fundamentally reformist politics. Instead of independent mass action in the streets, it presents these movements with the perspective of supporting the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, a perspective which, if successfully carried out, would destroy their anticapitalist thrust. This can be seen by taking a closer look at the role of the Stalinists in the antiwar, Third World, women's liberation and student movements.

The Stalinists play a contradictory role in the antiwar movement. At times they have participated in adult and student antiwar organizations, supporting mass demonstrations. But within these organizations they have always pushed for the adoption of a reformist program in the name of "dealing with other issues" in order to steer the antiwar movement into support for capitalist "peace" candidates. For example, in both 1968 and 1970, the CP was instrumental in splitting the antiwar coalitions, covering their retreat from independent mass action with rhetoric about the antiwar movement's need to take up the issues of racism and repression. The CP did not support

the October 31 antiwar actions and has not participated in the Student Mobilization Committee or the National Peace Action Coalition in the recent period. In spite of their abstention from the organized antiwar movement, we must continually seek to involve them in antiwar united fronts, realizing that their participation adds important forces to the antiwar movement.

The CP does not recognize the right of Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, and Native American peoples to self-determination, but in order to adapt to these powerful movements, they give token support to certain aspects of the national struggles. However, they reject the independent thrust of these movements in favor of what they call "working class unity" and "fighting racism." Nationalism, they say, "divides" Black and Brown workers from white workers. In reality, four hundred years of racial oppression have divided the working class. Real working class unity can only be achieved on the basis of support for the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities.

The CP and YWLL do not support the formation of an independent Black or Chicano political party which can lead the fight for self-determination on all fronts. One of their main tactics in the Third World movements is to advocate support for "progressive" Democrats, especially Black Democrats, such as Ron Delums, Shirley Chisolm, and Carl Stokes. Although they give lip service to La Raza Unida Party, they oppose the principled stand taken by many of the LRUP leaders against support for any Democratic Party candidates. The CP has not campaigned in support of LRUP.

The CP and YWLL are beginning to participate in the women's liberation movement to an increasing extent, and here again, their line is the same. They introduce the same phony argument into the women's movement as they do into the Third World movements, i.e., independent feminist organizations "divide" the working class. As with the antiwar movement, they charge that the women's movement is racist unless it makes "fighting racism" part of its program. In the electoral arena, they have urged support for women Democrats like Chisolm and Bella Abzug. These arguments are geared toward preventing the women's liberation movement from becoming a mass independent movement.

Moreover, the CP is compelled to defend the nuclear family by its support of the Soviet bureaucracy, which maintains and champions this oppressive institution in the degenerated workers state. Flying in the face of Marxist theory from Engels to Lenin, the Stalinists maintain that "love" can make the working class family "revolutionary." This completely unscientific and reactionary concept runs

counter to the whole thrust of the women's liberation movement, and clinging to it will present the CP with difficulties in attempting to win support from militant feminists.

The CP and YWLL have developed no program for student struggles. They do, however, look to the current radicalization to replenish the forces of the CP, particularly through their youth organization, the YWLL. But the YWLL has not concentrated its activities on the campuses, and as a result played only a minimal role during the May events, making no significant gains for their organization.

Because the Communist Party and the Young Workers Liberation League remain the central opponents of revolutionary socialism within the radical movement, and because their reformist perspectives are a dead-end for the developing mass movements, the YSA must continually work to limit the Stalinists' influence among radicalizing youth. We want to politically confront them whenever and wherever possible, engaging their members in debate and discussion and exposing their bankrupt politics to the entire radical movement. In this way, we can make sure that no young radical joins the YWLL under the mistaken notion that by doing so, she or he has joined an organization fighting for socialism.

Progressive Labor Party

The Progressive Labor Party was founded by former Communist Party members who left the CP in the late 1950s. The CP had lost thousands of members during the McCarthy period; they were further weakened when thousands more of their members became disillusioned by the Soviet crushing of the Hungarian uprising in 1956 and the shock produced when Khrushchev, at the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU, brought to light a fraction of the crimes committed by the Soviet bureaucracy during the Stalin era. These events helped precipitate a shake-up in the CP and many members began looking for alternative organizations, or dropped out of politics altogether. Although the founders of PLP left the CP during this period, they did not agree with the criticisms of Stalin or his policies.

Despite their break with the CP and their adoption of Maoism, PLP never analyzed or explained the degeneration of the Communist Party. Moreover, they never broke with the CP's basic political perspective of class collaboration and peaceful coexistence. Their ultraleftist rhetoric to the contrary, PLP is a reformist organization.

In the student movement, they put forward the strategy of the "worker-student alliance," holding that students are powerless and their only role is to "serve" the working class. While their extreme

sectarianism prevents them from participating in the women's liberation and Third World movements almost entirely, their political attitude to these movements is similar to that of the CP. They oppose feminism and nationalism on the basis that they divide the working class. They also abstain from the antiwar movement, charging that it has been co-opted by liberal politicians. They even say that the NLF has "sold out" the struggle of the Vietnamese by accepting Soviet aid and by negotiating in Paris!

During the May events, the Progressive Labor Party was the only national organization which put forward an alternative to the strategy of the antiwar university. Their position was that the universities should be shut down and kept shut down, since students could do nothing on the campuses until the workers seized state power. At the most, PL said, students could "ally" with campus workers. This strategy won little support and by and large isolated PL during the May events.

When Students for a Democratic Society split up in June of 1969, the PL-led Worker-Student Alliance faction assumed the name of SDS and attempted to recapture the prestige of the "old SDS." This proved impossible, due to the political sectarianism of PL, which condemned WSA-SDS to remain outside the mainstream of all the mass movements. SDS's size and political influence are declining, as shown, for example, by their "Elections are a hoax" demonstration held in Detroit on November 3, which drew only about a thousand, although it was built as a major national demonstration. There are growing indications of dissatisfaction among non-PL SDS members with PL's lack of an action perspective. YSAers should continue to discuss and debate politics with SDSers, where we have the possibility of winning some of them away from SDS.

The New Left

The once-powerful SDS disappeared from the scene over a year ago. This fact, more than the relationship of forces among the traditional working class political tendencies, has made a qualitative change in the YSA's relative position within the student movement. Although new left type formations exist on a number of campuses, the possibility of the formation or regroupment of a national new left organization anything like the old SDS becomes more and more remote as the radicalization continues and our own forces grow. Where before a newly-radicalizing young person would automatically look to SDS as the organization to join, she or he now looks most often to the SMC, the YSA, or, less often, to PL or YWLL. If any new left organization does form on a national or regional level, it will be viewed as only one tendency within

the student movement, unlike the old SDS which claimed to speak for the entire student movement and involved many young radicals who had not yet chosen among the existing political tendencies.

Terrorism

Several tiny terrorist groups exist in the U.S., composed of individuals who have completely rejected the perspective of winning masses of people to the struggle for social change. As Marxists have pointed out for over a century, isolated acts of violence carried out by a small, self-appointed elite "vanguard," represent a complete retreat from the mass independent struggles that are needed to actually make a revolution.

Although the terrorist groups in the U.S. today are small and have little political influence in the student movement, their actions are widely publicized and can both disorient the movement and provide the ruling class with a tool for discrediting and attacking it. It is important for us to continue to counterpose a revolutionary socialist mass action perspective to terrorism and to help educate the mass movements against terrorism.

The United Front

One of the ways in which the YSA is distinguished from other radical organizations is in our application of the united front-type tactic to mobilize masses of people against the government. A united front-type coalition is based on an agreement between different organizations and individuals to carry out common action around specific demands. The National Peace Action Coalition is an example of the united front tactic as applied to the mass antiwar movement. The organizations in NPAC all agree to organize periodic mass demonstrations against the war around the demand for immediate withdrawal, even though these organizations and individuals have serious disagreements on other questions.

The central purpose of the united front is to mobilize the broadest possible action in opposition to the policies of the government--broader than any single organization could mobilize by itself. For example, the YSA and SWP would not by ourselves be able to mobilize significant numbers of people beyond our membership and supporters to take action against the war in Vietnam. But by uniting in formations such as NPAC with other organizations and individuals who

also want to act against the war we are able to help organize hundreds of thousands--even millions--of people in mass antiwar mobilizations. Even when revolutionaries are leading mass movements they still look for opportunities to unite with other organizations and forces in order to mobilize the maximum numbers of people.

In addition to the agreement to carry out common action, there are two other principles upon which the united front is based. The first is non-exclusion, which means that no organization which agrees with the aims of the united front should be excluded from participation on the basis of other positions it may hold. In the early days of the antiwar movement, for example, some organizations, such as the Socialist Party, felt that communists and revolutionary socialists should not be allowed to participate. The principle of non-exclusion within the antiwar movement was first confirmed when SDS, which called the first anti-Vietnam war march for April, 1965, refused to bend to pressure from its parent organization, the League for Industrial Democracy, to keep socialists from organizing for and participating in the action. The YSA and SWP have been the most consistent fighters for non-exclusion in the antiwar movement and in other united front-type formations. We oppose any measures unnecessarily limiting the forces brought into action, and we also oppose the introduction into the united front of the reactionary red-baiting and witch-hunt tactics of the government, which only serve to divide the movement.

The second principle upon which we insist in united fronts is that all participating organizations continue to have the freedom to criticize other organizations within the front. The fundamental reason why we organize and participate in united fronts is to lead the largest number of people possible in mass action. In order to do this we seek to involve in the united front organizations that we disagree with, such as the CP and PL, realizing that their participation will bring added forces into the struggle. At the same time we must remain free to debate and polemicize with these other organizations who are our competitors for hegemony within the radical movement.

The united front is a tactic we use in all the developing mass movements: the women's liberation movement, the antiwar movement, the movements for self-determination, and the student movement. In this way we are able to organize independent political action against the government on a broad scale. The united front is especially crucial in this period when there exist no mass working class or Third World political parties capable of

mobilizing these sectors on their own. When such formations do exist, the united front will remain an important tool in mobilizing mass opposition to the government.

By building these united front actions, the YSA is also able to get out its ideas, recruit activists, and extend its influence. We realize that newly radicalizing young people, who first move into political action around a single question, such as the war, soon begin to question other aspects of capitalist society and will be looking for ways to change society as a whole.

United front formations are a test for every radical organization. If, for example, the CP, YWLL, or PL claims to support "free abortion on demand," but refuses to join in building actions around that demand, this gives us an opportunity to explain the reasons behind their abstention. If, as we urge, they participate in united front formations, they add to the power of the movement, and we are able to discuss and debate politics with their members before a broad audience of radical youth.

Within the Third World communities, the united fronts organized around such demands as community control of the schools can lead to a break with the Democratic Party and can be a stepping stone toward the creation of a mass Black political party.

Mass Action

Mass action is fundamental to the Marxist concept of class struggle and social change. It is only through the mobilization of the majority of the American people led by the working class in action independent of the capitalist parties and politics that we will be able to defeat the U.S. ruling class and end once and for all the system whose existence depends on the exploitation and oppression of millions of people throughout the world. This basic concept is one with which all our opponents disagree.

Liberals and reformists rely on "good" bourgeois politicians to do what only the masses of people can do, whether it is ending racial oppression, or forcing the government to withdraw from Vietnam, or defending democratic rights.

Ultralefts, while shouting the loudest for revolution, are no more effective than the reformists. They try to substitute tiny "super-militant" actions for the actions of the millions. They are basically elitists, having no faith in the masses' ability to understand or act against their oppression.

Revolutionaries have a different approach. We participate in and help

lead the ongoing mass movements, fighting to keep them independent of the capitalist parties and centered on carrying out ever larger actions against the government. We support demands for these movements which will draw in the largest numbers, and which will help raise the consciousness of those involved about the need for social change. We also understand that by participating in successful actions, the self-confidence of people about their ability to affect and control their own lives is deepened.

The question of mass action is at the core of most of the debates within the different movements. It has come up in the antiwar movement, the Third World struggles, on the campuses, and most recently within the women's liberation movement. Although the form of the debate differs, its essence is the same.

Socialist Electoral Action

As revolutionary socialists we have no illusions about being able to bring about fundamental social change through elections. However, it is precisely because the masses of American people do have these illusions that we have an obligation to present a revolutionary socialist alternative to the capitalist parties and candidates. Around elections there is a heightened interest in politics and there are increased opportunities for getting our ideas out through speeches, radio and TV coverage, etc. We utilize these opportunities to publicize and build the mass movements that can bring about social change and to get out our socialist program.

Ultraleft organizations, such as PLP, call for abstaining from electoral activity, ignoring the fact that the majority of American people participate in elections, believing their demands can be met by electing the right man or woman to office. In fact, the policy of boycotting the elections does nothing more than leave that field of political activity completely in the hands of the capitalist parties and their candidates.

Reformist organizations, such as the Communist Party and liberal groups, make two major errors in their approach toward elections. Not only do they support bourgeois candidates in the elections, but they counterpose support for "good" Democrats or Republicans to building the independent mass movements against the war in Vietnam, for women's liberation, and for Third World self-determination.

By supporting the election campaigns of the Socialist Workers Party, the YSA is able to reach broad layers of people with our ideas and build support for the mass movements in which we are involved. In addition, through our support for the

SWP campaigns, which combine electoral activity with building the independent mass movements, we can help educate about the need for organized labor and the oppressed nationalities to break with the Democratic and Republican parties and form independent political parties which would organize and lead mass actions around all their demands, as well as participating in elections. Our socialist electoral activity has been and will continue to be an important arena of YSA-building activity. For many young people, supporting an SWP election campaign is the first step toward joining the revolutionary socialist movement.

In the coming year, there will be major local election campaigns run by the SWP. One way in which the YSA will support these campaigns is through initiating Young Socialist Campaigners groups, in order to involve those young people who want to carry out socialist political activity, but who may not yet be ready to join the YSA. Another way to both build support for the SWP campaigns and get out our socialist program to the student movement will be to run Young Socialist slates in college and high school student government elections.

The 1970 SWP election campaigns, and those coming up in 1971, help lay the groundwork for the 1972 SWP presidential campaign, of which the YSA will be the key supporter. That campaign will be the focus of our activity in the pre-election period and will provide us with great opportunities to expand the size and influence of the YSA.

Tasks

The opportunities for the growth in size and influence of the YSA have never been greater. Both in terms of the objective openings, and in terms of the YSA's political and organizational capabilities, 1971 offers every reason for optimism. Successfully carried out, the following tasks will lead to the continued expansion of our organization, and bring us closer to becoming a mass revolutionary youth organization. At the same time, they will strengthen all the anti-capitalist forces now moving into action.

1. We will support and build the antiwar movement, particularly the Student Mobilization Committee, on the basis of mass actions in the streets, independent of the ruling class, around the demand for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam.

2. We will support and build the burgeoning women's liberation movement,

especially campus women's liberation groups and action coalitions.

3. We will support and build the struggles of oppressed nationalities in the United States, especially the struggles of Third World high school and college students.

4. We will prepare for new upsurges in the student movement, explaining to masses of students the concept of turning the schools into centers of struggle and organizing and initiating struggles in defense of the student movement against government attacks.

5. All of these tasks will be related to the big 1972 presidential campaign to be launched by the Socialist Workers Party. Our active support of the 1971 campaigns will help lay the basis for the large-scale, exciting 1972 campaign.

6. In addition to our work in support of legal defense cases in the United States, the YSA will continue to support international defense efforts. Two of the most important of these are the campaign of the Mandel Case Legal Defense Fund to gain support for the suit against the government, challenging the ban on Ernest Mandel visiting the United States, and the campaigns of the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners, especially the campaigns to free Hugo Blanco and the political prisoners in Mexico.

7. We will continue to work in defense of the Arab revolution, and especially of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. We will help educate the student, antiwar, women's liberation, and Third World movements about the role of the U.S. in the Middle East, the nature of Zionism, and the Israeli state, and the necessity to support the Arab peoples' struggles.

8. We will continue the distribution of socialist ideas through widespread sales and subscription campaigns for The Militant and International Socialist Review.

9. We will continue the education of our own ranks in the fundamentals of Marxist ideas and in the history, strategy and tactics of the movements in which we are involved, through regular classes, summer schools, and conferences.

The YSA and the Coming American Revolution

The YSA was founded in 1960. In the past ten years we have grown, along with the deepening and extension of the radicalization, from a small and relatively

isolated group of radicals into the largest, most cohesive, most dynamic and most stable radical youth organization in the country. As we have grown, we have seen other radical organizations rise and fall, torn apart by internal contradictions or smashed by events they were unable to foresee and unprepared to grapple with. SDS was the most well-known of these other organizations. SDS made the fatal mistake of thinking it could ignore the question of program, failing to examine and choose between the three major tendencies in the socialist movement--Stalinism, social democracy, and revolutionary socialism.

Organized without a program, including people whose political ideas were in fundamental conflict, SDS was able to stay together only so long as the situation in the country did not make united action necessary. But as the radicalization and the mass movements grew, SDS was paralyzed by its inability to reach agreement on what to do; it reeled under the impact of events, zig-zagged from reformism to ultra-leftism, and finally flew to pieces.

The YSA was organized from the very beginning on a clear political program and built to include people who agreed with that program--a revolutionary socialist program based on the knowledge and experience of the world revolutionary movement from Marx to Lenin to Trotsky, preserved and enriched in the United States by the Socialist Workers Party. Building on the basis of this program of

action, the YSA began to grow as the crises our Marxist understanding enabled us to foresee developed and called for the kind of united action our democratic-centralist organization equipped us to carry out.

We face the period ahead with considered optimism, realizing that the problems of the capitalists have never been so grave and the prospects for revolutionaries have never been so bright as they are today in the United States. Working in close political collaboration with the Socialist Workers Party, the revolutionary vanguard party in this country, we expect to continue and expand our growth and influence in the coming year, using our energies and our Marxist understanding to further the student movement and the struggles for women's liberation, Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Native American self-determination, an end to the war in Indochina and the defense of democratic rights.

Together with the SWP, the YSA belongs to the world revolutionary movement, not in the abstract, but concretely, with strong fraternal ties to our co-thinkers in the Fourth International. Our ties to the American and world parties of the socialist revolution put the YSA in a position to win to its ranks the best young militants of this generation and become the mass revolutionary youth organization which, together with the vanguard party, will lead the masses of American people in the coming American socialist revolution.



The Power of Mass Action: Young Socialist Strategy for the Antiwar Movement

Vietnam remains in the center of world politics, and the deepening conflict in Indochina is at the root of the gravest problems which have ever confronted the U.S. ruling class. The Nixon administration's attempts to create the impression that the war is "winding down" in no way correspond to the reality which is that the war has continued to intensify during the past year.

Imperialist Strategy in Southeast Asia

Since the end of World War II, from which the United States emerged as the supreme imperialist power, the U.S. capitalist rulers have undertaken the task of quelling the struggles of colonial peoples for self-determination. The conflict between imperialism and national liberation struggles in the colonial countries has been the axis of revolutionary activity during these 25 years.

The fundamental aims of Washington's strategy in Southeast Asia have been to stem the tide of colonial revolution, maintain the encirclement of the Chinese workers state by U.S. military bases, and, ultimately, to try to roll back the victories of the socialist revolutions in North Vietnam and China.

What began as a limited counter-insurgency operation in Vietnam in line with these objectives has steadily escalated into a war of monstrous proportions. But despite the dispatch of more than half a million troops, the expenditure of billions of dollars, the use of the most terrible military technology in history, the deaths of nearly 50,000 American GIs and many times more Vietnamese, Washington has not been able to crush the Vietnamese revolution.

The heroic resistance of the Vietnamese against the barbarous aggression of U.S. imperialism has combined with increasing social unrest provoked by the war's effects inside the United States to create a relationship of class forces less

and less favorable to the American rulers.

At the same time, Washington's imperialist allies have been unwilling to back up the U.S. war effort, adding another dimension to the problems of the American ruling class.

The U.S. government has been forced to respond to this changing relationship of forces by altering the tactics with which it continues to pursue the same basic aims. While deepening differences have developed within the ruling class itself over these tactical shifts, such divisions have occurred within the context of agreement on the fundamental objectives of U.S. imperialism.

Because of all of the above difficulties, Nixon, while committed like his predecessors to the continued U.S. imperialist domination of Southeast Asia, has been unable to win an outright military victory. Like Johnson before him, he is aiming at a negotiated settlement similar to the outcome imposed on Korea, a settlement preserving a capitalist South Vietnam as an Asian base for U.S. imperialism. While the imperialists would make limited concessions to achieve such a settlement, they would not concede on the decisive question of state power--that is, which class will rule? So long as this question is undecided, the war will go on. There has been no indication that the Vietnamese revolutionists are prepared to buy the kind of "just peace" Nixon is trying to sell. Although this possibility cannot be excluded, as long as the Vietnamese freedom fighters continue to struggle for complete national liberation and Washington holds to its basic objectives, the war will continue until one side defeats the other.

Nixon's fake "peace proposal" and his propaganda about scaling down the war are designed to quiet massive opposition to the war in the United States. At the same time that he has carried out a number of partial troop withdrawals and cut the use of combat troops in order to reduce American casualties and dampen mass

antiwar opposition, Nixon has increased the use of military technology. According to a November 8 report in The New York Times, "So many American planes are bombing the Ho Chi Minh trail in Southern Laos that military officials have established traffic patterns similar to those in use at major U.S. airports." The bombings in Cambodia and South Vietnam have also been stepped up considerably.

For Nixon and the ruling class, placing greater reliance on military technology in order to foster illusions that the war is gradually drawing to a close is an extremely risky business. First, it has not succeeded in turning the tide of battle in favor of imperialism. Second, the potential exists for a sudden and dramatic escalation of the war which would cause a greater outpouring of anger by masses of people whose hopes for peace have been raised by Washington's maneuver. This has already been demonstrated by the invasion of Cambodia and the explosive protests it generated.

Nixon's decision to expand the war by invading Cambodia was made necessary by an extreme shift of the military-political situation to the disadvantage of Washington. The massive popular resistance to the CIA-backed rightist Lon Nol regime represented a tremendous deepening of the class and national struggles in Cambodia. The dynamic of these struggles threatened to overthrow the puppet regime. A similar process was taking place simultaneously in Laos. By late April, the theater of the war encompassed Laos and Cambodia along with Vietnam. The imperialists are now engaged in a war on three fronts in Indochina, in each case attempting to prop up a reactionary government incapable of holding out by itself against the armed power of social revolution. The U.S. rulers are now in a situation in which they can find themselves at any time forced by the exigencies of the conflict to make a decision about reversing the partial troop withdrawals--either to re-escalate or get out.

Nixon was forced to pull back from Cambodia by the eruption of mass mobilizations in May. The sharpness of the tensions that developed then has been blunted to some extent by his apparent restraint from further escalation coupled with his propaganda offensive, partial troop withdrawals and a decline in GI casualties. Nixon's administration was also successful in hushing the "doves" of the two capitalist parties in the 1970 election campaign.

The Potential for Another Upsurge

For the time being, Nixon has managed to disarm large sections of the masses who

oppose the war. Yet he has been able to do this only by raising the expectations of the majority of Americans for peace by persuading them he is embarking on a course of withdrawal. Nixon has purchased a short lease to maneuver, but he has obtained it on bad credit and at an extremely high price.

The illusions that exist will be shattered by developments in the war. The recent bombing raids and landing of ground assault troops in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam are indications of the way in which Washington's continued pursuit of its fundamental strategic aims will lead to a situation that will once again trigger an explosion of active opposition in the United States.

The mass mobilizations of the antiwar movement during the past six years prepared the way for the spontaneous independent upsurge of last May, and they have prepared and will continue to prepare for such outbursts in the future. In the present situation, ripe for another social explosion, it is the responsibility of all those who support the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination to prepare politically and organizationally for another upheaval even greater than the one in May. The antiwar movement has the obligation to organize mass demonstrations in the streets counterposing the demand for immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops to the propaganda maneuvers of the ruling class. Building the next series of mass antiwar demonstrations is the central task of the YSA in the antiwar movement for the period immediately ahead.

International Opposition to the War

The U.S. imperialists have hoped to make use of the Soviet bureaucracy in pressuring the Vietnamese into surrender at the conference table. However, Moscow has been less able to enforce a capitulation than in similar situations in the past. At the same time the Kremlin has consistently defaulted in its responsibility to respond to the step-by-step escalation of U.S. aggression.

Moscow bears the primary responsibility for failing to stand up against U.S. aggression in Indochina, but the Maoist bureaucracy has also abdicated its responsibility to aid the Vietnamese. Peking's grandiose rhetoric about the war in Vietnam has not been matched by any more than token concrete aid, and China's sectarian refusal to press for a united front defense of the Vietnamese revolution by all the workers states has made it easier for the Kremlin to renege on its obligations.

Both Moscow and Peking have put their own narrow, bureaucratically conceived national interests ahead of the Vietnamese revolution, and this policy has been reflected by the failure of the Communist parties throughout the world to mount mass actions against the war. This is especially criminal because in many countries the pro-Moscow parties are mass parties whose weight would significantly shift the balance of struggle. The Maoist parties have generally pursued a sectarian course of abstaining from the mass antiwar movement.

Cuba's revolutionary internationalist defense of the Vietnamese revolution has been the most consistent among the workers states outside of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The reformist social democratic parties, some of which are mass parties, have either openly supported U.S. imperialism or abstained from the struggle against the war. The major exception is the Japanese Socialist Party, which has participated in the Japanese mass antiwar movement.

In the vacuum created by the betrayal of the Stalinists and social democrats, an independent antiwar movement has developed internationally which has bypassed these parties to their left. This antiwar movement has led mass mobilizations which have helped to generate a worldwide youth radicalization that has swelled the ranks of the international revolutionary socialist movement.

The section of the international antiwar movement which can deal the most powerful blows to U.S. imperialism is the movement in the United States.

The U.S. Antiwar Movement

The antiwar movement which has developed in the United States is unique in American history. For the first time a mass action movement against an imperialist war has developed and grown while the shooting is going on. This unprecedented movement has had a profound effect on American politics.

The mass mobilizations of the antiwar movement have been able to win over the majority of people to an antiwar position. The November 1970 referenda on the war held in Massachusetts, Detroit and San Francisco provided further evidence that a clear and growing majority of the American people favors withdrawal from Vietnam.

Not only does this explosive antiwar sentiment impose narrow limits on the ability of the ruling class to maneuver

in the Indochina war, but it severely restricts them in contemplating other such wars in the future.

Today the antiwar movement has reached such a massive stage that, properly led and organized, it has the potential power to force the imperialists to withdraw their forces from Indochina.

Moreover, the antiwar movement has helped to wipe away the witch-hunt atmosphere of the 1950s and early 1960s. Its mass mobilizations have played a major role in the creation of a climate of protest favoring the development of other mass struggles against the capitalist rulers. The Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican struggles for national liberation and the women's liberation movement have been spurred by the effects of the antiwar mobilizations.

The main factor in the accomplishments of the antiwar movement has been the continued organization of massive demonstrations independent of the capitalist class and its parties. The means through which these mass demonstrations have been organized have been coalitions which are a particular form of the tactic of the united front. In the absence of any mass party of labor or the oppressed national minorities, these united-front coalitions have been able to unite diverse forces around the organization of mass antiwar action. The coalitions are composed of a heterogeneous grouping of individuals, organizations, parties and tendencies opposed to the war.

As revolutionary socialists we have fought within the antiwar movement for four central principles: 1) the central strategy of mass demonstrations, 2) the central demand for immediate withdrawal, 3) the principle of non-exclusion, and 4) the principle of democratic decision-making.

The activist student sector of the broader antiwar movement has furnished the bulk of the participants and pushed and prodded other sectors into support for the mass actions. The Student Mobilization Committee has been able to best organize and lead the militant student left wing of the antiwar movement in a consistent defense of the four basic principles of the mass action perspective.

Mass Action

It is the mass demonstrations independent of the capitalist parties and institutions which are the source of the antiwar movement's power. It is the threat to the ruling class of masses of people in motion outside of its control which will ultimately compel the imperialists to get out of Indochina.

The Demand for Immediate Withdrawal

The demand for immediate and complete withdrawal is the only demand which is consistent with the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. It makes a clear demand on the capitalist U.S. government, placing responsibility for the war squarely on the imperialists. Expressed in the slogan, "Bring All the GIs Home Now!", it is a demand which can reach out to the broad masses of the American people and unite them in common action against their government.

Non-Exclusion

The principle which allows the participation of any person, party or organization which is opposed to the war has been essential to the strength and success of the antiwar movement. The role of the revolutionary socialist vanguard, whose participation depends on this principle, has been indispensable in keeping the movement on a course of independent growth.

Democratic Decision-Making

The democratic making of decisions at periodic open mass meetings and conferences has also been a necessary element in maintaining the strength, independence and growth of the antiwar movement. Only frequent and open discussions where the deciding vote is cast by the rank and file antiwar activists can ensure the firm adherence of the movement to the other central principles.

Antiwar Coalitions 1965 - 1969

The history of the antiwar movement has been a history of continued struggle over the four basic principles of mass action, immediate withdrawal, non-exclusion and democratic decision-making. Each of the national antiwar coalitions which developed prior to 1970 was able to thrive so long as it adhered to these principles and organized mass actions. Each coalition declined and fell apart as it strayed from the four basic principles.

The first viable national antiwar coalition, known as the National Mobilization Committee, organized national demonstrations in April and October, 1967. Under the pressure of the 1968 elections, it abandoned mass action and disintegrated. Antiwar actions were continued by the Student Mobilization Committee during the period between the collapse of the National Mobilization Committee and the formation of the New Mobilization Committee. The New Mobilization Committee was formed in July, 1969, and organized the November 15 March on Washington. After November 15 the New Mobe retreated from mass action and degenerated.

Neither of these coalitions was a stable, long-term formation because of the centrifugal political forces which operated on its constituent elements; while the New Mobe contained forces which were not in the National Mobe, both of these coalitions rested in large part on three main elements: the Trotskyists, the Communist Party and the radical pacifists. The demise of each coalition came about when the CP and pacifists fled mass action.

The Antiwar Movement in 1970: The Growth of NPAC

The past year has been marked by shake-ups and realignments in the organized antiwar movement.

The Vietnam Moratorium Committee, formed in late spring of 1969, was organized by forces tied to a section of the Democratic Party. The VMC oriented toward capitalist politicians from the outset, and with the approach of the 1970 elections and the capitulation of the Congressional "doves" to Nixon, this orientation destroyed the VMC. The VMC made no real effort to organize the protests it had called for on April 15, 1970, and it decided to disband on the eve of the invasion of Cambodia. Consequently, the VMC played no role in the May events.

The leadership of the New Mobilization Committee, dominated by the CP, pacifists and a handful of ultralefts, changed its orientation after November 15, 1969, away from mass action toward support for capitalist "peace" candidates, combining this with an attempt to substitute small-scale acts of civil disobedience and adventurism for mass demonstrations. Like the VMC, the New Mobe called for protests on April 15, 1970, but refused to build them as mass actions.

The sole activity of the New Mobe in May was to call for the May 9 demonstration in Washington, D.C. Because of the intervention of other forces and the massive numbers who came to the capital, May 9 was a successful mass action. But the New Mobe leadership, which had attempted to organize May 9 as a confrontationist trap for those who attended, viewed it as a disappointment; New Mobe leaders published vicious red-baiting attacks on the SMC, YSA and Socialist Workers Party for the role of these organizations in marshalling the action and preventing the kind of bloody police attack the New Mobe considered a "militant" confrontation.

The antiwar activity led by the SMC during the New Mobe's decomposition and the widespread mobilizations of May set

the stage for reorganizing a national antiwar coalition. In June, 1970, at the national antiwar conference held in Cleveland, the October 31 demonstrations were called and the National Peace Action Coalition was formed. NPAC set itself the task of involving new forces that had been jolted into readiness for antiwar action by the May protests.

NPAC was organized on the basis of agreement to build the October 31 actions and adherence to the four basic principles of non-exclusion, democratic decision-making, mass action and immediate withdrawal.

The success of the October 31 demonstrations, which brought out tens of thousands of people in more than 40 cities, proved the viability of NPAC and the correctness of its perspective. While the turnout was modest compared to some previous mobilizations, it is by far the largest which has ever taken place in a pre-election period.

Moreover, the process of building the actions and involving a broader base of forces in NPAC was carried out in the face of active hostility and red-baiting by the CP and other remnants of the New Mobe, as well as red-baiting and violence-baiting by the government and sections of the trade union bureaucracy. The CP and a handful of ultralefts from the old New Mobe created a new multi-issue reformist organization, the National Coalition Against War, Racism and Repression. This formation has been unable to mount any successful activities in the fall. As a result, some of the former elements of the New Mobe who had not associated with NPAC previously, can now be won to its perspective for antiwar action in the spring.

The YSA supports NPAC, but unlike the previous coalitions, NPAC does not have the support of the pacifists and the Communist Party. NPAC is based on local antiwar groups and forces with a mass base like the SMC, trade unions, Third World organizations and others. NPAC has been particularly successful in involving support from the trade union movement, laying the groundwork for participation by social forces whose power will be decisive in forcing Washington to withdraw its troops.

Some of the forces around the old New Mobe have joined NPAC in the past several months, and more should be encouraged and expected to do so. However, the predominant base for NPAC's leadership is firmly rooted in the more substantial organizations which have come into the antiwar movement during the past year.

The prospects for a successful mass action in the spring depend largely on the movement's ability to tap the energy and

power of students, who have furnished the bulk of the participants in the mass actions and who have been the main base for the militant, independent left wing of the antiwar movement.

The Student Mobilization Committee

Since its inception in December, 1966, the SMC has been the major vehicle for organizing the students in antiwar action. The SMC is by far the largest student antiwar organization with many thousands of members and chapters at hundreds of colleges and high schools all over the country.

The SMC was originally organized as a coalition resting on the same three elements as the old national adult coalitions. But when the pressure of the 1968 elections drove the CP and the radical pacifists away from mass action into campaigning for capitalist "doves," the YSA was able to lead a victorious fight against these forces in the SMC for the perspective of continued mass action. The pacifists and the CP then walked out of the SMC.

In 1968 and early 1969 the SMC continued to organize mass actions and succeeded in prodding others to support them while the National Mobilization committee fell to pieces. The SMC was instrumental in helping to form the New Mobilization Committee and winning the call for a mass action in Washington on November 15 as the focus for that coalition. The SMC again played the role of continuing the mass action perspective after November 15 when the New Mobe went the way of its predecessor.

Since the fall of 1969, major changes have occurred in the student movement. SDS declined dramatically after its 1969 summer convention, at which it split apart into three small groups. The only organization which continues to use the name of SDS is a narrow group dominated by the Progressive Labor Party. The other splinters barely exist, and no new organization has arisen which acts as the kind of all-inclusive radical youth organization SDS used to try to be. During the same period, the SMC made major advances, particularly in the course of building the October 15 Moratorium, the November 15 March on Washington, and the May 1970 student upsurge.

The SMC conference in February 1970 dramatically illustrated the growth and influence of the SMC. Close to 4000 participants made it the largest student conference of its kind since the 1930s. The geographical representation was greater than at any previous antiwar con-

ference. With all political tendencies present, the mass action perspective put forward by the leadership of the SMC and backed by the YSA carried overwhelmingly.

The upcoming SMC conference will be just as important in concretizing the further gains of the SMC, maintaining its political line and mobilizing forces for the next major antiwar action in the spring.

During the period of its tremendous growth since 1968, the SMC has evolved into a more cohesive membership organization which individuals join on the basis of political agreement with the main principles of the SMC. Many SMC activists now not only belong to local SMC chapters, but are members of the national SMC as well. This new membership policy has helped to create a keener sense of organizational loyalty among the members at the same time that it has enhanced the SMC's democratic procedures. The strengthening of the national SMC by building the largest possible base of national members in the local chapters will help to ensure the SMC's continued leadership role in the student movement as well as democratic decision-making in the SMC.

The SMC's Role in May

One of the major activities of the SMC is organizing mass antiwar action on the campus. The May strike, which mobilized millions of students, has shown the importance and power of such activity. Students' actions on the campuses spearheaded the shaking of the entire structure of American society, and students initiated steps to expand the struggle beyond the campuses.

Although the upsurge went beyond the campuses in only a limited way, the example of the antiwar university set by the May actions has laid a basis for future upsurges which can be even larger and which can succeed in catalyzing massive action among other sectors of the population.

The scope of the explosion in May and its spontaneous and rapid development went beyond the capacity of any existing student organization to be the central leadership. Nevertheless, the SMC was able to play an important role in affecting the direction of many campus strikes.

The Antiwar University

The SMC put forward the concept of the antiwar university, the goal of which is to win maximum use of university facilities to build the struggle against the war by reaching out to GIs, organized labor, the oppressed nationalities and women, and bringing them into antiwar action.

The continuation of the antiwar

university strategy is the major aspect of the SMC's program on the campus. This includes organizing struggles to get rid of ROTC, war recruitment and other campus complicity and the draft, as well as the effort to recapture and extend the students' control of campus facilities for antiwar organizing.

The SMC and Defense of Student Rights

One of the most striking results of the May upsurge was that it intensified the fear of the ruling class that continued involvement in Indochina threatened an upheaval shaking the very foundations of U.S. capitalism. The role of students as the detonator of such an upheaval was a lesson drawn graphically for the American rulers by the May strike. Since the May events have ebbed, they have been carrying out a coordinated crackdown on campus political activity in hopes of defusing the potential for another such explosion.

In line with this crackdown, university administrators have been able to whittle away many of the gains won by students in the strike. New restrictions have been enacted at most schools aimed at limiting political activity on the campus.

The SMC must continue to play a role in leading the student antiwar movement and mobilizing to fight back against such restrictive measures by school administrations. This fight is necessary to continue building antiwar actions and also to prepare for another general student strike when the occasion arises.

The fight against campus restrictions must be combined with a continued fight to parry and drive back the counter-thrusts of the Nixon administration aimed at the student movement. The SMC can point out the hypocrisy of a government which murders masses of Vietnamese and then attempts to scandalize and smear the antiwar movement on the basis of isolated incidents of violence. Washington's attempts to resurrect official red-baiting such as J. Edgar Hoover's "Open Letter to College Students" must be met with an effective rebuttal. Today's student movement will not be cowed by the threadbare scare tactics of Joe McCarthy's 1950s. Audacity must be the rule in answering such attacks.

One of the most important cases calling for an effective stand to be taken by the student antiwar movement is the government attempt to frame up the Kent State activists and justify the murder of four students by the Ohio National Guard. A loud and clear response from the mass antiwar movement can set the example for others who come under attack elsewhere in the country.

High School Students

High school antiwar activists are a vital and rapidly growing part of the SMC's membership. Without any serious political competition from other radical groups, the SMC is able to attract the allegiance of militant high school students who are among the most committed to a mass action perspective.

An important part of the SMC program is the fight for the High School Bill of Rights. High school activists face arbitrary regulations which severely restrict their ability to organize antiwar activity in their schools. High school students can win in fights against these restrictions by waging serious struggles to organize broad public support for their civil liberties.

Through the High School Bill of Rights, SMCers can combine their fight for civil liberties with the fight against the war.

High school students are an important part of the antiwar movement not only because of their militancy and energy but because their social composition means that high school students act as a direct link between the antiwar movement and young workers, the Third World communities, and GIs. High school students will take their antiwar ideas and experience with them into the armed forces, factories, and campuses after they graduate.

In addition, the fight for high school rights and against tracking can be linked directly to the struggles of the Black and Brown communities for control over their own education.

High school students made up a large part of most of the October 31 actions, demonstrating that they are among the sectors of the movement least susceptible to ruling class pressure at election time.

The SMC has taken account of the importance of this section of the movement and the growth of the high school rights struggle by assigning East and West Coast national high school coordinators. The national SMC will be paying more and more attention to the vital role of high school students.

Third World Opposition to the War

Antiwar sentiment is deeper in the Black and Brown communities than in any other sector of the population. Third World youth form a disproportionately large part of the draftees, frontline troops, and GI casualties. The oppressed

nationalities' living conditions are the most adversely affected by the misallocation of society's resources for the war. Black and Brown people, fighting for their own national liberation from racist oppression in the United States, share no stake in the war of U.S. imperialism against the Vietnamese national liberation struggle. They are made to sacrifice the most for a war which is directly opposed to their interests.

Despite the fact that antiwar sentiment is so deep in every sector of the Third World communities, there has not yet been participation in the organized antiwar movement on a scale corresponding to the potential. The antiwar movement has the important task of creating the conditions which will enable the potential for mass Black and Brown participation in antiwar action to be realized.

The SMC, through its GI Press Service, through organizing Third World committees of the SMC, through collaboration with Third World student organizations and through the fight for high school rights, can play a big role in increasing the active involvement of oppressed nationalities in antiwar activity.

Third World YSAers have an important task in explaining the importance of the antiwar movement to the struggles of the Third World communities.

The increased breadth of NPAC-- including the support of a number of Third World organizations along with the support of labor officials--puts it in a good position also to draw increased participation from the Third World community in mass demonstrations.

A major development during the past year was the organization of mass Chicano antiwar protests which set the example for the kind of action possible by the oppressed nationalities in the U.S. On August 29, 30,000 Chicanos demonstrated in Los Angeles in the largest antiwar action ever held in that city. There has been a general increase in Chicano activity all over the West and Southwest, and while the Chicano Moratorium has since suffered setbacks, it illustrated dramatically the potential for mass Third World antiwar action.

Organized Labor

One of the main signs of labor's opposition to the war until now has been its refusal to sacrifice its standard of living for the sake of the war. This is extremely significant because in past wars the government has been able to dampen labor militancy with patriotic

appeals. During the Vietnam war, however, there has been a militant strike wave. As inflation has grown, so has the intensity of labor militancy, as seen, for example, in the strikes against General Electric and General Motors, as well as in the strike against the government by the postal workers.

The SMC has correctly projected the policy of responding to such strikes by pointing out the relationship between the war-caused inflation and the struggles of the labor movement. By organizing on-campus anti-complicity campaigns directed at war corporations such as GE and GM, the SMC can put itself in a better position to make links with the labor movement. YSAers in the SMC should be ready to respond quickly to similar strike situations in the future, especially where the unions involved have indicated opposition to the war or made overtures for such student support.

More workers--especially young workers--have participated in the antiwar movement as individuals during 1969 and 1970 than previously, but the organized labor movement as such has not participated yet to any appreciable extent. However, especially since May, there have been signs of increasing interest in the antiwar movement from important sections of the labor bureaucracy. Within the trade union bureaucracy, there has been a publicly-voiced break with Meany's pro-war position. Many more labor officials appeared on antiwar platforms on October 31 than ever previously. There was also a good deal of official labor support for the antiwar referenda in November. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the largest union in the AFL-CIO, passed a resolution for immediate withdrawal at its national convention last spring. A trade union antiwar demonstration was held in New York City in May. A considerable number of trade union officials have formally associated with NPAC.

All of these signs point to increasing opportunities for the antiwar movement to reach the decisively powerful social layer in the trade unions. The endorsement of labor officials and formal antiwar resolutions help open the door to the antiwar movement's approach of the ranks in the unions. Efforts in this direction will be an important part of the work of antiwar coalitions and SMC chapters in local areas.

As revolutionary socialists who understand the social power of the organized working class, we seek out and welcome the participation of trade union officials in the antiwar movement as a means of bringing in the trade unions as a whole. At the same time, we realize that the labor bureaucrats will attempt

to exert pressure from the right to jettison the fundamental principles of the movement. The SMC will be the largest and best-organized force to fight for participation in the antiwar movement by labor and all other antiwar forces.

Women and the War

The growing women's liberation movement and the antiwar movement are objective allies in the common fight against the capitalist government. More than that, opposition to the war was clearly expressed along with the demands around equal job and educational opportunity, childcare, and free abortion in many of the rallies and demonstrations on August 26. In some cities, women's liberation contingents were organized in the October 31 demonstrations. During May, campus women's liberation groups played an initiating role in the fight for the antiwar university at some schools.

As an independent movement with its own demands, the women's liberation movement must be viewed as more than merely a section of the antiwar movement. However, women are affected by the war like every other sector of the population. One of the most obvious ways in which the war affects women is the way money is wasted on destroying lives while women go without adequate facilities for childcare or free, safe abortion. Women's liberation groups should be encouraged to build support for antiwar actions along with their other activities.

GIs and the Antiwar Movement

Nixon's promises of a speedy end to the war backfire most powerfully among one of the most strategic components of the antiwar movement--the GIs who are asked to die in a war that is supposed to be "winding down." Consequently, antiwar sentiment among GIs has continued to increase in the face of the government's phony "peace" maneuvers.

Increasing GI activity takes a variety of forms, both spontaneous and organized, including signing petitions, distributing antiwar newspapers, participating in antiwar demonstrations, fighting for constitutional rights to oppose the war while in the armed forces, wearing peace insignia, and forming antiwar discussion groups.

GI and civilian antiwar sentiment are closely interlinked, and eventual development of massive GI antiwar actions can only occur in conjunction with a

large and powerful civilian antiwar movement. The YSA has taken the lead in the antiwar movement from the very beginning in arguing for the importance of forging links with GIs. YSAers who were drafted have taken leading roles in organizing GI antiwar activity, especially in the historic struggles at Fort Jackson and Fort Bragg.

There are three essential points in a policy enabling effective antiwar activity to be carried out by GIs:

1) The activity must be open and collective and aimed at becoming mass activity. Individual acts of conscience or so-called "underground" activity only isolates those who carry it out from the masses of their fellow GIs and makes them easy targets for victimization by the brass.

2) The activity needs to be carried out together with a fight to defend the constitutional rights of GIs, who are citizen-soldiers, against the attempts of the brass to deny these rights. Important victories have been won in this fight, but maintaining and extending GI rights requires a continuing struggle.

3) The central issue of concern to GIs is the war and the central demand of the GI antiwar movement should be the same as in the civilian movement--the demand for the immediate withdrawal of troops from Indochina.

The SMC's GI Press Service is a valuable tool for circulating antiwar views and putting forward an effective strategy among GIs, and of aiding locally-produced GI antiwar newspapers.

SMC defends GIs in the struggle for their rights and works to build GI participation in antiwar demonstrations.

* * *

Strategies Opposed to Mass Action

The two major alternatives which continue to be presented in opposition to the revolutionary mass action strategy put forth by the YSA in the antiwar movement are:

1) Reliance on capitalist politicians, which blunts the thrust and independence of the antiwar movement. The most persistent advocate of this line within the antiwar movement has been the CP.

2) The substitution of individual acts of resistance or small adventurist confrontations for mass mobilizations. The

main advocates of this line have been the pacifists and the ultralefts.

Most of the other disagreements in the antiwar movement ultimately stem from disagreement along one of these two lines. What both of them have in common is their hostility to the mass actions which have been responsible for the growth and influence of the antiwar movement.

Ultraleftism

The ultralefts and the pacifists put forward their alternative in the name of militancy, but the strategy of isolated acts undercuts the organization of real militancy--the militancy of masses in motion against the government.

One of the best aspects of the May upsurge was the general rejection of ultraleft adventurism which has arisen in the student movement over the past several years. The rejection of adventurism by the masses of students clearly showed the validity of our line on the effectiveness of militant mass action as contrasted to the adventurist policy that had been carried out by many SDS chapters in the heyday of SDS. The October 31 demonstrations gave further confirmation of the declining support to ultraleftism in the student movement. We should continue to hammer away at the lessons of May on the effectiveness of mass action and the futility of adventurism.

Reformism

The strongest threat to the independent mass action line has come and will continue to come from the reformists--the Communist Party and the liberals who attempt to draw the movement into dependence on a section of the capitalist class. This threat becomes the strongest during election periods when all sorts of capitalist politicians present themselves as "peace" candidates.

The YSA and the militant left wing of the antiwar movement have helped maintain the independence of the antiwar movement by opposing support to capitalist candidates and continuing to project mass actions during the election periods.

The YSA has urged antiwar activists to support the candidates of the Socialist Workers Party as an alternative to the capitalist candidates during the elections. But we have consistently resisted the idea of the antiwar organizations giving their endorsement to any candidate because that would cut across the ability to mobilize maximum support for the continuing mass demonstrations. The SWP candidates have aided the fight to continue organizing mass demonstrations during election periods.

A "Multi-Issue Movement"?

One of the forms the dispute between the independent mass action strategy and the strategy of reliance on liberal capitalists has taken is the controversy over whether the antiwar movement should continue to concentrate on the central demand for immediate withdrawal or adopt an all-purpose program. The political heterogeneity of the antiwar movement means that it could not adopt a general program without flying apart. The CP has been one of the main proponents of the antiwar movement adopting such a program. In reality, this proposal is designed to dissolve the antiwar movement into a campaign organization for capitalist "doves," primarily in the Democratic Party.

One example of what happens to attempts to form such multi-issue groups is the fate that befell the forces which walked out of the SMC in 1968. The CP and pacifists walked out announcing their intention to form a multi-issue group which would surpass the SMC in size and influence. The group they formed, the Radical Organizing Committee (ROC), never got off the ground. Another example is the National Coalition Against War, Racism and Repression, organized by the CP and remnants of the New Mobe this past summer. NCAWRR has not been able to organize any significant actions since its formation, nor has it been able to broaden the narrow organizational base on which it rests--the CP and a handful of ultralefts.

With the preparatory campaigning for the 1972 presidential elections likely to start around the fall of 1971, this approach will be pushed vigorously by the CP and others. As in the past, it will most likely be accompanied by a lot of demagoguery about the antiwar movement being "racist" or ignoring the oppression of Black and Brown people.

The antiwar movement cannot substitute for the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, women's liberation or labor movements, nor can these other movements, acting separately, accomplish the tasks of the antiwar movement. In practice, the antiwar movement does not and never has ignored other social issues. The Indochina war has affected all sectors of the society and the struggle against the war has affected all of the other social struggles. By raising the relationship of the war to all other social issues through its independent mass mobilizations, the antiwar movement points out that the common interest of all oppressed and exploited sectors is advanced by its united struggle against the government.

An "Anti-Imperialist Movement"?

A variant of the argument that the antiwar movement should adopt a "multi-issue" program is the argument of some sectarians and ultralefts that it should become an "anti-imperialist movement." By this they mean that the antiwar movement should verbally state its opposition to imperialism by advancing such slogans as "Defeat Imperialism!" In reality, imperialism will not be defeated by rhetoric. The antiwar movement is based on opposition to a concrete instance of imperialist aggression at the center of the international class struggle--the Indochina war. It is objectively anti-imperialist in its actions, actions which both do real damage to imperialism and help to educate masses of people about imperialism. Slogans opposing imperialism in the abstract, which cannot unite and mobilize masses of people, neither harm imperialism nor educate the masses.

Negotiations versus Withdrawal

The demand for immediate withdrawal has been counterposed to the demand for negotiations or limited demands such as "Stop the Bombing!" New variations of the demand for negotiations call for the phased withdrawal of troops or withdrawal by some specified future date. None of these demands conforms to the principle of self-determination for the Vietnamese, since they all imply that U.S. imperialism has some right to continue its presence in Indochina.

The calls to support the programs of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam or of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam ultimately compromise the right to self-determination as well. The primary concern of the antiwar movement must be to oppose the presence of U.S. troops in Southeast Asia. As long as U.S. troops remain, the self-determination of Vietnam is violated, whether the U.S. government recognizes the NLF or the PRG or not.

"Victory for the NLF"

Variations of the demand for victory for the NLF do not represent a demand directed at the capitalist U.S. government. If they are aimed at anyone, they seem to be aimed at the Vietnamese who are already valiantly holding up their end of the struggle. The task of those who support the Vietnamese revolution in this country is to join with others who oppose the war in mobilizing masses behind the concrete demand that the U.S. get its forces out of Indochina now.

The Draft

The draft law comes up for renewal in Congress in 1971. It is possible that the draft issue will consequently assume more prominence than it has in the most recent period.

The YSA favors mass action against the draft opposing the whole policy of capitalist conscription, its discriminatory nature and its enforcement by the schools. Such mass actions can be best organized and most effective by linking the draft to the Indochina war and opposing the draft as a device used to further U.S. aggression. It would be a grave mistake for the antiwar movement to shift its central focus away from immediate withdrawal; it is the war which has exacerbated the oppressive nature of the draft and made it an issue which can move masses into action.

The YSA does not advocate individual draft refusal because it is not an effective tactic--it isolates the individual involved and subjects him to easy victimization. While we support the right of those who refuse the draft for reasons of conscience to do so and oppose their imprisonment, our own members accept induction if drafted and insist on their constitutional rights to oppose the war while in the armed forces. We urge others to do the same.

In addition to individual acts of resistance, another policy opposed to the YSA's approach is that of relying on capitalist politicians to abolish the draft or eliminate the inequities in it. This policy is not an effective means of opposing the draft.

The Middle East

The antiwar movement has sensitized millions of people to the possibility of the U.S. imperialists creating new wars like the one in Indochina. The antiwar movement must be ready to respond quickly and decisively to the threat of any such actions. The central issue around which the antiwar movement is organized is opposition to the use of U.S. troops for wars of aggression. The focus on Indochina is politically, not geographically, determined. Indochina is the place where U.S. troops are carrying out a shooting war of aggression at the present time. Should similar aggression threaten anywhere else outside the Indochinese peninsula, the antiwar movement has a responsibility to act to prevent such aggression; this does not change the central issue of the focus on Indochina.

During the civil war in Jordan the

imperialists were ready to use the U.S. Air Force and U.S. troops if they determined it had become necessary in order to maintain Hussein in power. The danger continues to exist that the U.S. will directly intervene with troops in the Middle East. Although there is wide disagreement in the antiwar movement over the issues in the Mideast conflict, broad unity can be won for the demand, "No More Vietnams! No U.S. Troops to the Mideast!" This demand expresses the best way of bringing masses of Americans into action which could affect the ruling class' decision in the event that the question of a U.S. invasion should be immediately posed again. Moreover, the demand that the U.S. keep its troops out of the Middle East conforms to the tasks dictated to us as revolutionary socialists by our obligation to defend the Arab revolution. The YSA will argue within the antiwar movement for support to this demand.

The Role of the YSA

We have been the most consistent fighters from the first days of the antiwar movement for the perspective which has brought about its powerful growth. We have been among the most energetic activists in putting that perspective into practice. As a result, the antiwar movement has continued to increase in size and influence to the point where today it possesses the potential power to force the withdrawal of troops. Another result has been the winning of many of the best antiwar activists to the program of revolutionary socialism and to membership in the YSA.

Our tasks in 1971 are to continue to build the membership and activities of the Student Mobilization Committee, the local antiwar coalitions, and the National Peace Action Coalition. Our central task in the coming months is to mobilize support for the spring antiwar action. We will do this by bringing the maximum numbers of activists to the national SMC conference, by working in local SMC chapters to continue the antiwar university, the fight for high school rights and support for the GI antiwar movement, by working in local coalitions affiliated with NPAC to reach support in the trade unions and Third World communities. Through all of this activity we will be consciously preparing for another revolt like the one last May.

The YSA's participation in and orientation toward the fight against the war have been central to the antiwar movement's development as a force which has raised the radicalization to a qualitatively higher stage, and which today has the real potential for being able to force Washington to end its bloody aggression in Indochina.

The antiwar movement has helped to produce in masses of radicalizing young people the willingness to fight against the misery and oppression dealt out by the capitalist government--for many of them the first step toward joining the revolutionary socialist movement. In the course of building the antiwar movement as one of its main tasks, the YSA has

grown significantly, strengthening the international revolutionary socialist movement of which we are a part. We will continue making the antiwar movement central to all of our activities in the period ahead, realizing that by doing so we are bringing closer the day when we will be able to abolish the cause of war itself--capitalism.



The Struggle for Women's Liberation: Strategy for a Mass Movement

Fifty years after the granting of suffrage, the status of American women remains essentially unchanged. In their overwhelming majority, women are still tied down to the home. They are discriminated against on the job, earn 58% of what men earn, and continue to be portrayed by this society as dumb, subservient household fixtures and sex objects. In 1970 the contradiction between the technological proficiency and wealth of our society and the fact that women cannot even obtain free, safe birth control and abortions, childcare facilities, decent jobs and equal education opportunity, is becoming more and more sharp as the feminist movement unfolds and sweeps new layers of women into its ranks.

Just two years ago the women's liberation movement consisted almost entirely of small groups which met to talk out their common problems in private. Today, in demonstrations like the August 26 Strike, we see thousands of women pouring into the streets to demand their liberation. The growth of women's liberation has proceeded at an astonishing rate, reflecting the depth of the radicalization that is sweeping this country.

In many ways, women in America have won a good deal of formal equality. They have the right to vote, to own and dispose of property, and other rights. There are labor-saving devices such as refrigerators, laundry facilities, and prepared foods to cut down on household drudgery. But rather than alleviating the oppression women feel, the legal and technical gains made by women over the past half century have only exacerbated the frustration of women with their role in society. It is partly because women spend less time than ever before in such activity as housework that they are restless with the lack of creative opportunities open to them. Partly because women can vote, but see no progress being made by the government on their demands, they have taken to the streets in independent action.

With the rise in the number of women working, the gap between the wages of men and women has widened. In 1955,

women's wages on the average were 64% of men's wages. In 1968, this percentage was 58, a drop of 6%. As more and more women enter the labor market, they are beginning to challenge the long-standing practices of discrimination, lower pay, the lack of childcare, and women's dual job inside and outside the home.

The eruption of women's liberation organizations in virtually every sphere of American society is breaking down the myth that the only feminists are middle-class or college women. Women are organizing everywhere, in grade schools, in city government offices, in hospitals, in the suburbs, in the church, on the job, and on the college and high school campuses.

The Young Socialist Alliance has been in the forefront in recognizing the revolutionary nature of this movement, supporting feminist demands, and building feminist groups and mass actions by women.

Women's Liberation in the Context of the Current Radicalization

The radicalization we are now experiencing is being produced by fundamental contradictions in the capitalist system. These contradictions in the epoch of the decay of capitalism as a world system have rendered the ruling class incapable of stemming the tide of the revolt of Blacks in the ghettos, student struggles on the campuses, a mass antiwar movement, and now the rebellion of women.

Women have learned many important lessons from the Black struggle, in particular the need to study their own history, the development of self-pride, and the need to guarantee their liberation by organizing their own independent struggle. The antiwar movement has also helped to set the stage for the upsurge of women, by legitimizing dissent and mass actions in the streets against the government. The Vietnam war itself has created a deep distrust of this government

in the minds of the American people. More and more young people are understanding that the ruling class ignores the needs of the masses of people when these needs conflict with the needs of imperialism.

One of the most powerful aspects of the current radicalization has been the alienation of youth from the social relationships imposed upon men and women by the capitalist system. Radicalizing youth today are groping for new forms of living without the intense alienation and oppressiveness of present human relationships. To many young people it is becoming clear that it will be impossible to build new, freer relationships in the context of this system.

This alienation from the social roles forced upon individuals in our society is most vividly reflected in the breakdown of the nuclear family. More and more young people are rejecting the notion that lifetime monogamy is the only sexual norm. The role of parental authority in preserving bourgeois ideology is clearly breaking down. The development of relatively available birth control devices has allowed women especially to redefine their sexual role, at least in terms of separating sexual relationships from the bearing of children.

But in spite of these developments, the fact remains that under capitalism there is no escape from the social oppression people face. The partial freedom women now have to control their bodies exists alongside the grossest exploitation of the female as a sex object, in advertising, the media, and in personal relationships. The attempts of a few young people to live in communes is frustrated by the fact that even with communal living, someone still has to perform alienating labor outside the commune to support the non-working members of the group, and someone, often a woman, has to take care of the house and children. Until this society is transformed into one where production is organized on the basis of human needs and not private profit, that is, until we achieve a socialist society, it is utopian to think we can win freedom through individual solutions.

August 26: The Turning Point

The large scale demonstrations on August 26 indicated for the first time that the demands of women's liberation have a mass appeal. Women protested that day in nearly every major city and in smaller towns all over the country to demand free abortions--no forced sterilization; free, 24-hour childcare, community-controlled; equal opportunity and pay on the job; and equal opportunity in education. The thrust of the actions was

militantly in favor of "liberation now," not just for token rights or equality with men.

The demands of August 26 clearly emerged as foci of the struggle for women's liberation. While there are undoubtedly many other issues around which women will mobilize, these basic demands and others related to them obviously have the power to draw masses of women into action and relate to their most basic needs.

As revolutionary socialists we support these democratic and transitional demands. They are demands which can mobilize women in independent political action against their oppression. They also lay the blame for the continued oppression of women squarely on the government, where it belongs. Finally, in the process of raising these demands women's consciousness is raised about the type of social system which is needed for their total liberation. Their realization that only a socialist society can create the possibility of an end to women's oppression will add powerful new forces to the revolutionary movement in this country.

The spectrum of women involved in August 26 was one of the most revealing aspects of that demonstration. The turnout of traditional women's organizations, women's liberation groups, both radical and moderate, and campus groups, was large. In addition, for the first time we saw significant numbers of Third World women, high school women, working women and housewives. It is the presence of these women that clearly exposes the elitism of the reformists and ultralefts within the women's liberation movement who claim that feminist demands do not relate to working women. These demands, in fact, have the most relevance for working and Third World women, since they suffer the most from inadequate childcare, exorbitantly expensive or illegal abortions, and discrimination on the job.

August 26 has set the stage for the development of women's liberation into a mass movement. Thousands of women for the first time saw that sisterhood is powerful when they united in mass action around common demands. They were able to see the impact that masses of women in motion can have on this country--on the media, on the government, and on the minds of masses of Americans who before August 26 didn't know what the women's liberation movement was all about. The majority of these women participated in their first women's liberation activity that day and now await further opportunities to act against their oppression.

The Importance of Mass Action

The central debate in the women's liberation movement today is the question of mass action. This debate is an integral part of the larger question of how the women's liberation movement is going to organize to win its demands. The YSA has consistently pointed out that mass actions against the government are the most effective means of building the movement and winning our demands.

The oppression of women is so tightly intertwined with the basic needs of the capitalist system itself that the ruling class will grant no rights to women without a real struggle. Just to gain the elementary right to vote, women had to fight for nearly a century. The struggle for our total liberation must involve massive numbers of women united in the broadest, most visible actions possible against the government. We have seen that this system will not and cannot grant total freedom to any oppressed group; some reforms may be won, but only through struggle independent of the government.

At this juncture in the women's liberation movement, the perspective of mass action is also important in order to unify the existing women's groups around clear demands directed at the government. In addition, mass actions will serve to reach out to and mobilize the thousands of women who are not yet involved in the movement.

The role that mass actions have played in the antiwar movement demonstrates the correctness of this strategy. It is clear that antiwar mobilizations and student strikes that have taken place in this country against the war in Vietnam have been a real deterrent to the ruling class in carrying out its counterrevolutionary plans in Southeast Asia.

Women have already begun to win significant victories through mass action. For example, the reform of the abortion laws in many states has only come about as women began to demand en masse the right to control their own bodies. Teach-ins and demonstrations played a key role in forcing reactionary state legislatures to pass bills aimed at the liberalization of the existing abortion laws.

The Alternatives to Mass Action

Some women in the movement see a contradiction between the building of mass actions and the work of small women's

liberation groups. They fear that mass actions, where all the sections of the movement unite around common aims, will somehow destroy the work of smaller feminist organizations. Consciousness-raising and other women's liberation groups do indeed play an important role in providing a way for women to become more conscious of their oppression and carry out on-going education and small scale actions; often the first introduction of new women to the movement is through such groups. But mass actions organized by coalitions have the power and visibility to the broader masses of people which the individual feminist groups do not provide by themselves. Mass actions in no way cut across the ability of small groups to function and continue to grow. In fact, the building of mass united demonstrations can help these groups to reach new women and grow stronger.

Another variation of this argument is that mass actions compete with the "counter-institutions" women have developed to cope with the everyday problems they face. Such counter-institutions include abortion-referral projects and communal childcare projects. These projects can be useful in drawing new women into the movement and in providing a limited means of survival for small numbers of women who have no other recourse. But it is utopian to believe that women in the movement can organize enough abortion clinics and childcare centers to meet the needs of the millions of women in this country when they do not control the resources necessary to do so.

Counter-institutions cannot and should not be a substitute for mass action which places the responsibility for providing these resources on the state. The main thrust of the women's liberation movement has been the recognition that it is the duty of society as a whole to meet the needs of women who want abortions or a decent childcare center for their children while they work. Women cannot assume that entire burden for themselves and must demonstrate that it is the government's obligation.

"Women Are Too Divided To Unite"

A more basic argument against mass action is the line adopted by the Communist Party, Young Workers Liberation League, Progressive Labor Party, and others that women have too many disagreements to unite around action. They claim that the class and racial divisions between women prohibit the possibility of any real union around the common oppression all women face.

The essence of this line is that it clearly opposes any kind of independent women's movement at all. The underlying reason for this opposition is a fear of a mass women's movement, most often manifested by opposition to women participating in broad actions to make demands on the government. The CP opposes the mass character of the women's liberation movement for two reasons. First, the anti-capitalist thrust of an independent women's movement runs counter to their reformist political perspective, and second, the demands of the movement conflict with their defense of the family system. For PL, the demands of women's liberation are not legitimate "working class" demands. They deny the fact that the super-exploitation and oppression of women workers is only possible because of the family system. Both the CP and PL are opponents of an independent women's movement.

We must make it clear that all women, regardless of class or racial background, face some degree of oppression. No woman, even in the ruling class itself, can be arbitrarily ruled out as a potential feminist. While it is obvious that most women in the ruling class have more loyalty to the privileges of their class than to other women, there can be and are exceptions.

It is also fallacious to say that Third World women do not share an interest with all women in fighting for feminist demands. For Third World women, the issues of women's rights to control their own bodies, to equal pay, and to childcare are of crucial importance. The fact that growing numbers of Third World women are organizing around their oppression as women is testimony to this fact.

The Two-Party System

Another major alternative to the perspective of mass action is to place faith in the capitalist two-party system as a solution to women's oppression. The main argument is that if only more women were elected through the Democratic and Republican parties to Congress, they could convince the more reactionary elements in the government to grant women's just demands.

This reformist line has many parallels to the support for "peace" candidates as a means of ending the war in Vietnam. The experience of the antiwar movement has shown that it has been the mass pressure of thousands demonstrating in the streets, not the "doves" in Congress, that has limited Nixon's ability to escalate the war against the Vietnamese people. The campaigns of the so-called peace candi-

dates have sought only to sap the strength of the antiwar movement by taking it out of the streets and into the capitalist electoral machines.

Just as in the antiwar movement, we must counterpose independent mass actions around the demands of women to reliance on the ruling class parties to grant women's liberation. We must point out that no woman, no matter how well-intentioned she may appear, can change the centuries-old oppression of women by seeking to reform either of the two parties responsible for the perpetuation of capitalist society.

We have already begun to see "women's liberation" candidates appear on the scene as it becomes clear that the women's liberation movement is reaching masses of women. The best example of such candidates is Bella Abzug from New York, who was elected to Congress this year under the slogan "this woman's place is in the House." Her campaign was a skillful attempt to convince women that their needs can best be granted by electing spokeswomen for their demands on the Democratic Party ticket. Among her best supporters was the Communist Party, which calls for 51% representation of women on all governing bodies by doubling the number of women elected to public office with each election.

One of the ways we counter this strategy of dependence on Democratic or Republican party politicians is by supporting the Socialist Workers Party election campaigns. These campaigns stress a break with the two-party system, counterposing the building of a mass, independent women's liberation movement to support for the ruling class parties.

Large numbers of women's liberation activists supported and participated in the 1970 SWP campaigns. These campaigns educated thousands of new women about the ideas of feminism, as well. Many of the SWP candidates were activists in the women's liberation movement and played significant roles in building women's liberation actions in their areas.

An "Anti-Imperialist" Women's Movement?

Progressive Labor Party and other ultraleft women have counterposed the building of a "socialist" or "anti-imperialist" women's movement to building mass actions around feminist demands. These women say that the women's liberation movement as it now stands is reformist because it does not take up the struggles against racism and imperialism.

Again, in essence, this position opposes any mass, independent women's movement at all. The struggle of women is a revolutionary struggle in its own right. Its demands are those which have the potential of drawing the largest numbers of women possible into struggle against the government. And the granting of these demands in their entirety presupposes the establishment of a socialist system.

To specify that women must be "anti-imperialist" to join the movement only serves to narrow it, and weaken it by excluding masses of women who don't yet understand imperialism, but are ready to fight against the oppression they feel as women.

We must also point out on the question of racism that the women's movement cannot map out a program or define a strategy for the Third World liberation movement. That is the task of Third World people--both men and women. It is by struggling as women around demands that meet the needs of all women that the most can be done to advance the independent liberation of Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and other oppressed nationalities.

The main way we will be able to cut across all these attempts to divert the struggle of women from becoming a mass movement is by building the mass actions themselves. Through the success of these actions thousands of women will begin to see the strength they have when they unite around common issues. The victories women have already won against the abortion laws have greatly increased their self-confidence and combativity. These and future victories will be seen by women as concrete proof of their power to wrest concessions from the government.

Other Debates Within the Movement: The Role of the Family

The role of the family becomes more and more of a central theoretical debate as the feminist movement grows. The key demands of women's liberation today strike objectively at the foundations of the family as an economic institution and as a pillar of class society.

The family provides the capitalist system with a way of escaping the costs of public services such as free childcare, care for the aged, etc. The family system forces each unit to compete with every other to feed, clothe, and provide adequate housing for its members.

The family is the agent for inculcating bourgeois ideology and morality into its members. Children are taught to

respect the authority of their parents and of the state, the sanctity of capitalist private property, etc. Through the family they learn all the traditions of morality, competitiveness, and religion. Women are trained to accept their role as the bearers and rearers of children, while men are trained to think of themselves as the creative doers in every sphere, and trained to think of women as inferior.

It is through the family that woman's oppression is justified. Her job is in the home, therefore she should be denied equal access to jobs and equal pay outside the home. Her role is to care for her children, therefore she is a "risk" for acceptance into institutions of higher learning (this is particularly blatant on the graduate school level). She is supposed to bear children and consider it a "joy," therefore her demands for abortion are immoral.

Our main and most consistent opponent on this question has been the Communist Party. The CP considers the family a potentially revolutionary force. In order to get around the traditional Marxist condemnation of the family, they put forth the idea that the family has evolved into a vital unit of love between man and wife and an important tool for raising "socially conscious" children.

The CP takes a dim view of those women who insist that the family is a reactionary institution, pointing out that no other substitute exists. While it is absolutely true that no other means exists in capitalist society for the care of children and for companionship in this alienating environment, women cannot defer until the socialist revolution their struggle against their role as defined by the family. Demands such as free 24-hour childcare, government financed and community-controlled, and free abortion on demand can be fought for as steps toward creating a society where the family can be replaced.

The CP goes so far as to claim that part of the women's struggle today should be a struggle to maintain the family! Clara Colon, in her pamphlet Enter Fighting: Today's Woman, wrote the following:

"A stronghold in the midst of a crisis-torn, poverty-ridden existence, a solid start in life for the children, a good start each day of their lives--that's what keeping the family together means." (page 48)

According to Colon, the ruling class is on a major offensive to destroy the family, and those feminists who consider the family an obstacle are playing into their hands.

The CP's position flows from their defense of the official Soviet position on the family and women's place in it. While many more women in the Soviet Union are doctors, scientists, and technicians than in the United States, and while there are considerably more publically available childcare centers, the traditional role of women in the home remains. If a Soviet woman holds a job, as most do, then she must juggle her time accordingly to both care for her children and husband and go to work. The concept of motherhood as a woman's fulfillment is strongly encouraged by the Soviet bureaucracy.

Some women point to the reactionary attitude of the Soviet Union toward women as proof that what they identify as socialism is not the answer to the oppression of women. One of our important tasks will be to explain what happened in the Soviet Union. After the Russian Revolution, the Soviet state instituted measures to legalize abortions, liberalize marriage and divorce laws so that women would have equal rights with men. The material backwardness of the Soviet Union and the isolation of the revolution enabled a privileged bureaucracy to arise and consolidate power over the Soviet state. This Stalinist bureaucracy reversed the gains made by women in the early days of the revolution as part of its strategy for staying in power. The state did not have the resources to immediately free women from the oppression of the family, but rather than admit this and proceed to develop these resources as fast as possible, Stalin restored the family as a sacred social unit and a "progressive" force, using the authoritarian family as a prop of the authoritarian rule necessary to uphold the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Progressive Labor Party puts forth the same concept of the "revolutionary family" in its attacks on the women's liberation movement. As with the CP, the Maoists defend the policies of Stalin and the practices of the Chinese bureaucracy in preserving the family system.

Are Women Oppressed Only As Workers?

The Communist Party, Progressive Labor, and at least a wing of the International Socialists have sought to limit the struggle to the demands of women as workers. Their argument is that the main struggle in capitalist society is between the ruling class and the working class and that any "other" struggle is a diversion.

The only issue around which women should fight, they say, is discrimination on the job--any other aspects of women's oppression are "petty-bourgeois" issues. But, in fact, the reason that women can be

super-exploited on the job is because of the oppression of women as women, which is rooted in the family system. The family is used as the rationale for giving women less pay and for pushing them into the most menial labor categories, since their real job is supposedly in the home.

A further argument by these groups is that the fight for women's liberation will separate men and women in the fight against the ruling class. They have a similar position on Black nationalism, saying that the Afro-American struggle for self-determination "divides" the working class. The fact is that the working class is already divided on the basis of sex and race lines. Unity among male and female workers can only be based on a program that supports the rights of oppressed women, not on the basis of capitulating to the prejudices of backward male workers.

Another argument in this vein is that the demands of the women's liberation movement do not relate to working women. Such an assertion could not be further from the truth, as the growth of women's liberation groups among working women has shown. This argument is basically an elitist one, saying that working women can only understand and react against their economic oppression.

Both the reformists and ultralefts have formed a bloc against support for the Equal Rights Amendment. This position is just another indication of their pessimism about working women's ability to fight for and win equal rights. The government counterposes the ERA to the Protective Laws, saying that women must choose between the two. We do not accept this ruse and urge the passage of the ERA as a step forward in the struggle of women for our rights, and at the same time demand the extension of those protective laws that benefit women to all men as well. While the ERA will be defeated this year, we can expect renewed debate and struggle around this issue next year when it comes up again in Congress. YSAers must be prepared to explain our position on the ERA and to organize support for its passage in the future.

The Present Stage of the Movement

It is clear that the depth of the women's movement as illustrated on August 26 opens up the way to establish on-going coalitions of women around concrete actions. The action focus of these coalitions will be crucial to the maintenance of unity among all the forces within the women's movement. While there

are wide differences in approach and emphasis among the numerous women's groups, it has been shown that the majority of these women can join together to carry out actions for common goals. It is through such actions that coalitions will be able to hold together.

Demands

The demands of such a coalition must be those that can draw into action the largest number of women possible. At the present time, the demands of August 26 have widespread support and speak to the most acute needs of the most women. But as the movement grows, new demands will also emerge as important issues to great numbers of women. There must be flexibility in relation to the question of demands for the women's liberation movement; unlike the antiwar movement, the movement for women's liberation is not limited to a single central demand. Women feel oppression on many different levels and any mass movement that purports to speak to that oppression must be conscious of the broad range of issues around which the masses of women can be mobilized in struggle. The main criterion for these demands is that they must be able to bring new layers of women into direct political confrontation with their main oppressor--the U.S. government.

Non-Exclusion

We must defend the right of all women to be part of any women's liberation coalition. The oppression of women affects every woman, and to cut off any group of women from full participation in the movement means that the movement cannot grow into the kind of mass movement necessary to win its demands. The strength of any coalition will be based on its ability to represent the authority of radical women's groups, conservative women's groups, campus women, high school women, lesbians, women from political parties, from trade unions, and independent women.

The main axis of our fight against exclusion must be around the question of the need to build a powerful women's liberation movement. The majority of independent women will be in favor of drawing into action every woman possible and will oppose the rejection of women on the basis of political differences on other questions. We must point out that to concentrate on differences between us rather than on how we can unite is to place these differences on other issues

above the need to create a broad, powerful women's liberation movement.

So far, the YSA and Socialist Workers Party have been a main target of attempts to exclude women from the movement. Women who oppose mass action have tried to introduce exclusionary policies into the women's movement to prevent the development of mass action coalitions. Their attacks are launched directly at us because of our perspective for building the women's liberation movement through united mass action. One form that exclusion has taken within the women's movement is the charge of belonging to a "male-dominated" organization. The test of whether or not an organization is politically dominated by men and oriented toward preserving male-domination in society is in its program. There is no organization in this country--not even feminist organizations--whose program for the liberation of women is better than that of the YSA. Actually, the charge of "male-domination" is a tactic used by women who disagree with the YSA but substitute red-baiting for trying to convince other women in the movement that the YSA's ideas on women's liberation are wrong.

If the policy of excluding women from all "male-dominated" groups were carried out in practice, then the movement would have to exclude from its ranks all women in trade unions and all women who vote for the Democratic or Republican parties, in other words, the majority of women in this country.

Women who disagree with us have attempted to promote red-baiting attacks on the YSA, claiming that we want to "take over" the movement for our own purposes. As revolutionary socialists we see the creation of a mass women's liberation movement as a vital part of the struggle of all the oppressed which will eventually lead to the transformation of this capitalist system into a socialist system. That is the reason we participate so fully in this movement, because of the potential it has to bring about a change in the society we now live in. Our interests are in no way different from those of the thousands of women who also want to see an end to their oppression and are organizing themselves to bring about that change.

Many women new to politics may be initially confused by the red-baiting tactics. We must realize that for some of these women, the only experience they have had with socialists and communists has been in the attacks made on radicals by the government and the press. We have to explain that red-baiting is a reactionary policy that only plays into the hands of our enemy. Such attacks are a diversion from our real struggle and can only serve

to divide our forces.

High School Groups

Building Women's Liberation Groups

Both the coalitions and women's liberation groups must maintain the structure of all-women's organizations. The decisions and strategy of the women's liberation movement can only be formulated by women, since we alone experience the form of oppression we are trying to end.

Campus Groups

It is from the campuses and high schools that the bulk of activists have come to build the antiwar movement, and the same is becoming true in the women's liberation movement. Feminist organizations now exist on nearly every campus. Often these groups have a complex range of activities, including consciousness-raising, education, campus actions, and participation in citywide actions. During the May upsurge these groups played important roles, bringing the demands of women into the antiwar university struggles on a number of campuses. The deep radicalization on the campuses means that support for women's liberation activities can be far more easily mobilized there than in any other sector of the population at this time. The campus women's liberation struggles can play a vanguard role and set an example for the movement as a whole. During the Cambodia events, for example, one common feature of the gains made by students was the provision of childcare centers by the university administrations. A number of schools have also been forced to concede to the demands of women for courses in women's history.

We want to see the feminist groups on campus orient toward the concept of the "women's liberation university"--with university-financed free childcare centers for students, staff, and the community; with free birth control devices and adequate medical services for women; with a curriculum of women's studies; and with an end to the discrimination against women by college admissions offices. We must remember the critical role that universities can play in this period in linking up student demands with the demands of the population as a whole. For example, many universities own and run hospitals in the community that deny free abortion services to women. The campus women's liberation groups can take the lead in struggles of the whole community to force the school administration to provide such services to all women free of charge.

The spontaneous growth of feminist organization has reached into the high schools as well. As on the college campuses, there are a number of ways in which high school women are specifically discriminated against. They are expelled from school when they become pregnant, they cannot receive birth control information, they are tracked into a cycle of home economics classes, and upon graduation have greater difficulty than men gaining admission to many universities. High school women radicalizing around the demands of women's liberation reflect the growing acceptance of these demands in the working class population as a whole.

Third World Women's Groups

The development of Third World women organizing around their oppression as women has been one of the most significant aspects of the development of the women's liberation movement as a whole. Third World women suffer from the triple oppression of being women, belonging to an oppressed nationality, and being workers. They receive the lowest wages and worst jobs in the labor market, they have the least opportunity to obtain a decent education, and they suffer most from the high cost of abortions and unavailability of childcare.

Third World feminist groups have sprung up in many different forms. Some began as caucuses in all-Black organizations, such as the Third World Women's Alliance in New York, which grew out of a women's caucus in SNCC. Others have emerged on the campus, and still others have come directly out of the Black community, such as the Phoenix Organization of Women, made up of predominately high school age women in drug rehabilitation centers in New York City. These groups have organized independently of the other women in the movement, due to the particular and different form of oppression they experience. The women's liberation movement must defend the right of Third World women to organize separately and at the same time join with them in the action coalitions.

The motion of Third World women around the demands of the women's liberation movement demonstrates the depth that this movement has already attained and also indicates the new layers that the current radicalization is reaching as a whole. The entrance of Third World women into the struggle will make a tremendous difference not only in the power of the women's movement to reach out to broader layers, but will also add

leadership forces to the struggle for national self-determination.

Among working women as a whole struggles have erupted around the issues of childcare at the jobsite and around the discriminatory job categories open to women. One example is the FEW (Federally Employed Women), an organization of government workers with 30 chapters nationally and a membership of over 1000 women, half of whom are Black.

Another area of radicalization has been among professional women, who have organized themselves to protest unequal pay, lack of advancement, and the relatively narrow spectrum of jobs open to women, including those with college and graduate school degrees. Even women tennis players have begun to rebel, demanding tournament prizes equal to those received by men.

The Tasks of the YSA

Through our experience in the antiwar movement, the YSA has gained a strong background in the building of mass movements. We have learned through this experience that in order for a movement to become a force in American society, it must engage in independent mass action. We must fight for such a perspective in the women's liberation movement and our success will be a determining factor in the future of women's liberation as a movement. We can expect that as the feminist movement grows, all the forces opposed to the growth of such a mass movement will do their best to divert that struggle, either by counterposing community-organizing to mass action or by trying to channel the movement into support for the Democratic and Republican parties.

The new stage of the women's liberation movement we are now entering will be the testing ground for whether or not broad on-going coalitions around actions can be built. Just as in the antiwar movement we will have to be among the best fighters for democracy and non-exclusion, for mass actions in the streets, and for independence from the ruling class parties. We must help build coalitions capable of drawing in not only the campus, high school, professional, radical women's groups that now exist, but also the burgeoning Third World organizations, trade unions, welfare rights groups, etc. While we can be flexible in terms of the demands, we must be firm on the question of choosing those demands which can mobilize the greatest number of women against the capitalist government and the system of sexism it perpetuates.

In addition to building coalitions, a major part of our work in this movement will be in building women's liberation groups, especially those based on campuses and high schools. On the campuses, we should help initiate such groups where they do not exist, just as we would initiate campus SMC chapters. We will also want to participate in and initiate Third World women's liberation groups.

The best women's liberation groups have been those that have successfully combined consciousness-raising and education with action projects. Many campus groups, for example, have consciousness-raising meetings, committees for citywide and campus actions, plus an educational and literature program for the entire membership. In addition, the best of these groups are those which concentrate on reaching out to other women by holding periodic well-publicized mass meetings.

It is also important for women's liberation groups to link up with other struggles which relate to the oppression of women. These groups should be encouraged, for example, to build women's liberation contingents in antiwar demonstrations.

The YSA has learned a great deal from the women's liberation movement. At the same time, we have played a key role since the beginning of the feminist movement in our contributions to the theoretical debates. We have a revolutionary socialist analysis of women's oppression, which provides the only cogent explanation of the roots and reasons for the demotion of women to second-class citizenship in this society. Our analysis also provides a clear strategy for the liberation of women. We must use every opportunity open to us to present to the movement our perspectives for feminist liberation: through forums and debates, through classes open to all women, through our press, and through election campaigns. In particular, both the SWP campaigns and campus election campaigns offer us important opportunities to get out our ideas to the widest audiences possible, especially through use of the bourgeois media--newspapers, radio and TV. In addition, YSAers must keep up with the women's liberation press, both to learn from it and to contribute articles on our perspective for the movement.

The women's liberation movement has drawn into activity many women who never before participated in politics. Many of these women will first start to question other aspects of the capitalist system as they begin to struggle around their demands as women. The fact that most of these demands cannot be wholly or consistently granted by the ruling class will raise the consciousness of these women about the

bankruptcy of capitalism. At the same time they will realize the deep inter-connection between the feminist struggle and the struggles against war, racial oppression, and poverty--that all these struggles are against the same enemy. These women will be looking for a revolutionary socialist alternative to this system.

A movement of women willing to fight all the way to achieve their liberation will find itself in confrontation with the present system of class society, capitalism, and with the family, an institution that supports class society. To achieve its goals the feminist movement will help to change this system.

In order to win such demands as free abortion on demand, control of hospitals to prevent forced sterilization of women, free, 24-hour childcare centers under

community control, and free restaurants, laundries and house-cleaning services, it will be necessary to completely reorganize society on a socialist basis.

We have already seen that many women's liberation activists are joining the YSA. This process will continue at an accelerated rate as the feminist movement grows, as our program for women's liberation reaches more women, and as YSA women all over the country help to build and lead mass actions for an end to women's oppression. The best activists in this movement will see that the best feminists are also those who are revolutionary socialists, part of an organization that unites the struggles of all the oppressed to overthrow capitalism. They will join the YSA, as the only revolutionary socialist youth organization which has the perspective of building a society where women can regain their destiny.



Black Youth and the Struggle for Self-Determination

Present Stage of the Black Liberation Struggle

In the past year, nationalist consciousness has continued to deepen in the Black community. Two conferences held earlier this fall illustrate this point. On the same weekend, Sept. 5-7, the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention-Plenary Session and the Congress of African People met with a total attendance of about 14,000. The fact that 10,000 people attended the plenary session of the RPCC in Philadelphia indicates that the Panthers, despite the government campaign to liquidate them, are still a force among advanced layers in the Black community and on the campus. The weak point of the conference was the lack of any strategy of how to defend the Panthers from the government's attack, and how to further the struggle for liberation.

At the Congress of African People, the perspective of an independent Black political party and the need for united front actions were laid out. However, it remains to be seen whether the programs outlined at the conference will be put into practice.

Nationalist consciousness is spreading and taking hold in every sector of the Black population; it is surfacing in many different forms. The strike of the postal workers, the majority of whom are Black, is a clear example of the combativity and militancy of Black people in this country.

The deepening revolt of Afro-Americans in the armed forces of the U.S. is testimony to the depth of nationalist sentiment. The racist oppression meted out to Black soldiers is a reflection of the racist conditions that exist in society as a whole. This fact is becoming more and more apparent to Black GIs, and in response they are fighting these racist conditions within the armed forces just as they fought them at home.

Perhaps the best examples of this are the organizations that have arisen in Germany, including the Black Action Group in Stuttgart, the Black United Soldier in Karlsruhe, and the Black Defense Group in Karlsruhe. These Black GIs are not only involved in activities centered on their national oppression, but are also organizing other Black GIs on a wide scale against the war. On July 4 of this year, a coalition of these groups held a mass meeting of a thousand Black GIs at the Heidelberg University campus to protest and to plan further protests against racist oppression at home and in the army. This is quite significant considering that the number of Black GIs in Germany is only about 28,000.

Another sector of the Afro-American population that is beginning to surface and vent its anger against the government are the Black prisoners, who, along with Puerto Rican prisoners, have revolted all over the country. Recently in New York City prisoners took control of five jails for a brief period. Rebellions in the prisons of this country have happened before, but what is especially significant about the recent revolts in New York is the increased political character of the uprisings. In the Queens Branch House of Detention in Long Island City the prisoners formed the Inmates Liberation Front and banners were flown from windows with slogans such as "All Power to the People!" and "Free All Oppressed People!" As David Rothenberg, director of the Fortune Society, a group of former convicts fighting for prison reforms, expressed it, "Prisons are a microcosm of society." These prison revolts are part of and illustrate the depth of the present radicalization.

The rise of Black feminist organizations and the increased participation of Black women in the actions of the women's liberation movement illustrate the depth to which not only the feminist sentiment, but also the nationalist sentiment, has taken hold of the Black community.

One of the most important developments in the last year has been in Cairo, Illinois. The Black community has over the last two years suffered systematic attacks from white vigilante groups and the city and state police. These attacks were aimed at destroying the mass movement of the Black community in Cairo to boycott the white-owned stores and corporations. The leadership of the Cairo struggle, having been through the "Panther Experience" and learning from that experience, was able to project a strategy that dealt with these attacks.

Unlike the ultraleftist fixation on "picking up the gun," the Cairo United Front for Survival understands to a certain extent the importance of mass actions and the need for self-defense in conjunction with mass action. That is, they did not counterpose the question of self-defense to the need to mobilize the masses of Blacks in Cairo around the boycott. Nor did they project self-defense in isolation from the masses of the Black community. Rallies were held every week to inform people of the situation, and a newspaper was published to aid this process. However, when physical attacks were launched on the Black community in an attempt to smash the boycott, the Cairo United Front understood the necessity to defend itself and did not hesitate to do so.

Throughout the national conference called by the Cairo United Front, held in Carbondale, Illinois, October 24-25, the leadership of the United Front constantly expressed the need to dispense with what they called the three Rs--Rapology, Romanticism, and Rhetoric. They understand the need to build a nationwide defense of their movement, and see this as part of developing a nationwide movement. Rev. Charles Koen, chairman of the Cairo United Front, said, "When Jackson State went down, no stand was made. When Kent State went down, a stand was made. Black people have to make a stand around Cairo."

Strategy for Black Liberation

Many ideas have been raised as strategies for Black liberation. Although there are many concepts put forward, they fall basically into three categories, the first of which is reformism. The basic strategy reformists project is the gaining of reforms, not through struggle, but through reliance on Democratic and Republican party politics. That is, reliance on the political instruments of the capitalist class in this country, the capitalist class that has thrived on the oppression of Afro-Americans and has no interest in the liberation of Black people. In fact,

the capitalist class, aware of what a shake-up of the two-party system would mean, has more and more backed "Black" Democrats like Stokes, Hatcher, Andrew Young, Dellums, etc. By relying on these capitalist politicians the reformist wing of the Black struggle does not in any way serve the general welfare of the Black community, but rather aids the white supremacists by co-opting and corrupting the Black nationalist sentiment and channeling it back into the Democratic and Republican parties.

One of the contradictions of reformist organizations like SCLC is that they have at times organized mass actions while being deeply immersed in the Democratic party. This reliance on the Democratic party has had detrimental consequences for the struggle.

In the fall of 1969, SCLC in Chicago led mass demonstrations demanding jobs on construction sites and community control over job training. These Black actions shut down many sites, gathering more momentum with each passing day. But as soon as Mayor Daley feigned sympathy for the demands, SCLC called a halt to the demonstrations. It was at this point that the momentum of the mass actions was lost and dissipated through reliance on the good will of the Democratic party politicians; the struggle ended in defeat.

The second category of ideas are those put forward by the ultralefts--such as the Panthers, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and the All-African People's Union. Ultraleftism is a real problem in the Black struggle, and, along with reformism, it has served to mis-direct the movement. Ultraleftism is not a question of "ultranationalism," but is again a question of moving away from nationalism. What ultraleftism essentially amounts to is attempting to find short-cuts to bridging the gap between the present state of consciousness in the Black community and revolutionary consciousness. The ultralefts see no way of linking the struggles for the immediate needs of the Black community with the revolutionary goal of fundamentally changing the whole capitalist system. Because of this they swing from one extreme to the other without finding a connection between the two ends. Lacking a nationalist strategy, the Panthers fall into reformist positions such as their back-handed support to Black Democrat A. A. "Sammy" Rayner, who ran for Congressman in Chicago. Rather than projecting a strategy for action against national oppression, the ultraleft wing of the Black liberation movement projects, at its best, non-struggle, and, at its worst, "revolutionary suicide."

The final strategy is one that is

projected by ourselves and a small section of the Black liberation movement. The revolutionary nationalist strategy is a strategy of consistent nationalism, a strategy that recognizes the need to organize Afro-Americans as Afro-Americans around the issues that affect them as Afro-Americans. That is, to organize them around the kind of demands codified in the document A Transitional Program for Black Liberation--the kind of demands that will draw the masses of the Black community into independent political action. Rejecting both reformism and ultraleftism, the YSA's strategy projects struggles for demands that center around the broader demand of Black control of the Black community, which is the only nationalist and the only revolutionary solution to the oppression of Black people. As Malcolm X put it in an interview given to A. B. Spellman, which was published in the May, 1964, issue of Monthly Review, "We must be in complete control of the politics of the so-called Negro community; we must gain complete control over the politicians in the so-called Negro community, so that no outsider will have any voice in the so-called Negro community. We'll do it ourselves." Clearly expressed here is the revolutionary dynamic of the demand for Black control, for it poses the question of who will rule over the Black community--Black people or the white capitalist class.

Part of this strategy is the building of a mass independent Black political party as an indispensable tool for organizing and carrying out effective struggles for these demands. This party would be able to expose and challenge the two capitalist parties and play a central role in bringing the revolutionary ideas of Black nationalism to every sector of this society.

We have the perspective of building a left wing of the Black nationalist movement around a strategy of mass independent political action focused on democratic and transitional demands. A key aspect of determining the success of any united front formation is the strength and influence of the left wing of that movement. The YSA perspective for a left wing is based on our realization that there are thousands of people who will join us in building a movement for concrete demands, without necessarily agreeing with the YSA's full program. This left wing formation would seek out and try to involve other sectors of the Black community in the struggle and would play a key role in mobilizing the Black community around concrete issues, like the war, laying the base for the construction of a mass Black party. As in the antiwar movement, where the SMC is the most militant and consistent wing, in a similar fashion this organization would be the most militant and consistent wing

of the Black liberation struggle.

The reformist strategy for Black liberation has brought nothing except Uncle Toms like Stokes and Hatcher to the fore to administrate the oppression of Afro-Americans under the guise of having significantly changed the conditions of the Black community. Therefore it is nothing more than a dead end for the fight for Black self-determination.

Ultraleftism also represents a dead end for the Black struggle and its inadequacies are perhaps best illustrated by the degeneration of the Panthers. By criticizing and analyzing the Panthers, we can assess the tasks of the Black liberation struggle and develop a strategy for our own participation in the movement, avoiding the traps the Panthers fell into. As always, one of the primary tasks of the YSA is the defense of victims of capitalist oppression, especially the kind of oppression that the Panthers now face. However, political support of the defense of the Panthers must not be confused with political support of the Panther's political program and approach.

The popularization of the concept of a Black political party, the providing of an example of the kind of transitional program which would be the basis of such a party, raising the idea of self-defense, and showing the link between capitalism and racism are all important contributions made by the Panthers. However, it is precisely on these points that the Panthers are unable to realize in a programmatic and organizational sense the potential that they had.

This is basically due to their incorrect analysis of the present situation and the tasks of the revolutionary vanguard. The Panthers rejected the strategy of building a mass Black political party around a transitional program and projected instead the construction of a para-military organization based on a semi-Maoist program. Their concept was not that of a mass Black political party based on the current level of consciousness and struggle in the Black community, i.e., nationalism, a party that would engage in all of the slow, hard work which is part and parcel of party-building. They instead attempted to substitute themselves, the "revolutionary vanguard party," for the masses of Black people, rejecting the necessity of putting forward and fighting for a program that could transform the general militancy of the Black community into an organized, cohesive and consciously revolutionary force.

Ultraleftism and reformism both flow from a lack of understanding of the potential for and the necessity of organizing the masses in a revolutionary

fashion. The reformism of going to Philadelphia to write a new "constitution" for the U.S. combined with the ultra-leftism of "revolutionary suicide" is a good example of how ultraleftism and reformism can be combined due to this common lack of confidence in the power of the masses.

Black Students

The lessons of the last big upsurge in the Black student movement have to be drawn by the present Black student movement if the next upsurge is to go further than the last. Some sections of the movement are beginning to understand this. The importance of projecting a strategy and program that can involve broader sections of the population in the struggle is a key lesson to be learned from the 1968-69 San Francisco State College and University of California at Berkeley strikes. It was by raising the demand for open admissions that the Third World Liberation Front was able to involve the Black, Chicano, Asian-American, and Native American communities in action. Also the TWLF was able to provide a conscious direction and leadership for white students, pointing out the role that Black student organizations can play in the struggle for social change on campuses.

The struggle of Black students is an important component of the fight for Black liberation. The struggles on the campuses and in the high schools for open admissions and Black studies have led to a degree of organization and political development in advance of any other sector of the Black community.

Coupled with this has been the vanguard role that Black youth in general and Black students in particular have played in the fight for national liberation. It was Black students that provided the leadership and the driving force in the civil rights movement. And it is they who will provide important cadres of the broader struggles that will take place later in the Black community as a whole.

Black students, more so than students in general, have strong ties with the rest of their generation in the high schools, factories, and in the armed forces. This makes the radicalization of Black students a serious matter of concern for the capitalist rulers. Regardless of class, Afro-Americans are subject to more or less the same oppression inflicted by racist bourgeois society. They are subjugated by the same discriminatory laws such as those that deal with political rights, military conscription,

social and cultural restrictions. This common national oppression is the basis for the greater ties between Black students and the other strata of their generation.

The Black student struggles have also provided both positive and negative examples for the Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian-American and Native American liberation movements. The best illustration of this is the Chicano struggle, where a section of that movement was able to pick up on the positive lessons of the Black struggle and the antiwar movement and move forward.

The campuses and the high schools are the training grounds for the cadre of the Black struggle and for the Black cadre of the revolutionary socialist youth organization, the YSA. In places like Detroit, Chicago, and Riverside, California, the bulk of the YSA's Black membership has been recruited from our participation in the Black student movement.

Added to this is the factor that it is on the campuses that the Black cadre of the YSA and the YSA as a whole have their base. In all the mass movements, in which students especially play a significant role, our contact and influence is greatest on the campus and in the high schools. It is among students that our propaganda is most widely circulated, and it is on the campuses that the YSA will find those people most responsive to our revolutionary ideas.

Integral to the building of the YSA as part of the day-to-day life of the campuses will be deepening our roots and integrating the YSA into the Black student movement. It is in this way that we will best be able to relate to the community and workers' struggles.

Although a number of general statements can be made that apply to both the campuses and the high schools, there are some important differences that have to be taken into account in developing a strategy for Black students in the fight for national liberation. The more repressive atmosphere in the high schools makes it somewhat more difficult to participate in political activity. This means that a very important aspect of the YSA's work among Black high school students will be the fight for high school student rights. The experience of the struggle in New York City last spring has brought into sharp relief the fact that Black high school students will be an active component of the fight for the democratic rights of high school students. In New York, the coalition which was formed to wage the campaign for high school student rights had the active participation of

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Black and Puerto Rican student organizations as well as individual Black and Puerto Rican students. This coalition was able to mobilize thousands of high school students in New York, many of whom were Black. Because these students were mobilized in their mass, some gains were made in winning some of the demands of the high school rights coalition. The experiences of Black high school students, upon their graduation, will spread into the army, onto the campuses, and into the factories.

Another difference between the high schools and campuses is that the ties between the Black student population and the rest of the Black community are greater in the high schools than on the campuses. Struggles in the high schools have a greater potential for growing over into struggles of the entire Black community. The necessity of having the control of the educational institutions of the Black community in the hands of the Black community can be much more clearly seen in the case of the high schools.

Overall, the opportunities and potential for the involvement of the YSA in the future struggles of Black high school students are just as great as on the campuses and will be a key area of our participation in the Black liberation movement.

A Black University

The Black community should have universities which are related to the desires and needs of Afro-Americans, to their struggle against oppression, and to their development as a nationality. The Black community must also control its entire educational system in order to end the teaching of racist myths and begin the development of an educational system and curricula that meet the needs of Black students, give them a knowledge of themselves and an understanding of the true history and culture of Black people.

The task of turning the high schools and universities into instruments of the Black liberation struggle is the strategy of the "Black University." During the May upsurge, this concept of turning the schools into organizing centers of the various movements was applied in the concrete at a number of campuses around the country in terms of the "Antiwar University." In some cases, such as Seattle, San Jose, and Stanford, the Black student unions were very much involved in the building of strike activities like the demonstrations that took place May 9. This was especially true after the murder of Blacks in Jackson and Augusta.

Some sections of the Black liberation movement have grasped the lessons of May and the YSA has the task of broadening this understanding. The importance of responding in a massive fashion to attacks by the ruling class on the Afro-American community has been shown in the negative sense by the lack of response to the murders in Augusta and Jackson. Although it is true that the masses of white students didn't respond to the murders of Black people in Augusta and Jackson as rapidly or in as great numbers as they did around Kent State, it is also true that practically every section of the Black liberation movement reneged on its responsibility of mobilizing the masses of Black students and the Black community against the murders. This is one of the major lessons that has to be drawn from the experience of May, i.e., the necessity of the defense of the Black liberation movement being organized by Black people.

Another lesson that has to be drawn is the role that the campus can play in the mobilization of the entire community. The campuses must become organizing centers for the Black liberation struggle; along with teaching the truth about Black people, the establishment of adequately-financed Black studies departments under the control of the Black community will mean the availability of tremendous resources to the Black liberation movement for organizing and mobilizing other sectors of the Afro-American population.

Black Student Organizations

To be effective, struggles like the struggle for a "Black University" have to be given a conscious and consistent direction. The various Black student organizations should act in that capacity, i.e., they should play the role of being the most militant and consistent wing of the movement. By putting forward programs of struggle that transcend the campuses and high schools in their goals, but at the same time include them, that connect Black student demands with the broader demands of the Black community, that show Black students how their demands relate to these broader struggles, are an integral part of them, and can help to advance them, the Black student groups would be the most dynamic section of the movement and have the clearest perspective on what direction the struggle should take.

What is needed on the campuses are mass organizations of Black students built on the basis of nationalism and coordinated on a nationwide scale. The major reasons for the lack of this type of Black student formations are the

general crisis of leadership within the Black community and the weakness of the Black cadre of the revolutionary socialist youth movement. This results in the Black student movement having a lack of social perspective on the development of the coming American revolution and the role that the struggle for Black self-determination will play in that revolution.

The YSA's concept of what role the BSU's and Black student formations should play in the Black liberation movement is not the only idea that is being put forward today. At the recent National Association of Black Students conference in Detroit, several other concepts were advanced. NABS is an organization of NSA-type Black student leaders from around the country. With very few exceptions, these students lacked any perspective, but due to the heavy participation in the conference on the part of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the All African People's Union, and the YSA, the different strategies for Black liberation were able to be contrasted and debated fully at the conference.

One concept, popularized by the Black Panther Party, is the Breakfast-for-Children-Free-Medical-Clinic-Free-Clothing-Store strategy of making the revolution. This "social work" or "serve the people" approach to the struggle for self-determination in no way solves the problems facing the Black community today. In fact, attempting to substitute the vanguard party for the state by performing the functions the state should take on cannot lead to Black liberation. The correct approach is to organize and mobilize the masses of Afro-Americans against the capitalist state, demanding that their needs be met.

In terms of the role of Black student organizations in the Black liberation struggle, the "social work" approach lacks the understanding of how the struggles on the campus can aid the broader struggles in the community as a whole. People at the NABS conference who had this concept suggested that what Black student organizations should be concentrating on is programs like tutoring or simply encouraging Black students to become doctors, lawyers, scientists, technicians, etc., so that they could then better serve the community. There is absolutely nothing wrong with Black students studying to learn one skill or another, in fact, this is quite needed. However, the real way to achieve this is to put forward a program of winning Black control of the Black community. It will only be when Black people control the educational institutions in the Black community that these institutions will train Black students to serve the interests of Blacks.

More and more Black students are realizing the bankruptcy of the "social work" strategy and are looking for alternatives. It is in this context that organizations like the League of Revolutionary Black Workers have posed themselves and their programs as an alternative.

Although the League has criticized the BPP, both on its strategy and tactics, there exists no essential difference between the approaches of the two organizations. Just as the Panthers have done, the League attempts to substitute itself for a mass organization of the Black community fighting for demands linked to the present consciousness of the masses of Afro-Americans. The task facing revolutionary nationalists is to break the hold which the white capitalist class has on the Black community through the capitalist parties.

The difference between the League's approach and the "social work" approach outlined above is that the League stresses the workers rather than the "community." That is, the League has an economist approach which holds that the "real" struggle is at the "point of production." What this means in the concrete for Black students is that their struggle on the campus should be subordinated to "serving" Black workers. At one point in the NABS conference a League spokesman expressed the need for a "Black worker-student alliance" and aside from the nationalist tone of the proposal it could just as easily have come from Progressive Labor Party. This kind of strategy ignores the need for struggles on the campus and, in fact, as one League spokesman expressed it, sees the strategy of making the university an organizing center for the liberation struggle as a "utopian" concept.

The YSA recognizes the importance of the struggles of Black workers, but it is precisely the League's sectarian approach to the campus that cuts across relating the campus struggle to those of Black workers and the Black community as a whole. The YSA's strategy sees the possibility of using the universities to aid the struggles, not only in the factories, but also in the high schools, in the armed forces, and in the community as a whole. The struggles on the campuses for a "Black University" are an integral part of the struggle for Black liberation.

It has been a sectarian approach like the League's that has led to the demise of many Black student organizations. It is only by taking a transitional approach of mass action around the issues facing Black students and the Black community that political isolation from the Black community can be avoided and victories won.

Other Tendencies

In the Black liberation struggle, as in all the other movements, our main opponent is the Communist Party. The CP's and Young Workers Liberation League's reformist strategy flows from their anti-nationalist and class-collaborationist politics. Their class-collaborationist politics mean that the CP and YWLL fear the development of any independent political force in this country. They realize that the struggle of Afro-Americans has led to confrontations, often on a mass scale, with the basic institutions of bourgeois society and the capitalist state--the courts, the prisons, the police, the armed forces, the Democratic and Republican parties. Because of this the Stalinists seek only to divert the independent thrust of the struggle for Black self-determination.

The CP and YWLL attempt to do this through their support of Black Democrats. However, they are also quite capable of adapting to the various ultraleft currents in the Black nationalist movements and this can obscure their basically reformist politics. This is perhaps best illustrated in the way the CP and YWLL attempt to subsume the national oppression of Afro-Americans into some more general type of oppression in order to divert the struggle. For example, the CP used the ultraleft misconception that fascism is here to deflect the independent political thrust of the BPP at the Panther's United Front Against Fascism conference in July 1969. Although the defense of the movement is a necessary part of the struggle for social change, subordinating the struggle for Black liberation to a general "fight against repression" would both divert the Black struggle and eliminate the basis for really effective defense against attacks by the ruling class.

At this time, the CP and YWLL have more Black members than the YSA. However, the Stalinists' anti-nationalist line and reformist program will seriously hamper their ability to recruit and build a Black cadre. Where we can draw the CP and YWLL into united front actions, we will have an opportunity to discuss and debate with their members and recruit some of them to the YSA.

The strongest Maoist tendency--Progressive Labor Party--takes the position that Black nationalism is reactionary and must be combatted. PL opposes the concept of Black control of the Black community and has opposed Black student struggles on the campus. They claim that the struggle for self-determination has prevented Black and white workers from getting together to "unite and fight" their common oppressor. The truth is that Black and white workers will only be

able to unite around a common program which recognizes the right of Blacks to self-determination.

United Fronts

The forces in the Black community that understand the need for a mass independent Black political party which counterposes itself to the capitalist parties, that understand how to use electoral and other forms of political action to organize and mobilize the community are at this point a small sector of the Black community. There are also few Blacks who understand the need to form a national Black student union.

To raise these concepts as agitational rather than propagandistic concepts would be to fall into the same trap as the ultralefts, i.e., substituting the initiation of a Black political party for united front mass action.

United front actions are, in fact, what will create both the subjective and objective conditions in which a Black political party can be formed. Struggles around transitional demands for changes in the system can lead to and become part of the overall struggle for power. The mobilization of the masses thus takes place as a process, with each struggle awakening, educating, inspiring, and organizing new layers toward revolutionary consciousness and action. This is one of the lessons to be learned from the Chicano liberation struggle and the development of La Raza Unida Party. This party grew out of the united front organizations and actions of the Chicano community.

The YSA's participation in the Black youth movement will center on building united front organizations and mass actions to combat all the different aspects of the oppression of the Black community--as it has in the past period. At this point, we will want to do this mainly around the issues of the war and women's liberation, high school rights, Black control of the schools, and the Black university.

Black Liberation and the Fight Against the War

The issue of the war in Southeast Asia is a relevant and a nationalist issue to the Black community. It is Black people and other oppressed nationalities that are most exploited by the war-exacerbated inflation. One

of the most blatantly racist acts of the U.S. government is to draft Black youth in highly disproportionate numbers and send them to the front lines in even higher proportion to kill or be killed in a war which is opposed to their own interests. The fight against the war relates to the struggle for self-determination, because the mobilization of the Black community against the war poses the question of who controls the Black community. One cannot speak of Black control of the Black community if Black people have no control over whether Black youth are drafted into the army, no control over whether the U.S. has troops in Vietnam.

The fact that the Black community is overwhelmingly opposed to the war is well-known. Black antiwar sentiment is so deep that in a survey taken among Black GIs in Vietnam, published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer June 21, 1970, 68.3 per cent of the Black GIs were "Fed up with fighting and dying in a war they consider the white man's folly." The increased participation of Afro-Americans in both the organized antiwar movement and its mass actions during the past period testifies to this fact. In cities like Detroit, Chicago and New York, the Black cadre of the YSA has been able to successfully draw other Black activists into the SMCs. In Detroit, the YSA helped build an antiwar coalition of Black students which had the support of groups ranging from black fraternities and sororities to the All African People's Union. This coalition was able to hold several mass rallies to protest the murders in Augusta and Jackson and a university-wide teach-in, but when the leadership abandoned mass action the coalition fell apart. This experience points out the major deterrent to the further mobilizations of the Black community against the war--that is, the absence of any authoritative leadership in the Black community which is willing and capable of organizing this sentiment against the war.

The involvement of Blacks in the fight against the war accomplishes several tasks. The most important one is, of course, the defense of the Vietnamese revolution. Also, this form of organization has the transitional and united front character that the YSA proposes for the entire Black liberation movement. In the course of fighting against the war, political consciousness is heightened. It will be by organizing mass struggles, like the antiwar movement, that revolutionary nationalists can build a base upon which to construct a mass, independent Black Party. The YSA projects the fight against the war as an integral part of the struggles in every sector of the movement: in the student movement, the women's liberation movement, the labor movement, and the Black and Chicano

liberation movements. Black student organizations can use the issue of the war as a means of reaching out to organize the other Black students on the campus, high school students, and then to reach beyond the campus to involve the community as a whole in antiwar actions.

The building of Third World Task Forces and other SMC-type organizations on the campuses and in the high schools among Black students is a necessary and important step toward the building of broad antiwar coalitions in the Black community that can accomplish the task of mobilizing the Black community against the war. These SMC-type organizations provide a vehicle for educating Black students on the necessity of mass action and non-exclusion, and can be a left wing force in broader antiwar coalitions. It is important that the existence of these organizations not hinge on periodic mass actions alone. The organizations should also involve themselves in the connected issues of high school rights and the defense of the rights of Black GIs.

Women's Liberation

Another key and integral aspect of the struggle for Black self-determination is the fight for women's liberation. Black women are the most degraded, exploited and oppressed sector of the Black community. Even more than white women, Black women are denied decent educations, are discriminated against on the job, and cannot obtain safe, free abortions and adequate childcare facilities in capitalist society. Their oppression as women is exacerbated by the national oppression they face because they are Black. And since Black women are in their vast majority working women, they are triply oppressed. The goal of total control of the Black community being in the hands of Black people will not be achieved as long as the oppression of Black women continues. To speak of Black control of the Black community when 52 per cent of the Black population is denied the right to control their own bodies is ludicrous. Rather than being a diversion from the Black struggle, as some tendencies in the Black liberation movement say it is, the struggle of Black women for their liberation is an intensification of the Black struggle as a whole. The struggle of Black women for their liberation broadens the whole struggle, attacking all aspects of the oppression of Afro-America.

The rise of Black women's groups and the involvement of large numbers of Black women in the actions of the women's

liberation movement has clearly shown the relevance of feminist demands to Black women. Because of the unique character of their oppression, Black women have and should organize independently of other women in the movement. These independent Black women's organizations will play an important role in mobilizing the deep sentiment of Black women for women's liberation.

The YSA's participation in the Black liberation movement will include participation in Black women's liberation groups. Through the fight for women's liberation, we can help build the struggles of other sectors of the Black community. For instance, the demand for free 24-hour childcare--community controlled--has been raised as one of the demands for the Black university and can grow over into much broader struggles. These struggles will steel some of the best Black cadre who will be won to the YSA.

The Middle East

The Black liberation struggle has from its inception solidarized itself with the fight of colonial peoples to free themselves from the yoke of U.S. imperialism. Because of the central role played by U.S. imperialism in attempting to roll back the Arab revolution, revolutionary socialists have an important task of mobilizing opposition to this government's actions in the Mideast and Afro-Americans will be a key component of any opposition to U.S. intervention in the Mideast. Black people will not tolerate being sent to kill brown people in the Mideast any more than they tolerate being sent to kill yellow people in Southeast Asia, when Blacks are denied their basic democratic rights at home.

In the work that the YSA carries out on the question of the Mideast, it will be of the utmost importance to draw in support from Black student and community groups. Black student organizations should be supporting and building teach-ins and other activities that will be needed to educate the masses of Americans about the role of the U.S. in the Mideast.

Defense

As the struggle for Black liberation deepens and expands, the importance of the Black liberation movement being able to defend itself is clear. The most effective defense strategy is one which seeks to win mass support for the democratic rights of the victims of

ruling class attacks.

The reformist approach to defense is to rely on the institutions of capitalist society, such as the courts, as the way to guarantee democratic freedoms. This kind of legalistic approach characterizes the NAACP, for example.

The ultraleftists fail to understand that the civil liberties of the American people are not gifts of the capitalist ruling class, but have been won through struggle. In their defense strategy the ultralefts neglect the necessity of building broad support and attempt to substitute themselves for the masses. An example of this kind of sectarian defense is the campaign the CP is presently waging around Angela Davis.

The YSA will be active in the defense of all victims of capitalist attack in the Black liberation struggle. In fact, through the defense of the Panthers, Angela Davis, etc., we can help educate others in the Black liberation movement and help create a self-confidence which cuts across the defeatism spread by our opponents. This defense work will be best done through united front committees established clearly and precisely on the issue of the democratic rights involved.

Tasks of the YSA

The YSA's strategy for the struggle for Black self-determination flows from our Marxist understanding of the revolutionary dynamic of Black nationalism. The rich history and traditions of our movement have enabled us to come to that understanding. Because the YSA and SWP are the only organizations that have that understanding and perspective, it falls upon us to carry out that perspective. In the youth movement, the task of carrying out this perspective falls upon the revolutionary socialist youth organization--the YSA.

The coming American revolution will have a combined character; it will be both a socialist revolution and a struggle for the self-determination of the oppressed nationalities, against a single, centralized capitalist state. This fact dictates the necessity of organizing a multi-national revolutionary socialist youth organization and party to lead the American revolution to victory.

The major area of work in the next period for the YSA in the Black liberation struggle will be among Black high school and college students. We see the role Black students will play as a catalyst in

the general struggle of the community and we want to help build the Black student movement. It is on the campus and in the high schools that we can expect to win most of our Black recruits in the next period.

Whenever possible we should participate in Black student organizations and united front formations, playing active and leading roles in the movement. The current crisis of leadership in the Black community and the relative weakness in numbers of the Black cadre of the Trotskyist movement make the united front approach of crucial importance. At the same time that we will want to build and participate in Black student organizations, it will be necessary to build and participate in united front formations around various issues.

One of the main issues around which these united fronts can be built is the question of the war in Southeast Asia. Through our participation in SMCs, Third World Task Forces, and Black student organizations, the YSA can help construct broad united fronts on the campuses that will help mobilize Blacks against the war. The SMCs and Third World Task Forces will play a key role in the Black struggle in the sense that the antiwar struggle is part of the struggle for Black liberation. The YSA's participation in the Black student movement around the issue of the war will be greatly aided by the fact that the Black cadre of the YSA and the cadre of the YSA as a whole has a great deal of experience in the antiwar arena.

Black women in the YSA can play a crucial role in initiating and participating in Black women's liberation groups. These organizations will strengthen both the nationalist and feminist struggles as a whole. In addition, we will be able to recruit Black women to the YSA through our participation in these groups.

In order to have the most effective participation in the movement, Black comrades should have a thorough understanding of the Black liberation struggle and the Leninist position on the national question. This means an understanding of the concept of the permanent revolution and the history of the African and Afro-American peoples. Such education is also important, of course, for the non-Black comrades.

Another aspect of this education will be the political education and development of a Black cadre in the YSA. Their education and development should not be oriented solely around the Black struggle, but around the full program of Trotskyism--around our tactical and strategic attitudes toward the antiwar movement, women's liberation movement, and around the organizational principles

and experiences of American Trotskyism.

Part of the process of building the Black liberation struggle is the winning of Black youth to the YSA. The recruitment of Blacks to the YSA will be done, at this point, on the basis of our full program and through our propaganda. The most effective kind of propaganda is propaganda combined with participation in the struggle and directed at those involved in the struggle. Our propaganda should stress the YSA's strategy for Black liberation, but should also deal with our entire revolutionary strategy. Although, in an abstract sense, the YSA's tasks flow from the objective situation, in the concrete, they flow from our current organizational strength, i.e., whether or not we can capitalize on the objective situation. Just as in any other area of work and especially due to the smallness of our Black cadre--although it is steadily growing--the YSA's participation in the struggle must be thoroughly thought out, concentrating on the best possible use of our forces.

The YSA's support to the SWP election campaigns is a powerful way to get out our ideas on the Black liberation movement to Black students. The 1970 California campaign was a concrete example of this; Herman Fagg was able to speak to a number of BSUs and out of that the YSA recruited a local of mostly Black and Chicano comrades in Riverside, California. The SWP election campaigns serve to build the Black liberation movement by providing an example of the kind of campaign an independent Black political party would wage around the kind of demands such a party would raise, and by effectively propagandizing for a Black party.

YSA campaigns for student government can also play this role because our candidates run on and struggle for the demands for Black studies, for Black control of the schools and for the Black university.

Not only our election campaigns, but all the propaganda tools of the YSA and SWP, when used in conjunction with our participation in the movement, are effective means of drawing people to our ideas and winning them to membership in the revolutionary socialist youth organization. Forums, classes, and the sale of our press, all must be integrated into our Black work.

Obviously, recruitment is part of the whole process of building the YSA as a multi-national youth organization. In order to make the socialist revolution in this country, the understanding of political and organizational questions embodied in revolutionary Marxism must be brought to the Black struggle in a

concrete form--Black Trotskyists. That is, one of the key tasks for the YSA is the construction of a Black cadre who are more than specialists on Black liberation, a cadre who also understand all aspects of the YSA's program and work.

A theoretical and programmatic understanding of the concept of a multi-national revolutionary socialist youth organization and party can only be

validated in the reality of struggle. The YSA's recruitment and development of this Black cadre, our increased participation in the various struggles in the Black liberation movement, and the lessons and traditions of the Trotskyist movement will lead to the realization of a mass, multi-national revolutionary vanguard youth organization, and, finally, to the validation of our ideas in the victorious American socialist revolution.



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Chicano Liberation and Revolutionary Youth

Oppression of the Chicano people is one of the pillars upon which capitalism rests. During the last decade La Raza has begun to demand liberation. The Young Socialist Alliance unconditionally supports the right of self-determination of the Chicanos.

One of the pillars that has held up the capitalist structure over the past one hundred years is the oppression of the Chicano people. The Chicano people have their origin in a cultural and racial mixture of Spanish with the original inhabitants of what is now Mexico and the Southwest United States. Aztlan, in the Southwest part of what is now the United States, is the national homeland of the Chicano people. With the growth of capitalism and its constant need for expansion, Anglos began moving west, taking over that land and destroying the culture of the Chicano people which had developed over several centuries. During the past seventy years, three waves of immigration from Mexico have enlarged the Chicano population, not only in the Southwest but all over the United States. Perhaps as many as 10-15 million people in this country today belong to La Raza de Bronze (the Bronze People).

In many ways Chicanos in the Southwest suffer an even greater oppression than do Blacks. According to government figures, 28 per cent are functionally illiterate, while only 4 per cent of Anglos and 14 per cent of Black people in the Southwest fall into this category.

Spanish, the traditional language of Chicanos, has often been forbidden in the schools. Literacy tests are given in English, but large numbers of Chicanos do not speak this language. As a result, in California, while the student population is 14 per cent Chicano, 27 per cent of the students classified "mentally retarded" are Chicano.

The brutal oppression of Chicanos is the result of a system which requires cheap labor and masses of people with poor jobs, poor housing and poor living conditions.

This has been one of the keys to the relative economic and political stability of U. S. capitalism.

Because this system needs a layer of people who will take the worst jobs with the lowest wages, who can be fired at will and discriminated against in many other ways, it has had to create the racist myths which justify the oppression of nationalities like La Raza. This oppression applies to one degree or another to the Chicano people as a whole.

La Raza suffers a double oppression: exploited as part of the working class and oppressed because of its culture, race and language. It is this dual form of oppression, both class and national, which gives the Chicano struggle a profoundly revolutionary character.

The recent growth of nationalist consciousness is the logical development of a people with a common culture, history and language, which, as a nationality, the capitalist system has been unable to assimilate. A number of factors have set the stage for this process.

Urbanization of the Chicano took place at a fast pace during and after the second world war. First came the Bracero program of the federal government which administered and controlled immigration from Mexico. These workers were used primarily in agriculture to keep wages down and replace those who had been drawn to the city and into the war industries; they were also used to break strikes. At the same time thousands of Mexican nationals crossed the border illegally in search of employment. The concentration of Chicanos into cities became even greater with the postwar prosperity of capitalism and the mechanization of agriculture. By 1960 urbanization had increased

to the point of equalling that of the Anglo. Today, most Chicanos are crowded into the barrios in all the major cities of the Southwest, but there are large Chicano communities in many Midwest cities. For example, several hundred thousand live in the Chicago area. Perhaps as many as one-half of all the steel workers in the eleven western states are Chicanos.

The decline of the small farmer and the rise of large-scale agribusinesses resulted in a worsened situation for the Chicano farmer whose land remained relatively unproductive.

The growth of the international student movement which began during the 1960s along with the worldwide youth radicalization has had a visible impact on Chicano youth. The Cuban revolution, the French revolt of May-June 1968, and particularly the massive student actions in Mexico in 1968 contributed significantly to the growing awareness of the Chicano youth. The identification with Mexico and its revolutionary tradition is reflected in many ways in the Chicano movement today. There is also more and more a strong sense of solidarity with oppressed people in all of Latin America. In addition to Zapata and Pancho Villa, Che Guevara is one of the heroes of Chicano youth.

Although this report cannot attempt to give a detailed history of the Chicano movement, I will briefly sketch some of the highlights.

Evolution of Chicano nationalism

In 1962, the Alianza Federal de los Pueblos Libres (then called Alianza Federal de Mercedes) initiated a movement in New Mexico exposing the violation of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and demanding the restoration of stolen lands. The treaty, which concluded the Mexican-American War, legalized the forceful seizure of one-third of the national territory of Mexico; but it also guaranteed the cultural, linguistic, and land rights of Mexicanos remaining in the Southwest. This movement, under the leadership of Reies Lopez Tijerina, raised the concept of self-determination of the Indo-Hispano, and inspired succeeding movements.

An important factor in the rise of Chicano nationalism was the experience of the Black struggle. Many Chicanos who later became activists and leaders in the Chicano struggle gained their initial experience from the struggle of Black people in the early 1960s. Some of them gained valuable experiences in SNCC. The Poor People's March in 1968, which was organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was joined by such Chicano figures as Tijerina, Corky Gonzales and Cesar Chavez.

The repeal of the Bracero program, which had made unionization of farm workers extremely difficult, created a new opening for the struggle of farm workers in the Southwest.

In May of 1965 Cesar Chavez and the National Farm Workers Association led the "Strike of the Roses" in Delano, which was followed by other strikes in California and elsewhere.

The National Farm Workers Association and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee merged in 1965 to form the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee and began the now famous grape strike and boycott which spurred the radicalization of the Chicano community. The

"Huelga" produced many of today's activists, drawing thousands of Chicanos into action for the first time.

Chicano students, particularly high school students, have played a central role in the rise of the Chicano movement. Of the two million U. S. students with Spanish surnames, 70 per cent go to school in the Southwest, and they are predominantly Chicano.

The oppressive conditions in these schools, such as the prohibition of the Spanish language on school grounds, led to a series of mass student strikes in the spring of 1968, starting in Los Angeles where thousands of Chicano students walked out of school. The high school strikes, which became known as blowouts, soon spread throughout Aztlan. Demands raised by the students included Chicano history courses, the firing of racist principals and teachers, and the right to use Spanish in the schools. (Until 1968 it was illegal to conduct classes in any language other than English in the public schools.) The high school blowouts paved the way for the mobilization of broader forces in the Chicano community.

While in 1960 the main political expression in the Chicano community was the "Viva Kennedy" committees, by 1966 discontent with the Democratic Party was manifesting itself. Democrats in some places in 1966 were defeated because of a shift of the Chicano vote to the Republican Party. One year later Chicanos in Texas began holding Raza Unida conferences in answer to President Johnson's "Cabinet Hearings on Mexican Affairs." Although generally dominated by reformists, these La Raza conferences played an important role in registering the developing nationalist consciousness.

Around the same time, Corky Gonzales of the Crusade for Justice, a Chicano community organization in Denver, began to break from the Democratic Party. The first National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference was called by the Crusade in March of 1969. It composed *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan* and projected the idea of an independent Chicano political party. *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan* was the beginning of a transitional program for Chicano liberation. It raised the concept of Aztlan, a Chicano nation.

The second Chicano Youth Liberation Conference, sponsored by the Crusade in March of 1970, led to the launching of La Raza Unida Party in Colorado, projected the National Chicano Moratorium action of August 29 in Los Angeles, gave support to Hugo Blanco and other Latin American political prisoners, and discussed women's liberation as it affects La Raza.

Chicano YSAers participated in both these conferences. Our participation in the 1970 conference in support of those forces who were for mass antiwar action and an independent Chicano party was an important factor in the defeat of the reformists and ultralefts at the conference.

La Raza Unida Party

The current rise in nationalist consciousness has found one of its highest political expressions in La Raza Unida Party in Southwest Texas. This party grew out of struggles for community control in Crystal City, Texas, and has gained the first electoral victories of an independent Chicano political party.

These struggles for community control make the con-

cept of self-determination concrete. Because this system is unable to grant self-determination to any oppressed nationality, the struggle for that right is a direct threat to the capitalist system. Without the pillar of Chicano oppression the whole capitalist structure would topple. This is especially true given the social composition of the Chicano people: almost entirely workers—and the most oppressed workers at that.

The Cuban revolution has demonstrated that only the overthrow of capitalism can lead to total liberation from imperialist political and economic control. This lesson will be learned by the Chicano masses who become mobilized and involved in the Chicano struggle around demands that, of necessity, are directly related to their needs. Because of the dual oppression of Chicanos as workers and as a nationality, the Chicano struggle will occupy a vanguard position in the coming American revolution.

The success of the Chicano movement depends on its ability to remain independent and build upon the strength of the growing nationalism. As *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan* explains, nationalism is the common denominator that all La Raza can agree upon and has the potential to unite and mobilize a massive and powerful movement that can shake up the *status quo* of the two-party system through which the capitalists rule. This would show the way to be followed by the Black movement and the labor movement.

Subordination of the Chicano struggle to some abstract call for "working-class unity" can only weaken that struggle by obstructing the mobilization of the masses of Chicanos around nationalist demands through their own organizations, their own party. Alliances between the different sectors of the struggle against a common enemy can be made and will be made on the basis of each sector's independent strength.

In the course of the independent struggles of Chicanos as Chicanos, the working-class aspect of the struggle will also emerge. A concrete example of this is illustrated by the role La Raza Unida Party activists in Crystal City are playing in the fight of the primarily Chicano work force at the Del Monte cannery. The workers have organized a new union at that plant. The overwhelming majority walked off the job when the Anglo Teamster union bureaucrats attempted to conduct a vote by locking up the workers and forcing them to vote in favor of a contract which the union membership opposed. This new union is called the Obreros Unidos Independientes (Independent United Workers).

As revolutionary socialists, YSAers unconditionally support the right of self-determination of the Chicano people. Demands based on the right to self-determination have a revolutionary content and cannot, will not, be met fully under the capitalist system. Moreover, independent mass struggles for self-determination can lead to many significant gains for the Chicano people.

The role of the YSA is to support that nationalism, and it is by participating in and leading the struggle for national self-determination as the most consistent Chicano nationalists, that Chicano revolutionary socialists will best build the Chicano movement.

Revolutionary socialist consciousness will be developed out of the nationalist mobilization of the Chicano people. Those revolutionary nationalists who become revolutionary socialists as well will join the YSA.

Chicano militants who understand the tasks facing La Causa are beginning to see that other social forces in addition to the Chicanos can be mobilized against American capitalism. They see that the different struggles are not separate and unrelated. Because these different forces are all fighting a common enemy—American capitalism—the coming together of these struggles can result in the overthrow of capitalism. But as YSAers, we also understand that this process cannot take place without the consistent leadership of a revolutionary socialist vanguard which is active in all these struggles and armed with a program based on an understanding of the combined character of the coming American revolution.

Those who understand this will also arrive at an understanding of the key question: the need to build a multinational revolutionary socialist vanguard. A multinational revolutionary socialist organization is not counterposed to nationalist organizations but is actively involved in supporting and building them. Because the YSA is active in all these different struggles—the women's liberation movement, the Black struggle, the antiwar movement, and the student movement—Chicano young socialists will be better able to contribute to the Chicano struggle.

This is not an abstract theory but one which has been put to the test in this last period. At the 1970 Chicano Youth Liberation Conference, Chicano and Latino YSAers were the most consistent speakers for the formation of an independent Chicano political party. We were also among the most active builders of the August 29 Chicano Moratorium in Los Angeles and, following the police attack on that demonstration, became a crucial force in calling the September 16 demonstration to protest that attack and the murder of Ruben Salazar. Our newspaper, *The Militant*, has played a major role in publicizing important developments in the Chicano movement, and is looked to by Chicano activists as an authoritative source of news and analysis on the movement.

The YSA is one of the vehicles through which the lessons and experiences of all the other movements will be conveyed to the nationalist movements and through which the lessons and experiences of the Chicano movement are taken back to the other movements.

Other organizations claiming to be multinational socialist organizations, such as the Progressive Labor Party and the Communist Party, either overtly or covertly oppose the Chicano nationalist struggle. PL's antinationalist position, as expressed in their call for "working-class unity," flows from a lack of understanding of the revolutionary character of nationalist struggles. It essentially expresses a lack of faith in the ability of the Chicano masses to draw the necessary lessons that will lead them to the logical conclusion of the need for a socialist revolution. Unlike the Marxist approach, this plea for "working-class unity" is a formalistic approach which implies that Chicanos are not an oppressed nationality but are all "workers," and nothing but workers. Chicanos are also students, are also women, are also people with special demands that relate to their special needs and around which they are waging independent struggles.

PL's role at the Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in March 1970 was to distribute a position paper attacking

nationalism. After August 29 in Los Angeles, rather than helping to build a united front in defense of the movement, PL organized their own small, sectarian, provocative rally. PL's antinationalist line has made them particularly unpopular among Chicanos.

The Communist Party is a reformist tendency in the Chicano movement with a significant influence. Their approach is to keep the Chicano movement tied to capitalist political parties. The CP's role has, for the most part, been limited to supporting liberal democrats such as California's Senator John Tunney and Congressman Ed Royball. They played an important role in the Peace and Freedom Party campaign of Ricardo Romo in California, counterposing this coalition of assorted radicals and Anglo liberals (with a sprinkling of Chicanos and Blacks who have not broken with capitalist politics), to a nationalist Chicano party. One of the tactics the CP uses is to attempt to dilute the independent character of La Raza Unida Party by calling *vendidos* (sellouts) like Royball "Raza Unida candidates." In the same way, articles in the *Daily World* talk about the Raza Unida movement in an attempt to get around having to state openly their opposition to the independent Chicano party.

Recently this tactic used by the reformists was taken on directly by the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO). A Raza Unida Conference in Austin, Texas, this summer called by reformists attempted to by-pass the issue of an independent party and deal only with the question of registering Chicanos, leaving the door open for endorsement of liberal Democrats. MAYO militants were able to defeat the reformists. The conference called for a complete break with the Democratic and Republican parties.

The events following the August 29 police attack on the Chicano Moratorium clearly pointed to the need for a clear perspective of mass struggles building toward the formation of an independent Chicano party. The National Chicano Moratorium Committee leadership, which lacked such a perspective for counteracting the attack, yielded to the pressure of the reformist forces. Despite the mass sentiment for a militant protest, the September 16 action was a watered-down protest with Jesse Unruh, Democratic Party candidate for Governor of California, leading it through East Los Angeles. Along with the Chicano Moratorium leadership, the CP encouraged this trend.

A common way that the CP intervenes in this movement is to attempt to counterpose some abstract struggle against "repression" to building mass independent actions around concrete demands. In order to fight repression, they say, the movement must support liberal politicians as opposed to so-called repression candidates. While it is true that the Chicano movement has been and will continue to be a victim of repression, the way to fight repression is not by supporting the very people who are the tools of the ruling classes for carrying out that repression, but by building the broadest possible united fronts in defense of individuals or organizations that come under attack.

A thorough understanding of nationalism is essential for YSAers since nationalist rhetoric is often used by reformist Chicanos to try to exclude the revolutionary socialists and to disorient the revolutionary nationalists. Chicano and Latino YSAers at the Denver conference were attacked by some for belonging to an organization which includes whites and has a socialist ideology. In fact, we

were among the most consistent nationalists. It became clear that this tactic of the reformists was a cover for an attempt to exclude the left wing of the movement.

A similar problem occurred in Los Angeles after August 29 when Rosalio Muñoz, under the pressure of the right wing, attempted to exclude Chicano and Latino YSA members by claiming that they were outsiders in East Los Angeles, a very dangerous position which opens the way for the government to clamp down, not only on the socialists, but on the movement as a whole. Our response was to draw up a statement reaffirming the concept of nonexclusion and the need for unity in defense of the Chicano movement. That document was circulated and well received by Chicano activists.

Ultraleftism is another orientation projected for the movement. The ultralefts counterpose "serve the people," "pick up the gun" rhetoric to a strategy of mass action for community control. By substituting a self-proclaimed vanguard for the mass—by posing themselves as the vanguard of the movement and rejecting the concept of electoral action and of mobilizing the masses around transitional demands—they are contributing the least to raising the consciousness of the Chicano people or to making concrete gains. While they project free breakfast programs or free health clinics which involve small numbers of people and are of minimal help to the Chicano community, the greatest number of people are being radicalized through mobilizations over such things as community control of the schools and the war in Vietnam. Free breakfast programs for all children can be gained as a result of a mass movement.

Such ultraleft abstention from mass struggles caused the Brown Beret leadership in Los Angeles to disassociate themselves from the Chicano Moratorium Committee and play no role whatsoever in one of the most politically significant events in Chicano history.

Chicano student movement

The correctness of our program, our strategy for mass action, our support and active participation in the nationalist movement, and our ability to relate to every aspect of the Chicano liberation struggle will guide us in the tasks that face the movement in the coming period. We must see as one of our prime tasks helping to publicize, support and build La Raza Unida parties, Chicano antiwar actions, Chicano student struggles, Chicana liberation, and other aspects of the Chicano movements.

Our Raza comrades can play a major role in the Chicano student movement. The level of organization that students have displayed, and the profound impact they have had in the Chicano community as a whole places them clearly in the forefront of the movement. The experiences gained by high school students in the course of the blowouts, their involvement in the struggle for community control of education, the role they have played in building La Raza Unida parties and the experience of the Chicano Moratorium which students initiated, are the key factors that have contributed to the high political level of the Chicano students. The international youth radicalization has given this process an added push, so that Chicano students today are not only the most militant

sector but also the most open to the ideas of socialism, for antiwar mass actions, for La Raza Unida parties and for Chicana liberation.

While the Chicano enrollment in colleges has been increasing in the last two years, Chicanos are mainly channeled into the junior colleges instead of the universities. Combined with their growing radicalization, the continuing oppressive conditions in most schools guarantee that these struggles will continue.

An impressive example of the gains that can be made around the struggle for community control of the schools is the establishment of the Latin and Mexican-American Studies Department at Merritt College in Oakland, California. It was one of the victories of several student strikes which mobilized community support in the Bay area around the demand for a Brown University. The faculty and students of the Latin and Mexican-American Department are involved in all aspects of the Chicano struggle, including the two Denver youth conferences, two northern California Raza Unida Moratoriums against the war, and support to the high school strike of Chicano students in Oakland in the fall of 1969.

The struggle for the Brown university, a university controlled by the community with university funds and resources at the disposal of the Chicano students, is a key to reaching out to and involving nonstudent Chicano youth. The utopian concept of the *free* university, counterposed by ultralefts, fails to understand this fundamental fact.

Tlatelolco, the school that has been formed by the Crusade for Justice for about two hundred students, is not intended to be a substitute for fighting for community control of educational institutions. In this case, the school has been initiated as a result of the Crusade *having established* a base in the community through struggle. It is not seen as a means of winning over or "serving" the community, *in order to* establish such a base. They also view the school as a means of educating cadre for the struggle for community control.

Chicano student organizations have been in the vanguard of a number of struggles carried out by the community and most importantly in La Raza Unida Party (RUP). The RUP in Texas grew out of a struggle over a set of demands of Crystal City high school students. The Mexican-American Youth Organization, after learning the lessons of that struggle, organized a campaign to register voters for La Raza Unida Party. In Colorado, the United Mexican-American Students has actively supported the RUP and had some of its members running as candidates. The Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MECHA) in California has supported the grape strike and the Chicano Moratorium and has led Chicano studies fights in California.

Our orientation toward the Chicano student movement means that we will help to build and initiate Chicano student organizations.

Another essential task which faces the YSA is building and supporting La Raza Unida parties. One of the most important lessons of this development is the need for a mass base gained in the course of struggles for community control. This lesson will be an important one for other movements. The steps taken recently by a group of Black activists in New York to initiate discussions on a Black political party were partly inspired by the RUPs,

which provided a model. Articles in our publications, in addition to our participation, made a substantial contribution to those discussions.

The Raza Unida parties' ability to relate to the needs of the community and play an active role in community struggles has been illustrated by the Colorado RUP's support to the lettuce workers strike and the support of the Texas RUP to the workers of the Del Monte plant.

Despite illegal moves by election officials to keep the RUPs off the ballot, and later to minimize the votes credited to RUP, the percentage of votes received in the recent elections was a definite success. The RUP in southwest Texas is now planning to expand into a twenty-six county area in south Texas which is predominantly Chicano, and later to become a statewide organization.

At the same time, although a number of victories have been gained, there are still many tests ahead for these and other RUPs which may be initiated in the future. La Raza Unida parties in Texas and Colorado are not yet mass parties. One difficulty they will have to face is the intervention of the Democratic Party, which will not just oppose them, but may try to get in and take them over.

The spreading influence of La Raza Unida was seen most recently in La Raza Unida Party Conference held in northern California on November 13. A definite agreement to go back to the community and begin organizing Raza Unida Party chapters came out of the conference, along with agreement to give no support to the Democratic and Republican parties. This, and the understanding of the need for establishing a base through mass mobilizations for community control, is the only guarantee that such a party will be successful in the future.

A good example of how a revolutionary vanguard can concretely support and build the nationalist movement is the role that the YSA and SWP have played in publicizing and popularizing La Raza Unida parties through *The Militant*, Pathfinder publications, speaking engagements and particularly the SWP candidates' tour of Aztlan.

One major responsibility that revolutionaries have is to prepare other forces for mobilizations in defense of sections of the movement that come under attack from the ruling class. The concept of broad united defense committees should be consistently explained to every sector of the movement as the most effective form of defense.

The National Chicano Moratorium of August 29, which mobilized 30,000 Chicanos around the slogan "Bring our Carnales Home," was a dramatic demonstration of the deep and widespread antiwar sentiment among the Chicano people. Chicano youth are drafted and killed in Vietnam in high, disproportionate numbers. This fact makes the war an extremely relevant issue to Chicanos. Unlike the Black movement, the Chicano movement developed a leadership which was able to organize and mobilize that sentiment through the National Chicano Moratorium Committee around the demand for immediate withdrawal.

The experience of the Chicano Moratorium holds important lessons for the entire radical movement in this country, and squarely refutes the argument of the reformists and ultralefts who claim that the antiwar movement is irrelevant to oppressed nationalities. Although the National

Chicano Moratorium Committee had the potential to become one of the central organizations in the Chicano struggle, at the peak of its accomplishment the leadership retreated from the orientation of mass action. This retreat created a temporary vacuum in leadership for the Chicano antiwar movement. Nevertheless, Chicanos continue to participate in actions against the war. Chicano contingents led the antiwar marches in Seattle and San Francisco on October 31, 1970. A good percentage of the demonstrators in Riverside, California, on that day were Chicanos. Involving Chicanos in the antiwar movement will be one of our central tasks.

Whether these actions are separate from the coalition-called antiwar actions or are a part of them will depend on the specific situation. The correct strategy will be the one that can involve the largest possible numbers of Chicanos in action against the war. Through the Student Mobilization Committee and the National Peace Action Coalition, Chicanos can be involved in the national demonstrations set for April 24. Chicano YSAers have been and will continue to be in the forefront of this process.

The most oppressed sector of the Chicano population is the Chicanas. Both the nationalist movement and the women's liberation movement have contributed to the growing consciousness of Chicanas, not only as nationalists, but also as feminists. We have seen the phenomenon of feminism coming to the forefront in the Black struggle. The dynamic of this movement foreshadows the potential of a similar process taking place among La Raza. An important part of the northern California Raza Unida Party conference was the enthusiastic response to the sec-

tion of the Oakland-Berkeley Raza Unida platform which outlined the oppression of Raza women. The second Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver, and other conferences held in Texas, have held workshops and discussions and drawn up resolutions on Chicana liberation. In Seattle, a campus women's liberation group held a rap session with Chicanas on the relationship between nationalism and feminism. A Chicana conference in Texas has been called some time this spring. YSA women have been in the leadership of the feminist movement, are gaining a thorough understanding of it, and are best equipped to bring its lessons to other movements.

One of the most important advantages the YSA has over other groups that call themselves socialist is that it functions as part of an international revolutionary socialist movement that is participating in the Latin American revolution. We must educate ourselves on these struggles and build the defense of political prisoners through support of the USLA Justice Committee. The Chicano movement helped to free Comrade Hugo Blanco! We must serve notice on the Peruvian government that we will not rest until Eduardo Creus is free. A defense campaign must be launched in the Chicano movement to free the Mexican and other Latin American prisoners.

This feeling of solidarity with people struggling against similar forms of colonial oppression means that lessons of the Latin American struggles, some of which are led by revolutionary socialists, can be applied to the Chicano movement. This can give added impetus to the Chicano movement and aid in the recruitment of Chicano youth to the YSA.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPTS OF THE YSA

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 a 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 unions 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 vice 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 policies 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 activists 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 "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 expansion 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 per-

centage 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 meetings 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 witch-hunting 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 them-

selves, 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 weaknesses. 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 magazine, 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 demagogy 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 vice 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

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 state-

ment 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

YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE CONSTITUTION

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 she or 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 re-admission. 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 two dollars

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 or her 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 pre-convention discussion period of at least 90 days.

4. The National Executive Committee shall issue a call at the start of the pre-convention 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 pre-convention 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 date specified in 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 Chairperson, 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.

If you would like more information on the YSA, if you would like to know about YSA classes, forums, or other activities in your area, or if you want to join the YSA, then get in touch with the YSA National Office or the YSA Regional Center nearest you.

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"The 1970s will be a decade of profound crises for American capitalism and of unprecedented opportunities for revolutionary socialists. Our experience has confirmed our view that the current radicalization can lead to the elimination of capitalism in the stronghold of world imperialism through a socialist revolution in the United States."

—Introduction to the Young Socialist Alliance

The Young Socialist Alliance is dedicated to the elimination of this capitalist society—in which a few profit at the expense of the vast majority and in which racism, war, the oppression of women, poverty, alienation, and the distortion of all human relationships are the norm—and to the creation of a new socialist society based on human need rather than profit.

The YSA is a multinational revolutionary socialist youth organization which seeks to unite fighters from all the struggles against capitalism: Black and Brown youth, women, students, and GIs.

If you want to help end capitalism then you should join the YSA and participate with us in the urgent task of building an organization which can help lead the American socialist revolution!



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