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The

YSA

Part 2

Defense

Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

When the campaign headquarters of the Houston Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance was bombed in a right-wing terrorist attack, the local and branch immediately responded by organizing a broad-based campaign to defend our right to exist in Houston. A defense committee was initiated, which opened its campaign by calling a press conference with representatives from all sectors of the community. The defense committee organized support rallies and meetings, put out detailed fact sheets, and solicited support from the general, as well as the academic and radical, communities. Because of this systematic campaign, several members of the Ku Klux Klan have been indicted for bombing the SWP headquarters and for other terrorist attacks.

The success we have encountered in Houston is not unprecedented, but is the continuation of our correct policies in waging defense campaigns. Our heritage dates to the International Labor Defense, of which James P. Cannon was National Secretary, in the mid-1920s. One of the most famous defense cases we have been involved in was the Minneapolis Sedition Trial in the 1940s. This campaign exemplified our basic principles of waging an effective and principled defense campaign. (Socialism on Trial and What Policy for Revolutionists--Marxism or Ultra-Leftism? by James P. Cannon are excellent handbooks on the strategy used in this case.)

Another famous campaign that occurred in the mid-1960s was the Bloomington witchhunt trial of three YSAers. This infamous case lasted for over three years, from 1963 to 1966, after three YSAers were indicted under a 1951 anticommunist act in Indiana. The defense committee formed (Committee to Aid the Bloomington Students) waged a campaign that was a model of how to defend oneself from reactionary attacks by the state and federal governments.

The basic lessons learned from the above cases and many others are outlined in this handbook. This handbook is a section of the Organizing the YSA series of pamphlets and includes detailed analysis and several short examples of recent and present defense cases. This compilation is not meant to be a "dictionary" where one can flip to a page and find the strategy needed to win a particular defense campaign. The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize all YSAers with the basic principles learned by the revolutionary movement over the years through concrete experiences on the best methods to defend ourselves.

The first article, by Rich Finkel, is the defense report approved by the YSA National Committee plenum in July, 1971. The report gives a brief historical analysis of how democratic

rights were acquired; the importance of these rights; and the correct strategy the YSA should use to defend itself in the student movement, from government attacks, and violence within the movement. This is the first report given at a YSA plenum outlining our general defense principles. The report codifies our past traditions and experiences in the revolutionary movement carrying out defense work.

The other articles in this handbook are taken from The Militant and The Young Socialist Organizer illustrating how we implement our defense strategy in various situations.

"Violence or Democracy in the Radical Movement?", by Caroline Lund, is an answer to the Progressive Labor Party and Students for a Democratic Society on the question of violence in the movement. This article laid out the tasks of the YSA in responding to the vicious attack initiated by members of PL/SDS at the May 24, 1970, SMC steering committee meeting held in Boston.

The next selection is a statement by the National Executive Committee of the YSA that takes up the seriousness of the physical attack PL/SDS initiated upon the SMC and points out the necessity of politically debating differences within the movement. These two articles are reprinted from the June 24, 1970, issue of The Young Socialist Organizer.

The next article, by Dave Salner, details how to wage a campaign against potential attacks from reactionary forces before they are initiated. The article also emphasizes the necessity of the antiwar movement being in the forefront of any defense effort related to its right to exist and function. It was originally published in the June 11, 1971, Young Socialist Organizer.

"How Houston Defense Against Klan Terror Was Built" is an article by Paul McKnight from the June 11, 1971, issue of The Militant. It outlines how the defense committee was organized and its strategy in combating the Klan.

The final article is "On Workers Democracy," by Ernest Mandel. It has been published by the YSA National Office as a four-page flier.

The YSA National Office welcomes any suggestions about how, in future editions, we can improve the defense handbook in light of the experiences of YSAers in defending and building the revolutionary socialist youth organization.

Defense Report

Editor's Note: We are reprinting in this issue the Defense Report which was unanimously approved by the recent National Committee plenum of the YSA, held in New York City, July 5-8.

IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

Marxists have always been in the forefront of the struggle to defend and extend democratic rights, from the first days of the revolutionary socialist movement up until today. We see democratic rights as among the most important victories of the struggles of the oppressed and understand that they present the revolutionary movement with the greatest freedom under capitalism to win over the insurgent masses to its views in the struggle for socialism.

The democratic rights which the American people enjoy today were first won during revolutionary struggles led by the rising capitalist class in this country. After the consolidation of capitalist rule, additional rights have been won through the struggles of working people, Blacks, Chicanos, women, and student rebels.

The Bill of Rights was a key achievement of the first American revolution, which was directed against both British colonial rule and the feudal privileges of the Tories. Black people won their emancipation from chattel slavery only through the course of the second American revolution, which crushed the power of the Southern slaveholders. The right to form industrial unions is just one more example of democratic rights won through the course of often bloody struggles.

The democratic rights of the American people are in reality among the most important acquisitions of past struggles in this country, and Marxists must be in the leadership of the struggle to defend and extend these rights during our own era of the decay of capitalism. The right to strike, to hold mass demonstrations, and to organize political movements and parties are essential tools in the struggle for socialism and must be constantly protected. Other democratic rights, such as the right of political minorities to be on the ballot during elections, must still be fought for and won.

Our understanding of the importance of democratic rights, however, does not in any way limit our realization that bourgeois democracy is a form of class dictatorship. Abroad we see the U.S. government raining bombs and napalm

in a genocidal war against the peoples of Indochina. At home we see it trampling upon the rights of Blacks, Chicanos, students, gays, women, and all working people.

The ruling class has decisive control over all the institutions of this so-called free society: from the banks and corporations to the means of mass communication; from the church and educational system to the government, military, and judiciary.

Democratic rights are today tolerated by the ruling class for two key reasons: first, because these rights present an illusion to masses of Americans that they actually can control the decisions that affect their lives; and second, because the American people, who understand that democratic rights are a central part of their heritage, will participate in massive struggles to defend these rights.

Because most Americans do not understand the real nature of bourgeois democracy, it is much easier for the ruling class to rule within this framework. Naked force is unneeded most of the time to ensure that factories will produce or soldiers will fight, when people believe that they are controlling their own lives and government. The U.S. government and ruling class are thus extremely sensitive about normally maintaining the illusions of formal democracy.

The rights of the American people are, however, a real threat to the power of the ruling class. In this sense we understand that during the period of the decline of capitalism, the ruling class will be compelled to attack and attempt to limit the use of these very rights.

One important example of this was the period of the Cold War and witchhunt when much of the existing antilabor and anticommunist legislation was first passed, in response to the labor upsurge following World War II, the continued existence of the Soviet Union, and the growth of the colonial revolution.

Today, in the face of growing independent movements against capitalist rule, the ruling class and government have attempted to limit existing civil liberties through unconstitutional conspiracy trials, wiretapping, the murderous attacks on the Black Panther Party, smashing ghetto rebellions, FBI infiltration and provocation in radical groups, and most recently illegal mass arrests of antiwar demonstrators.

We also understand that when facing massive

social movements that threaten the very existence of capitalism itself, the ruling class will go much further in its attempts to suppress democratic rights. The continuing growth and deepening of today's radicalization can eventually compel the ruling class as a whole to support a bonapartist regime, a military coup, or even a mass fascist movement aimed at totally destroying the rights and organizations of the mass independent movements.

Defense strategy is thus of the utmost importance to the revolutionary movement and must be based on a clear understanding of the nature and limits of bourgeois democracy. We must recognize that no sector of the ruling class—from its most unenlightened bigots to its liberal apologists—can be relied on to defend the democratic rights of the oppressed. It is the antiwar movement, the national liberation movements, the women's movement, the gay movement, and the labor movement that are the driving forces for the defense and extension of democratic rights today.

In our defense work we must place no reliance on the capitalist courts, politicians, or other bourgeois institutions to either enforce or adhere to their own legal system.

We have seen the ruling class react to the new waves of radicalization in the 1960s through a combination of repression and concession. The mass movements have already won important legal rights in the course of these struggles: from the Civil Rights legislation of the early 1960s to the most recent victory in New Haven when all charges were dropped against Bobby Seale and Erika Huggins.

The publication of the secret Pentagon documents on Vietnam in *The New York Times* and other newspapers was a dramatic example of the power of antiwar sentiment in forcing a section of the ruling class to publish part of the brutal history of the war. The government's attempt to suppress the study only weakened its credibility in the eyes of millions of Americans. This particular example of establishing the right of the press to publish secret government documents about Vietnam shows how civil liberties help build the mass movements, as well as the depth of the split within the ruling class over the government's war policies.

The YSA's defense policy is also firmly rooted in the principle of our unconditional defense of all victims of capitalist reaction and class injustice, no matter what their particular views are. We understand that the suppression of any democratic right which the American people have won would only strengthen the capitalist class and encourage the ruling class to attempt to deny other fighters that same right at a later time. Revolutionaries have always been the most consistent and uncompromising defenders of democratic rights, as exemplified in the solidarity slogan of the IWW: "An injury to one is an injury to all."

In defending democratic rights we seek to build

the broadest possible defense of these rights utilizing the best legal advice and counsel. By waging a non-exclusive campaign around the defense of civil liberties, we can win massive support from nearly all sections of society, and it is through such popular mobilizations and mass pressure on the ruling class that these rights will be successfully defended. Our defense campaigns are aimed at showing the antidemocratic nature of class repression and pointing out that it is aimed at the rights of all Americans.

When any part of our organization is under attack, defense becomes our first and foremost priority. Above all, any challenge to the legality of the revolutionary movement must be fought and defeated at all costs. It is within this context that our campaign to help put the Socialist Workers Party on the ballot in every state of the country for the 1972 Presidential elections is of the utmost importance. By struggling for and winning the right to be on the ballot, we will be further ensuring and protecting the legality of the SWP and YSA.

DEFENSE OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

A key aspect of the YSA's defense work since the 1970 convention has been the defense of student political rights. At this plenum it is important that we discuss this campaign fully and lay the basis for expanding this work in the fall.

The Nixon administration's campaign against the student movement was launched last summer in response to the May upsurge. It was aimed above all at isolating and discrediting the student movement.

New guidelines were issued by the Internal Revenue Service to give campus administrators a handle with which to crack down on student political activity. Hoover's vicious "letter to American students" was sent out by Nixon to over 900 colleges and universities. Throughout the fall 1970 election campaign students were attacked as "extremists," "thugs," and "bums." The FBI sent an additional 1000 agents onto the campuses, and in October the Kent 25 were indicted.

This campaign was implemented on campuses across the country as administrators issued new regulations to limit student rights to leaflet, hold rallies, sell literature, organize public conferences, or invite speakers of their choice. Censorship of school newspapers was begun or increased on many campuses. These restrictions varied from campus to campus, but were an integral part of the campaign launched by Nixon to attempt to choke off student dissent.

Our response to these attacks was to launch a counteroffensive at the YSA convention aimed at building the mass campus movements and challenging *any* attempts whatsoever to restrict student rights. We pointed to the importance of the YSA spearheading campaigns which would defend the gains students had won during the May strike and prevent new attacks by administrators from being successfully carried out.

This campaign was aimed at educating students

about the importance of such attacks by writing articles in the campus press, distributing the YSA Open Letter and Truth Kit, and building Young Socialist election campaigns. Where possible, we projected initiating broadly supported defense efforts, such as joint protest statements signed by the various campus groups, press conferences, and mass meetings and demonstrations.

Since the YSA convention this campaign has been carried out on campuses all across the country. In Florida we helped launch the Committee for Free Assembly and Political Expression on Campus (FAPEC) to support the right of the YSA to be a recognized student group on the Florida state university campuses and to raise funds for the legal proceedings we initiated.

In January and February a special tour by FAPEC's acting secretary was organized throughout Florida to set up local committees, gain sponsors for the case, and publicize the campaign. Articles have appeared on the case in nearly every Florida campus newspaper; groups such as the ACLU, student governments, faculty organizations, and other student groups have all endorsed the campaign. We expect a ruling on the legal case sometime this fall.

At Columbia University the YSA launched a propaganda campaign against the IRS guidelines, talking to different campus groups and gaining publicity through the campus newspapers. We had intended to initiate a legal suit against the University for enforcing these guidelines, but, partially because of our educational efforts on campus, the administration retreated and did not apply the guidelines against any campus organization during the spring. If, however, Columbia does attempt to enforce these guidelines next fall, we will be well prepared to launch a legal and political defense campaign aimed at knocking these regulations off the books.

As I pointed out earlier, the YSA must take the lead in challenging what may appear as insignificant restrictions on student rights. An example of this work occurred in Detroit at Highland Park Community College where the YSA successfully sought the support of other campus groups in guaranteeing students the right to set up literature tables when and wherever they desired on campus.

At the University of Illinois-Circle Campus in Chicago we also successfully fought attempts by the administration to limit student rights to post leaflets and hold public conferences. Most recently, in Berkeley we helped spearhead a campaign by the University of California Female Liberation when the university attempted to victimize this group on phony obscenity charges.

GOVERNMENT ATTACKS

A second area of our defense work is our response to attacks by the government. By using the courts, the ruling class can attempt to destroy the leadership of the independent social movements, isolate them from mass support, and distort their ideas.

Government prosecution has demoralized and destroyed many radical organizations; such attacks are aimed not only at their particular victims but at intimidating all forms of mass dissent.

Many legal attacks have been leveled against the YSA during our history and it is crucial that we fully understand how to defend ourselves against this form of assault. The most serious attack came early in our history and placed the entire future of the YSA in jeopardy. That was the case of the Bloomington Three, which began in May, 1963, when the first indictments were brought against three YSAers at Indiana University in Bloomington. The ensuing defense campaign lasted for almost four years until December, 1966, when the indictments were finally dropped.

The case itself was based on the 1951 Indiana Anti-Communism Act, whose purpose was to "exterminate communists and communism and all and any teachings of the same." It was the brainchild of a local prosecutor named Hoadley who hoped to make a political career out of successfully railroading three YSAers to prison.

The YSA nationally threw full efforts into the defense of the three Bloomington comrades. Its campaign was not only a crucial victory for the YSA, but a lesson to other witchhunters who hoped to crush the new radicalization at its earliest stages in the 1960s. The defense strategy used in this case was a prime example of the Marxist approach to the defense of civil liberties.

The basic concepts of the defense campaign were reaching out to the broadest numbers of people, educating them to the issues involved in Hoadley's witchhunt, and winning their support for the defense efforts. A national legal defense committee, called the Committee to Aid the Bloomington Students (CABS), was formed to coordinate this work, with local chapters in every area of the country.

CABS was set up strictly on a civil liberties basis to publicize the facts of the case and raise funds for legal expenses. Its co-chairpeople were professors from Indiana University and Harvard. Bertrand Russell served as honorary chairperson. National leaders of the YSA helped to organize the day-to-day work of the national defense.

By the close of the case over 1,300 sponsors had been gained for the defense committee, including hundreds of prominent academic figures, unionists, Black leaders, etc., from all across the country. Scores of national organizations had expressed their outrage at Hoadley's witchhunting efforts, and thousands of dollars had been raised to help pay for the huge legal expenses during the various stages of the case.

As in any defense committee which the YSA helps build, the Committee to Aid the Bloomington Students acted strictly within the framework of its statement of purposes, kept signed sponsor cards, and published precise financial records.

The defendants' legal strategy was geared to show that the specific charges against the Bloom-

ington Three were false and to focus on the broader constitutional issues at stake. Leonard Boudin served as the chief defense attorney and helped coordinate the many legal aspects of the case in the context of the national defense campaign.

CABS organized national tours for the defendants that covered nearly all of the U.S. and Canada. The Bloomington Three were able to explain to thousands of students the importance of defending the right of students to hold dissenting ideas and why they were being victimized as YSAers.

Our victory in the Bloomington case was a landmark in the development of the YSA. Hoadley himself was forced to state, when he finally dropped the charges, that he had lost the battle for public opinion. Through this case the YSA educated the entire radical movement on how civil liberties could be successfully defended, and we helped deal a powerful blow to the witchhunt atmosphere that still prevailed on many campuses.

Not all governmental attacks on the radical movement, however, are directed through the actual court system, and the anticommunist apparatus set up in the early 1950s offers the ruling class an additional means for attempting to intimidate dissent. This method is most clearly illustrated by the current investigation of NPAC and the People's Coalition by the House Internal Security Committee.

Through red-baiting the government hopes to obscure the demands of the antiwar movement, prevent new sections of society from joining in the struggle, and if possible split the movement. NPAC's response to this attack was a model of how such attacks should be answered.

NPAC immediately called a broadly representative press conference in Washington to denounce the Committee's hearings as a McCarthyite three-ring circus, explaining the reasons for the government's attack and the fact that the antiwar movement was not about to exclude anyone.

Banner headlines such as those in the May 21 issue of *The San Diego Union* stating "RED GROUPS LINKED TO D. C. WAR PROTESTS" are vicious threats to our right to participate in the antiwar movement, and they must be answered immediately both by the organizations concerned and the YSA.

The YSA calls for the abolition of the House Internal Security Committee, the Subversive Activities Control Board, and all witchhunting apparatuses, and we must continue to educate masses of Americans about the vicious nature of such committees.

Similarly, our movement must be prepared to immediately answer red-baiting attacks from elements within the radical movement itself. Charges of communist domination, democratic centralist tyranny, and so on, must be exposed as witchhunting tactics that have no place in the radical movement and as attempts to avoid political discussion on questions where real disagreement lies.

EXTRALEGAL ATTACKS

Because of the deepening radicalization and the growing strength of the mass movements, we can expect certain right-wing organizations to attempt to counteract this process by physically attacking radical organizations. In order to prevent such assaults and defend ourselves most effectively if they do occur, it is necessary to evaluate what such right-wing attacks represent at this time.

Groups such as the Legion of Justice, the Los Angeles gusanos, and the Klan, which are striking out in desperation against the new radicalization, in no way represent an ascending fascist movement at this time. Their attacks represent a sign of their weakness, and they have been less and less able to win mass support throughout the 1960s.

While the ruling class as a whole spurs on such terrorist attacks through its war in Southeast Asia and oppression at home, at this time the authorities feel obligated to officially condemn such attacks. In fact, on occasion the state can even be forced to arrest and convict such terrorists.

One key example is Houston, where the developing mass movements have been held back because of the strength of the organized right wing. The police and city administration have acted in open complicity with right-wing groups such as the Klan, and during the past year over 20 different attacks occurred on antiwar, Black, Chicano, and liberal organizations and individuals without a single arrest being made.

The March 12 bombing of the SWP Campaign Headquarters and bookstore, however, marked the beginning of the first public defense campaign aimed at turning back and decisively defeating the terrorists. Following the attack, our movement immediately went on the offensive, organizing press conferences and seeking statements of support from nearly every radical and liberal organization in Houston. Political demands were raised by the SWP candidates for public office, including the removal of Police Chief Short, who had not solved any of the previous cases. We also demanded that the records of the Houston police and arson division be made public and that open hearings be held on the wave of terrorism. A special campaign fund appeal was also issued to ensure that a legitimate political party would not be silenced during an election campaign by right-wing terror.

The Committee to Defend Democratic Rights in Houston was launched at a large public meeting held at the University of Houston to condemn the bombings. The Committee was established to wage a public campaign to pressure the Houston city administration to secure the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the March 12 bombing of the SWP Campaign Headquarters.

I am sure that comrades have been carefully

following the developments of our defense campaign in Houston through *The Militant*, but I would like to point out that in the wake of the first attack, enormous pressure was exerted against our movement to force us to retreat. The police investigators and individual city councilmen publicly accused us of having bombed our own headquarters for publicity. Attempts were made to evict us from our headquarters, and a second armed attack was carried out against our headquarters right before April 24.

The fact that the campaign organized by the Committee to Defend Democratic Rights in Houston has already resulted in grand jury indictments of seven Klansmen for the attack on our headquarters and earlier attacks against other groups is testimony to this work. It is clear that we have already dealt an important first blow to the Klan and other terrorist organizations in Houston.

An armed attack on our movement is among the most serious threats to our continued existence, and it is important that we draw some of the lessons from the campaigns we have waged in this connection not only in Houston, but also in Los Angeles, Chicago, and other areas.

The most basic lesson is that we must launch the broadest possible defense campaign aimed at isolating the right-wing terrorists, winning mass support for our right to function openly and freely, and bringing massive public pressure to bear against the city administration and police to demand that they secure the arrest and then conviction of the responsible terrorists. By carrying out such a campaign, we will both reduce the likelihood of future attacks and expose the reluctance of the state to defend the most basic democratic rights of U.S. citizens.

We absolutely reject any tendency at this time toward arming our headquarters or turning them into impenetrable fortresses, as we have no romantic illusions whatsoever about either armed defense or underground revolutionary activity. The arming of a small socialist headquarters would not only be totally misunderstood by masses of people today but could even open us up to deadly assaults by the police on any one of a series of pretexts, as the police raid on the Chicago headquarters and the Black Panther Party experience showed.

Our primary tasks today are winning to our ranks the best activists of the mass movements and developing the cadre necessary to build a mass revolutionary socialist youth organization. We cannot allow isolated right-wing terrorists to force us into a semi-underground position where we board up our headquarters and are unable to present an open public face to newly radicalizing youth.

Any technical aspects of such a defense campaign, such as making sure that there are adequate locks or exits in our headquarters or organizing limited unarmed defense guards during local meetings following an attack, must be seen in the context of our primary means of defense:

organizing an all-out political campaign to defend our democratic rights.

In addition, it is just as important to respond immediately to any *threat* made against any section of the radical movement by right-wing organizations. If the YSA or any of the mass movements receives what we believe to be a serious threat in the mail, or is harassed in some other way, we want to immediately expose the threats as attacks on the democratic rights of everyone.

In such situations we should issue a press statement, notify the police, and publicize the meaning of the threats in the campus press. It is simply suicidal to attempt to ignore such threats; an immediate political response is the best way of ensuring that such harassment is ended and not escalated into an actual physical attack.

The YSAers in Ohio helped spearhead such a campaign when threats were first aimed at student activists and the antiwar movement in Columbus by Minutemen. A great deal of publicity was gained by their work in immediately calling press conferences and holding large campus meetings to expose such threats, and the right of the antiwar movement to organize without harassment became a key theme in the building of April 24 in Columbus.

ATTACKS WITHIN THE RADICAL MOVEMENT

Full democracy within the working class movement has always been a basic tenet of revolutionary Marxism. This tradition first began to break down in the mass social democratic parties due to the unwillingness of the trade union bureaucrats to tolerate challenges to their privileged positions within the workers' movement. With the rise of Stalinism this tradition of workers' democracy was also totally destroyed within the Soviet Union and the Stalinized Communist Parties around the world.

The YSA unconditionally supports the fullest freedom for all points of view to be discussed and acted upon within the radical movement. We vigorously condemn any form of antidemocratic intimidation, from deliberately shouting down speakers to attempts at physical violence as a substitute for democratic debate within the movement.

Violence within the movement can only give a handle to enemies of the radical movement to attack the movement, slander it, and take advantage of the physical assaults to set their own stool pigeons and agents provocateurs to work.

Our response to PL and SDS's attempts at physically disrupting the NPAC conference will be crucial in educating the entire radical movement about democratic functioning and the right of all radical organizations to conduct their meetings and conferences without physical disruptions.

Our primary task is to get out the facts on what happened at the NPAC conference and thereby scandalize PL and SDS before every part of the radical movement and the student movement as

a whole. We want to make it clear that the antiwar movement is open to every person opposing the war in Indochina, including SDSers and PLers, but that the antiwar movement cannot tolerate hooliganism aimed at shutting off political debate.

This campaign should be aimed at totally isolating PL and SDS within the student movement, demanding that their memberships repudiate such vicious attacks on the antiwar movement, and reaffirming the right of all radical organizations to hold conferences that are not broken up by physical assaults on the part of those who refuse to democratically discuss their political disagreements.

INCORRECT DEFENSE STRATEGIES

The YSA and SWP's defense policy is unique in the radical movement and has been developed through decades of experience in this area of the class struggle. I would like to recommend several books and pamphlets that further explain and concretize the concepts I have outlined in this report: first, James P. Cannon's writings in *Notebook of an Agitator*, *Letters from Prison*, and *What Policy for Revolutionists—Marxism or Ultra-Leftism?*, which discuss the International Labor Defense of the 1920s and the Minneapolis Civil Liberties Defense Committee during World War II; and second, the extremely valuable Education for Socialists Bulletin, *Defense Policies and Principles of the Socialist Workers Party*.

Our opponents all make fundamental errors in defense work, which are in essence derived from a lack of fully understanding three key principles: 1) that democratic rights are key victories of past struggles; 2) that these rights can only be ensured by the strength of mass movements against the ruling class; and 3) that building non-exclusive campaigns to defend these rights is a central aspect of the struggle for the basic transformation of this society.

Both ultraleftists and opportunists in essence take an abstentionist position in the face of attacks on civil liberties. Neither understands that democratic rights have been won in struggle and both view civil liberties as either tricks or gifts of the ruling class that can simply be withdrawn at any moment.

The old SDS provided one classic example of the ultraleft approach to defense. Just before the June, 1969, convention at which SDS shattered to pieces, *New Left Notes* printed an article on a struggle led by SDS at Kent State. They report:

"The repression at Kent State has clearly hurt us. Over 60 of our people have been banned from campus, at least 11 face heavy charges with total bail exceeding \$12,000, and the administration has succeeded at least to some extent in scaring a lot of people and obfuscating our original demands, and allowing the civil liberties whiz kids to spring up.

"On the other hand, SDS has made several key advances. We have fought and fought hard,

making it clear that we are serious and tough. We have constantly stressed the primacy of our four demands, maintaining that political repression is only an extension of the people's oppression, never getting hung up in the civil liberties or pro-student-privilege defense of our movement."

The logic of such a position is suicidal. To announce publicly that you are not willing to defend yourself when under attack is only asking for further and more harsh repression. Other campus ultraleftists, however, make very similar mistakes when they merely tack one or two defense slogans on to their full program or even tell students that the best way to defend democratic rights is strictly to support the demands the ultraleftists have raised on campus. By putting forth such a strategy, ultralefts pave the way for serious defeats and make it difficult to win mass student support for even their most basic democratic rights.

Opportunists likewise reject building a non-exclusive political defense of civil liberties and place their faith in appealing to the better judgement of the ruling class. Such a strategy is as disastrous as its ultraleft counterpart.

An opportunist approach inevitably tries to avoid the real political reasons for the government's attack. By being "reasonable" and not publicizing the facts of the case, the defendants play into the hands of the government, which always tries to hide the real political aims of its attack. Instead of forcing the government to realize that its attack will be exposed to millions of Americans as an attempt to crush political opposition, the defendants hope to win by convincing 12 jurors or some "good" judge of their innocence on the basis of strictly legal arguments. Unfortunately, without a massive campaign aimed at exposing the government, any courtroom strategy has severe limitations.

The YSA thus has a tremendous responsibility to explain our concepts of political defense to other activists in the radical movement, particularly when they come under attack. We should understand, however, that we do not currently have the forces to undertake major organizational responsibilities for defense cases that do not involve our members.

We want to aid all victims of political repression by writing articles in the campus press, sponsoring forums, and participating in demonstrations that we can support. We should be clear, however, that it is often very difficult to actively support certain cases when the defendants choose an ultraleft or opportunist strategy. In particular we must be careful not to become involved in local defense committees that violate our fundamental concepts of defense.

Our work in support of the defense of Angela Davis is an example of our principled civil liberties approach to all victims of political repression. Across the country we have organized forums on this case, publicized the importance of her defense in our campus election campaigns, and participated in united front rallies and demonstra-

tions in her defense. In particular our movement has made important contributions to Davis's defense by proposing that special speakers be included at the April 24 rallies to publicize her defense.

At the same time the YSA does not politically support the National United Committee to Free Angela Davis or its local chapters and we can take no responsibility whatsoever for the way the defense is being organized. Our movement draws a careful distinction between defense cases we support and the committees which are organizing the actual defense. If we did support a particular defense committee, leading members of the YSA would become sponsors of that committee, and such a decision would be made nationally. If questions arise about our attitude toward a particular defense case or committee, the best procedure is of course to consult with the National Office.

AVOIDING VICTIMIZATION

We have often pointed out that ultraleftists are wrong when they make a virtue out of defeats and repression. When attacks are successfully carried out against the radical movement it is a sign of weakness and not strength.

The YSA's strategy for the student movement and for all our work in the mass movements is one of mobilizing massive numbers of people, with the aim of preventing victimization and winning concrete victories. We totally reject the concept that legal victimization is a desirable outcome of any struggle.

We must continually educate on campus about the necessity of putting forward defensively-formulated demands that counterpose the just demands of students, women, or Blacks to the unwillingness of the university to meet the needs of the overwhelming majority of students. We must always show that it is the U.S. government above all that is the real source of violence here at home and throughout the world.

When we are attacked, however, the first thing that the local area should do is compile all the facts and then *immediately* call the National Office. There is no other area of our work that requires closer consultation and collaboration with the national center than defense work. The national center is in the best position to evaluate the significance of a particular attack, to see how it relates to other defense campaigns we are waging, and to transmit to the local area concrete lessons learned in other cases.

All major decisions in our defense work, such as a decision to launch a legal civil liberties defense committee or initiate court action, must be made in close consultation with the National Office.

It is also important that all local areas have close relations with competent civil liberties lawyers and that all YSAers know how to reach a lawyer immediately if it becomes necessary. It is important for us to develop such working relations with lawyers *before* a major attack oc-

curs.

As I pointed out earlier, we do everything in our power to make the legal or extralegal victimization of our organization as difficult as possible, and it is precisely for this reason that we do not contemplate any changes whatsoever in our current security policy that forbids the use of any illegal drugs by YSA members.

When our movement is attacked, the YSA must be in the best possible position to defend itself politically. We cannot give the ruling class any means whatsoever to victimize our organization or members on a seemingly non-political level where it would be impossible for us to launch a successful defense campaign.

The YSA's policy that no member of our organization can use illegal drugs or live with people who do use drugs is a basic stipulation for membership in our organization. This policy must be carefully explained to every person who wishes to join the YSA. If a YSAer is unwilling to carry out this security policy, then he or she is jeopardizing the entire organization and has no place in the YSA.

It is precisely in those areas of the country where there is widespread use of drugs that the police would first move against YSAers for using illegal drugs if they were ever given such an opportunity.

To emphasize the eagerness of the police to use such cases to victimize the radical movement, and therefore the seriousness with which we view this policy. I want to cite the example of Lee Otis, who was one of the leaders of the Black student movement at TSU in Houston. In order to crush the Black student movement, Lee Otis was framed up on drug charges, convicted, and then sentenced to 30 years in prison.

The national leadership and the entire YSA must be absolutely clear that there can be no exceptions made in carrying out this policy and in strictly enforcing it.

TASKS OF THE YSA

This fall our national campaign to defend student political rights must continue to be central to all our campus propaganda work. We want to challenge vigorously any restrictions of student rights by winning broad support for protest statements, meetings, and demonstrations.

In particular, because of the central importance of the 1972 SWP campaign to all areas of our work, we want to meet head on any attempts made by high school or college administrations to restrict students from supporting political candidates in the upcoming elections. Wherever necessary, the YSA must take the lead in struggling for the rights of students to form Young Socialists for Jenness and Pulley and to make full use of campus facilities and an uncensored student press.

Nationally, we will be supporting in the fall the Committee for Democratic Election Laws, and we will want to immediately begin winning campus support for the campaign to democratize all election laws. In addition, we will be carrying out

a major campaign aimed at challenging the continuing attempts to disfranchise students who attend school in cities where their parents do not live. We are already involved in such a case in our campaign for municipal offices in Worcester.

In carrying out the fall sub drive, our financial campaign, and in organizing regional conferences, it will be essential for the YSA to challenge restrictions on our right to sell *The Militant*, obtain honoraria, or hold public conferences.

A significant development has already occurred in the Ed Jurenas case in that the Army has transferred Jurenas to the Presidio military base in California. We cannot let up, however, on our campaign to protest the Army's threatened court-martial proceedings against Jurenas for exercising his constitutional rights in helping to prepare a GI antiwar newspaper.

If local areas have not already assigned a comrade to coordinate the Jurenas defense work, such an assignment should be made immediately. In particular we want to urge local NPAC and SMC chapters to launch a major campaign to have protest telegrams and letters sent to the Secretary of the Army in Washington, D. C., with copies to the GI Civil Liberties Defense Committee, demanding that the Army halt proceedings against Jurenas.

Our primary task in the Mandel case remains raising funds vitally needed to cover the considerable legal expenses of the case. The U. S. government is now appealing to the Supreme Court the favorable three-judge court decision to allow Mandel to visit this country. This case, which knocks out the exclusion provisions of the

McCarran-Walter Act, is of the utmost importance in guaranteeing Americans the right to hear the views of all international thinkers.

It is necessary to reiterate that every local should assign someone to head up our local fund raising efforts for the Mandel case in the fall or wherever campuses are open during the summer. This money is essential if the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee is to be able to carry through this case and future cases that are of the utmost importance to our movement.

The defense reports sent in to the National Office prior to the plenum made it clear that many locals had done little or nothing on this case. All the material on the case is available from the National Office, and funds raised should be sent to the Mandel Case Legal Defense Fund at the office of the NECLC.

Finally, we want to use the 1972 SWP campaign as a key means of expressing our support to Angela Davis, the Harrisburg Eight, the Kent 25, and other outstanding national defense cases.

RICH FINKEL
YSA National Office

Violence or Democracy in the Radical Movement?

The Student Mobilization Committee has launched a national campaign around the question of violence in the movement. This campaign is in response to the May 24th attack by members of Progressive Labor Party and SDS on the SMC national steering committee held in Boston. As leaders of the radical movement who understand and are committed to the principle of democracy within the movement, YSAers must play a central role in this campaign.

The SMC has put out two pieces of literature which local SMCs can use in gaining support for the campaign. One is a fact sheet which describes the attack on the steering committee meeting. This fact sheet should be circulated widely throughout the antiwar and radical movements in order to get out the facts of what really happened and to counter PL's and SDS's attempts to paint the incident as an attack on them. The second piece of material is a statement on the question of violence within the movement for which the SMC wants to get broad endorsement. In addition to coming out against the use of violence in the movement and for united defense of all movement meetings, the statement asks SDS and PLP to repudiate their actions of May 24th. The SMC statement should be taken to all kinds of organizations and individuals for endorsement: antiwar organizations, Third World and women's liberation groups, community organizations, high school groups, trade unions and civil liberties organizations, as well as professors, student government officers and movement figures. Attempts should be made to get the SMC fact sheet and statement printed in movement and underground papers.

This campaign can help educate the entire movement on why democratic norms must be protected and how the movement can defend itself against such violent attacks. It will be a *political* counteroffensive which will isolate PLP, SDS and any other group which resorts to goon squad methods. We want to convince every section of the movement that this attack against the SMC is a threat to the right of every group and organization in the antiwar, women's liberation, Third World, student and labor movements to function and carry on their activities.

An atmosphere must be created in which the politics of disruption will be totally alien and repulsive to the movement as a whole, and strongly fought against. To achieve this, the primary battle must be waged on the political front.

In addition to educating the movement on the need for democracy, a vigorous campaign will also have an effect on the rank-and-file of those groups which resort to strong-arm tactics. If the rank-and-file of these groups think their ideas are important enough, they will repudiate the use of violence in order to be able to present their ideas in groups like the SMC. We think that PL, SDS and all other groups should have the right to present their ideas within the SMC. But SMC decisions must be made democratically — by majority rule — rather than by physical force.

Disruptions and physical attacks, whether successful or not, create a feeling of demoralization and disorientation among many newly radicalized activists. Even if a meeting or demonstration is successfully defended against attack, the activity is disrupted to a certain extent — and this is the aim of the ultralefts. Therefore, our basic orientation should be to prevent all attempts of physical assaults by making those attacks devastating politically through instilling a determination among all movement activists to jealously guard their democratic rights.

We should discuss these problems thoroughly with the antiwar organizations and coalitions and with key individuals in the movement, urging groups and individuals to sign the SMC statement. If possible, we should try to involve PL, SDS or other ultraleft groups in these discussions. This will help create an atmosphere of discussion of political differences, as well as win activists to support for the SMC campaign.

The organization of marshals for rallies, demonstrations and meetings should be seen as an extension of this political defense.

The marshals, in order to have authority, must be politically representative of all sectors of the movement who believe in the right of any group to hold undisrupted demonstrations, rallies and

meetings. Marshals, in other words, should not be selected solely on the basis of how big they are. If the marshals are representative their mere presence can often prevent ultraleft groupings from attempting to disrupt a movement function, because the marshals testify to the fact that the vast majority of the movement is against violence within the movement and is willing to unite against it. When the ultralefts see that they are up against the entire movement they may realize that they will lose more politically from an attempted assault than they will gain.

Assuring adequate marshaling, i. e., marshals who are as representative as possible, who understand the necessity of defending the right of democracy and who understand that acting as marshals has nothing to do with looking for revenge, is necessary to defend movement meetings and activities from ultraleft attacks.

If comrades have not read "On Workers Democracy" by Ernest Mandel (see order blank below) they should do so right away. Passing out this four-page flyer at mass meetings and making it available on literature tables will help make our position clear on the question

of democracy within the movement. The YSA's participation in the SMC campaign can help educate the entire left on the necessity for democratic norms in the mass movements.

PL, SDS and most ultraleft groups have never printed their position on the question of democracy in the movement for obvious reasons. Few other organizations have ever made their positions clear either. The position of revolutionary socialists, however, is clear: We unequivocally stand for and are willing to fight for the right of workers democracy.

CAROLINE LUND
YSA National Executive Committee

YSA National Executive Committee Statement

A serious and dangerous problem confronts the entire American radical movement. Exemplified by the physical attack on the May 24 Student Mobilization Committee national steering committee meeting by members of the Progressive Labor Party and Students for a Democratic Society, this problem is the substitution of physical violence for political discussion within the radical movement.

The Young Socialist Alliance extends its complete solidarity to the campaign initiated by the SMC to eliminate the use of violence within the movement.

There are four principal reasons for our serious concern about the use of violence inside the movement:

1) We must not lose sight of the real enemy. Our main enemy is the capitalist system and the ruling class, the architects and defenders of the South East Asian war, racism, poverty and the oppression of women. Any group with which we have differences about how to fight this system is not our enemy. It is self-defeating for the movement to devour itself instead of turning its energies against the enemy we have in common, despite our differing political approaches.

2) Our goal is to reach the masses of the American people. Today the antiwar movement has reached the stage of beginning to draw these masses into active struggle against the war. The employment of violent physical force within the movement can confuse these newly radicalizing forces, and delay their joining in action which they are ready to join in right now. In order for the antiwar movement, as well as the Third World and women's liberation movements, to grow and attract masses of people, it must be clear that we aim our attack at the government and not at each other.

3) There are many important issues posed before the antiwar, Third World liberation and women's liberation movements today--questions of orientation and program, of strategy and tactics. A free and open atmosphere of democratic discussion must exist for activists to be able to work out and choose the positions they take on these issues. Coercion cannot resolve the differences which exist; instead, it makes such resolution impossible. We cannot allow a climate of intimidation to interfere with the democratic decision-making process of the movement.

4) What is involved here is the democratic right of the various sections of the movement to organize

themselves, carry out activities, and, in the last analysis, to exist. While we feel that the YSA has the correct political perspective for bringing about a revolutionary change in this country, we do not feel that any organization has a monopoly of the truth. Only a politically sterile organization needs to resort to force to convince others of its ideas, or can believe that it can eliminate ideas with which it disagrees through violence.

Any group of people within the movement must have the right to hold its own meetings and to decide how they will be conducted—who will be invited, of what the agenda will consist and any other matters on which it chooses to decide. Even in the case of meetings which practice indefensible exclusion of political tendencies from coalitions or united fronts, force must not be used to break into or disrupt meetings of groups within the movement. All differences within the movement should be settled politically—in debate and practice—not physically.

The YSA urges all organizations in the radical movement to join in condemning the attack on the national SMC meeting in Boston and to join in condemning all use of violence within the movement. Together we must create an atmosphere in which any part of the movement attempting to use violence against any other part of the movement is politically isolated for doing so. We will participate, when necessary, in united defense of the right of the antiwar movement or any other section of the movement to hold meetings, conduct demonstrations and carry out its activities if that right is threatened by physical force.

We call upon members of SDS and PL, as well as the organizations themselves, to repudiate the vicious attempt made by some of their members to disrupt the May 24 national SMC meeting.

Columbus Antiwar Defense

The Columbus defense work is different from that undertaken in Houston, Chicago and Los Angeles, because it is defense activity aimed at politically combating threats which have not yet escalated into violent attacks.

Harassment of the antiwar and radical movements in the form of such threats may be more commonplace than coverage in either the movement or bourgeois press would indicate. This is because in areas where there are no revolutionary socialists or others who understand the importance of defense work, such threats go by without becoming the occasion for a public defense.

Even antiwar activists sometimes suffer from the misconception, a remnant of the McCarthy era, that those who engage in political activity are exposing themselves to continuous harassment and can expect no support from the public. The end result of this misconception is that the chances are increased that such threats will escalate into physical attacks.

A lack of response is not "keeping cool." The antiwar movement must take the initiative in mobilizing masses of people against the official terrorization and brutalization that the U. S. government employs abroad. But the antiwar movement must also take the initiative in mobilizing public support for its right to function when threats to this right are received. Properly combated, these threats can serve as the occasion for building the antiwar movement.

The first threat in Columbus was in the form of a list of 93 names marked for "political assassination." The list included campus student leaders, YSAers, Black activists and even some people with almost no record of political activism. Subsequent threats, in the form of handwritten notes on the backs of various pictures of weapons, were taped to the doors of Julie Bingham, co-chairperson of the Columbus Peace Action Coalition (COPAC) and the SMC, and a member of the YSA, and Phil Schultz, co-chairperson of COPAC. A bomb threat was also received by COPAC during this period.

It is possible that further threats were also directed against others on the list of 93, but these threats were not reported to COPAC despite its appeal for information concerning the harassment of political activists. Several of the ultra-lefts on the list responded by painting cross-hairs on their foreheads, indicating either a sense of frivolity about the threats, or a sense of doom, or perhaps both. When later threats were received, however, this attitude tended to vanish.

COPAC and the SMC attempted to set an example for the student movement at Ohio State University on how to conduct a defense and why it should be taken seriously. The Young Socialist Alliance sent its regional organizer into Columbus; the Cincinnati YSA local freed a leading comrade to work on the defense in Columbus; and the Ohio April 24 Committee sent its regional traveler into Columbus to ensure that the Columbus antiwar movement would not be slowed down in building the April 24 actions during this period.

COPAC and the SMC helped to turn the response to the threats from a joke into a concern of the entire OSU community. The Columbus police also regarded the threats as a joke. The police lieutenant who was in charge of the investigation stated in his initial release on the list of 93 names: "It is not beyond possibility that someone on the list circulated the list."

This statement was immediately exposed as a reflection of the police department's unwillingness to defend the civil liberties of the student and antiwar movements. Through publicly exposing the police, COPAC and the SMC managed to pressure the police department into stating its intention to carry out a serious investigation.

COPAC and the SMC were able to expose the police by demanding a full investigation of the right-wing threats. The fact that COPAC and the SMC were making evidence and clues available to the police was publicized by the OSU *Lantern*, so that the antiwar movement could not be accused of obstructing the investigation. At one point, an ultraleft told us that he could see that it was more effective to publicly call for police action, but, "It's against our morals to deal with the police." This ultraleft position was essentially a veil for abstentionism.

Before subsequent threats were discovered, various members of the press and elements within the student community raised the spectre that the antiwar movement was just "using" this issue to advance its name. We pointed out that if the struggle to extend the right of free speech and political activity won credit for those who fought for civil liberties and discredited those who would limit them with threats of violence—then this was only as it should be.

The antiwar movement in Columbus has made great gains as a result of taking the initiative in combating these threats. COPAC has been able to involve lawyers, professors and community

groups in its activity, and has consolidated itself as a coalition more quickly as a result of its appeals to various sections of the community for help in defense activity. In addition to this, Ohio State University YSAers have been able to distinguish themselves as leading student activists for their participation in the defense campaign.

Press relations between the local press and the antiwar movement were improved as a result of the defense work. The campaign received almost daily coverage in the OSU *Lantern*, which is distributed to over 46,000 students. On three separate occasions, COPAC received coverage on all three major TV stations in Columbus, during the one week period when defense activity was most intense. There were also several articles in the daily press and regular coverage on the radio.

One question that came up in the course of our defense activity was whether or not COPAC and the SMC should initiate a defense committee in

response to these threats. The decision to call for a defense committee means the commitment of responsible political personnel to staff the committee, and the serious solicitation of funds and sponsors, as well as stepped up activity in the areas of publicity and research. For these reasons, a projection for a defense committee should be based on the probability of sustained defense activity over a long period of time and with national attention if necessary. In Columbus, the antiwar movement decided not to set up a defense committee, but it is prepared to initiate such a committee if right-wing activity escalates into further attacks on the antiwar movement.

DAVID SALNER
Cleveland YSA

HOW HOUSTON DEFENSE AGAINST KLAN TERROR WAS BUILT

By PAUL McKNIGHT

HOUSTON—Houston, with a population of 1.3 million, is the largest city in the South and the sixth largest in the United States. The small, wealthy, white ruling class here has maintained a virtual monopoly on the political life of the city. One good example of the political reality in Houston is that although the population is 30 percent Black and 15 percent Chicano, not one elected city official is either Black or Brown.

One incident that is part of Houston's violent heritage is the 1967 shoot-up by hundreds of cops of the student dormitories of Texas Southern University, a Black school.

Last summer, snipers from the Criminal Intelligence Division (CID) of the Houston Police Department assassinated Carl Hampton, a leader of People's Party II, a militant Black organization, during a police-initiated confrontation.

Frame-ups of activists are common in Houston. The most famous case is that of Lee Otis Johnson, a Black political leader who was sentenced to 30 years in prison for allegedly handing another person one marijuana cigarette, which under Texas law would constitute a "sale."

In another case, two Black student activists were persuaded by a mysterious person to purchase dynamite for him in a nearby town. Several police watched them make the purchase, after the store had been instructed by the Houston Police Department to sell them the dynamite. A police helicopter followed the students back to town where they were arrested and subsequently sentenced to 25 years in prison.

The antiwar movement here is restricted by a City Council ordinance requiring exorbitant fees to hold a march or distribute leaflets.

This type of legal repression, which occurs to some degree in all cities, is combined in Houston with an extralegal variety of repression which, until now, the city administration has encouraged by refusing to act against it. This extralegal repression serves the same purpose as the official variety, i.e., to prevent or discourage any challenge to the status quo. It generally comes in the form of terrorism directed against liberal, antiwar and socialist organizations.

There are several small, secretive right-wing

groups that maintain good relations with the police and are generally acknowledged to be responsible for Houston's right-wing terrorism. Over the past five years, tires have been slashed, cars have been bombed and shot up, homes and offices have been burned and shot up, and activists have received a steady stream of threatening phone calls. The listener-sponsored Pacifica radio station has had its transmitter blown up twice. Any person or organization that stands up to protest any aspect of the oppressive status quo immediately becomes a prime target for the terrorists.

This terrorism has had the effect of dampening the development of the radicalization in Houston. The antiwar movement here has remained relatively small for so large a city. The largest antiwar demonstration to date has drawn only 3,000 people.

This repressive atmosphere has also had its effect on the city's working class. Only 15 percent of the work force is unionized.

Until this year, the terrorism had continued without being challenged in any organized fashion. The staff of *Space City!*, a radical newspaper published in Houston, courageously endured many months of threats, harassment and terrorist acts. Pacifica radio rebuilt its transmitter twice through massive fund drives. Antiwar leader Fred Brode built a sandbag wall in front of his house to stop the bullets.

The fight to reverse this climate of terrorism began last October when two known Klansmen, James Hutto and Louis Beam, were stopped by police around 4 a.m. while driving with their lights off in the neighborhood of the *Space City!* offices. Their car contained literature, semiautomatic rifles and carbines, ammunition, walkie-talkies and some flammable liquid. They were released with no charges shortly after being taken to the police station. Members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Houston Committee to End the War quickly organized a united front news conference at which more than 15 individuals and representatives of organizations protested the release of Hutto and Beam and raised publicly the "adulterous relationship between the Houston police and the KKK."

The next and most important step in the fight

against right-wing terrorism began March 12, the day the SWP headquarters was severely damaged by a pipe bomb. Statements of protest were solicited and received from a wide variety of groups, including the local Republican and Democratic parties and antiwar, Black, women's liberation, and student groups. Four newspapers carried editorials denouncing the bombing. A protest meeting held under the slogan "Stop the Bombings" was attended by 75 people, who heard a panel of 12 activists and/or victims of previous terrorist attacks protest the inaction of the city administration.

The Committee to Defend Democratic Rights in Houston (CDDRH) was formed at this meeting. Its stated purpose is to wage a public campaign to pressure the city administration to take action against the terrorists. Since then, the public meetings of the City Council have been barraged by speakers demanding such action. These speakers have included SWP candidates, professors, student leaders, spokespersons for the CDDRH, women's liberationists, and antiwar activists.

The SWP views the bombing of its offices as a threat to its very right to exist. It therefore undertook to help mobilize everyone possible to force the city administration to act. The forces were there all along; they just needed to be organized into an effective antiterrorist campaign.

In the course of this campaign, the SWP has come to be recognized by the mass media, the movement, the public, and right-wingers as a central force in the fight to put the terrorists out of business. Since the bombing, SWP candidates or spokespeople have frequently appeared or been quoted on TV, radio and in the newspapers. SWP mayoral candidate Debby Leonard is constantly being called by reporters for comments on developments in the fight. When police finally arrested klansman Mike Lowe at 4 a.m., May 23, on

charges of possessing the makings of a bomb, Leonard was called at 5 a.m. by a reporter for a statement on the arrest.

One of the highlights of the media coverage of the struggle has been a series of two televised debates between Debby Leonard and Klan Grand Dragon Frank Converse.

The fact that the terrorists see the SWP as the prime force behind the campaign to stop them is clear from their machine-gunning of the SWP headquarters May 14, two months after the bombing. The grand jury investigation of planned violence, which was initiated as a result of the public uproar since the bombing of the SWP offices, is a major step forward in the fight to decisively defeat these marauders.

A decisive victory in Houston will have major repercussions throughout the South, where there are still many areas in which Klan night riders and vigilantes are tolerated or encouraged by like-minded public officials. Internationally, the KKK is perhaps the most widely known symbol of racist reaction within the U.S. A decisive defeat of the Klan in Houston will not go unnoticed abroad.

Perhaps the most important result of a victory against the terrorists will be felt in Houston itself. If the Klan is put out of action, the radicalization, which is being held back here by the terrorism and the accompanying climate of fear, will be given a big boost.

On Workers Democracy

by Ernest Mandel

[Roger Garaudy, one of the leading intellectuals of the Communist party of France, visited Belgium November 5 to give a lecture on "May 1968 in France," at the request of the Communist Student Union of Brussels University. It was not surprising that radical students considered a lecture on this topic by a representative of the French CP as a provocation.

[In any case, when the meeting started, a few dozen Maoists carrying portraits of Chairman Mao and anarchists carrying a black flag persistently tried—for the most part successfully—to prevent Garaudy from addressing the audience.

[A confused debate followed in which the question of whether Garaudy should be allowed to speak was mixed with the question of whether or not a revolutionary situation had existed in France in May.

[Finally, the Maoists and anarchists ended the debate by pushing Garaudy out of the meeting hall.

[This incident raised serious questions about the norms of democratic debate and behavior in the working

class and socialist movement. In answer to some of the questions raised, Ernest Mandel, the well-known Marxist economist and editor of the Belgian socialist weekly *La Gauche*, wrote an article on the subject of workers democracy which appeared in two parts in the November 16 and November 23 issues of *La Gauche*. Because of the timeliness of the topic, we are reproducing the article below. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

The lamentable incidents which occurred at the ULB [Universitaire Libre de Bruxelles—Free University of Brussels] when Garaudy came to speak there have induced me to explain once again why we adhere to the principles of workers democracy.

Workers democracy has always been a basic tenet of the proletarian movement. It was a tradition in the socialist and communist movement to firmly support this principle in the time of Marx and Engels as well as Lenin and Trotsky. It took the Stalinist dictatorship in the USSR to shake this tradition. The temporary victory

of fascism in West and Central Europe also helped to undermine it. However, the origins of this challenge to workers democracy are deeper and older; they lie in the bureaucratization of the large workers organizations.

The Social Democratic and trade-union bureaucrats were the first to begin to undermine the principles of workers democracy. They started calling general membership meetings at infrequent intervals. Then they began to rig them, or often to do away with them altogether. They began likewise to restrict or abolish freedom of discussion and criticism within their organizations. They did not hesitate even to appeal to the police (including the secret police) for help in fighting revolutionary minorities. At the time of the first world war, the German Social Democracy set a dismal example of collusion with the state repressive forces. In subsequent years, the Social Democrats everywhere followed this example.

The Soviet bureaucracy first and then the bureaucrats in the Stalinist Communist parties (or in trade unions



Lenin and Trotsky, leaders of the Bolshevik Party, consistently fought for the principles of proletarian democracy.

under Stalinist leadership) simply followed the pattern established by the Social Democrats, extending it further and further. They abolished freedom of discussion and of tendencies. Slander and lies replaced argument and debate with opponent tendencies. They made massive use of physical force to prevent their opponents from "causing any harm." Thus, the entire Bolshevik old guard which led the October Revolution and the majority of the members of Lenin's Central Committee were exterminated by Stalin during the dark years of the Great Purge (1935-38).

The young generation of anti-imperialist and anticapitalist militants now developing a revolutionary consciousness are spontaneously returning to the traditions of workers democracy. This was apparent in France in May and June when freedom of speech for all tendencies was jealously safeguarded in the assemblies of students and revolutionary workers and students. But this new generation is not always conscious of all the principled and practical reasons for workers democracy.

This is why the youth can be vulnerable to a kind of Stalinist-derived demagoguery being spread by certain pro-Chinese sects, which seek to make people believe that workers democ-

racy is contrary to "the interests of the revolution." Therefore, it is necessary to reaffirm these reasons strongly.

The workers movement fights for the emancipation of the proletariat. But this emancipation requires the abolition of *all* forms of exploitation to which the workers are subjected. Rejecting workers democracy means quite simply that you want to maintain a situation like the one today in which the masses of workers are unable to make their opinions heard.

The Marxist critique of bourgeois democracy starts from the idea that this democracy is only *formal* because the workers do not have the material means to exercise the rights which the bourgeois constitutions formally grant all citizens. Freedom of the press is just a formality when only the capitalists and their agents are able to get together the millions of dollars needed to establish a daily newspaper.

But the conclusion that follows from this critique of bourgeois democracy, obviously, is that means must be created enabling *all* the workers to have access to the media for disseminating ideas (printing presses, meeting halls, radio and television, posters, etc.). If, on the contrary, you conclude from this that only a self-proclaimed "leading party of the proletariat" — or even a little sect which declares that it alone

is "genuinely revolutionary" — has the right to speak, to use the press, or to propagate its ideas, then you risk increasing the political oppression of the workers rather than abolishing it.

The Stalinists often reply that abolition of the capitalist system equals emancipation of the workers. We agree that abolition of private ownership of the means of production, of the profit economy, and of the bourgeois state are essential conditions for the emancipation of the workers. But saying that these are "essential" conditions does not mean that they are "sufficient." Because as soon as the capitalist system is abolished, the question arises of who is going to run the factories, the economy, the municipalities, the state, the schools and universities.

If a single party claims the right to administer the state and the society; if it imposes a monopoly of power by terror; if it does not permit the mass of workers to express their opinions, their criticisms, their worries, and their demands; if it excludes the workers from administration — then it is inevitable that a widening gulf will develop between this omnipotent bureaucracy and the mass of workers.

Then, emancipation of the workers is only a deception. And without real workers democracy in all areas, including freedom of organization and

press, real emancipation of the workers is impossible.

These principled reasons are reinforced by practical ones. Like all social classes in history, the working class is not homogeneous. It has common class interests, both immediate interests and historical interests. But this *community* of interests is interwoven with *differences* which have various origins—immediate special interests (professional, group, regional, craft interests, etc.) and different levels of consciousness. Many strata of the working class have not yet become conscious of their historical interests. Others have been influenced by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies. Still others are weighed down by the burden of past defeats and failures, of skepticism, or of the degradation caused by capitalist society, etc.

However, the capitalist system cannot be overthrown unless the entire working class is mobilized in action against it. And this unity in action can only be obtained if these various special interests and levels of consciousness can be expressed in, and little by little neutralized through, debate and persuasion. Denying this diversity can only result in a breakdown of unity in action and in driving successive groups of workers into passivity or into the camp of the enemy.

Anyone with experience in strikes has been able to see in practice that the most successful actions are prepared and conducted through numerous assemblies, first of the unionized workers and later of all the workers concerned. In these assemblies, all the reasons in favor of the strike can be developed, all opinions can be expressed, and all the class enemy's arguments can be exposed. If a strike is launched without the benefit of such democracy, there is much more risk that many workers will observe it halfheartedly, if at all.

If this is true for an isolated strike, it holds all the more for a general strike or for a revolution. All the great revolutionary mobilizations of the workers—from the Russian revolution to the revolutionary upsurge of May and June 1968 in France and including the German and Spanish revolutions, to cite only these examples—have been characterized by ver-

itable explosions of workers democracy. In these instances, many working-class tendencies coexisted, expressed themselves freely in speeches and in the press, and debated before the entire class.

The word "soviet"—council of workers delegates—expresses this unity of opposites—the *unity* of the workers in the diversity of their tendencies. In the Second Congress of Russian Soviets, which took power in the October Revolution, there were a dozen different tendencies and parties. Every attempt to repress this workers democracy—by the Social Democracy in Germany, by the Stalinists in Spain—has presaged, if not expressed, a setback or defeat for the revolution.

The absence of workers democracy not only hampers unity in action, it also obstructs working out a correct political line.

It is true that the workers movement has an excellent theoretical instrument to guide it in the often extremely complicated twists and turns of economic, social, and political struggles—revolutionary Marxism. But this tool must still be used correctly. And no one person has a monopoly on its correct application.

Without any doubt, Marx and Lenin were geniuses. But life and history ceaselessly pose new problems which cannot be solved simply by turning to the scriptures. Stalin, who was considered by many honest Communists before his death to be "infallible," in reality committed many errors, to say nothing of crimes, some of which—as in agricultural policy—have had pernicious consequences for three decades for the entire Soviet people. Mao Tse-tung, whom other naive souls also consider "infallible," endorsed the policy of Aidit, the leader of the Indonesian CP, up until the eve of the military coup d'etat. This policy was at least partially responsible for the deaths of 500,000 Indonesian Communists and workers.

As for the myth that the Central Committee of a party is "always right," or that the majority of this committee is "always right," Mao himself rejected it in the famous resolution passed by the CC of the CCP [Chinese Communist party] on the "cultural revolution" in April 1967.

But if no person or group has a monopoly on truth and wisdom, then

discussion is *indispensable* to determine a correct political line. Rejection of discussion under any pretext (and the pretext that a political opponent is "counterrevolutionary" or an "enemy agent" is as old as bureaucracy), or substituting epithets or physical violence for debate, means condemning oneself to remain the victim of false ideas, inadequate analyses, and errors with debilitating if not catastrophic consequences.

Marxism is a guide to action, they often say. That is true. But Marxism is distinguished from utopian socialism by its appeal to *scientific* analysis. It does not focus on action per se. It focuses on action which can influence historical reality, which can change it in a given direction—in the direction of socialist revolution, toward the emancipation of the workers and of all humanity.

Out of the clash of ideas and tendencies, the truth emerges which can serve as a guide to action. Action inspired by "monolithic," bookish, and infantile thought—which is not subjected to the uninhibited criticism possible only in a climate of workers democracy—is condemned to certain failure. It can only result, in the case of small groups, in the disillusionment and demoralization of individuals; in the case of unions or larger parties, in defeats for the class; and where the mass of the workers is concerned, in defeats with a long train of humiliations, privations, and impoverishment, if not casualties.

Often these arguments in favor of the principles and practice of workers democracy are countered in Stalinist circles by the assertion that workers democracy cannot be extended to the "enemies of socialism" inside the workers movement. Curiously, certain groups which claim to be antibureaucratic and very left take a similar line to justify booing and hissing or resorting to physical violence as a substitute for debate with their political opponents.

Both the Stalinists and the ultra-leftists cry: "You don't argue with revisionists, capitalist forces, and the representatives of the enemy." In practice, the Stalinists try to replace debate by repression, if not murder and the use of tanks against the workers (from the Moscow Trials to the intervention in Hungary and Czechoslo-

vakia). The ultraleftists limit themselves more modestly to preventing Garaudy from speaking, doubtless until the dreamed-of day when they can use more "effective" means modeled on the Stalinist ones. . . .

Of course, the working-class bureaucracies objectively act in the interests of capital, primarily by channeling the workers' periodic revolutionary explosions toward reformist outlets and thereby blocking opportunities to overthrow capitalism. They play the same role by influencing the workers on a day-to-day basis in favor of class collaboration, undermining their class consciousness with ideas taken from the bourgeois world.

But the objective function and role of these bureaucracies is not confined to maintaining class peace. In pursuing their routine reformist activities, they come in conflict with the everyday interests of capitalism. The wage increases and social welfare laws won by the reformists—in exchange for their pledge to keep the workers' demands within limits that do not threaten the bases of the system—reduce the capitalists' profits somewhat. The trade-union organizations which they lead inject the collective power of labor into the daily relationships between the bosses and the workers. And as a result, these conflicts have an altogether different outcome from the past century, when the strength of the trade unions was slight or nonexistent.

When the capitalist economy is flourishing, the bourgeoisie is willing to pay the price represented by these concessions in return for "social peace." But when the capitalist economy is in a bad way, these same concessions rapidly become unacceptable to the bourgeoisie. Then, it is in the capitalists' interest to eliminate these organizations completely, even the most moderate and reformist ones. The very existence of the unions becomes incompatible with the survival of the system.

This shows the real nature of the reformist bureaucracy in the workers movement. This bureaucracy is not composed of owners of capital who buy labor power in order to appropriate surplus value. It is composed of salaried employees (of the workers organizations or the state) who vacillate and waver between the camp of

capital and of the proletariat, sometimes leaning toward one, sometimes toward the other, depending on their particular interests and the pressures to which they are subjected. And, in facing the class enemy, the vanguard workers have every reason to do their utmost to force these bureaucrats to return to their camp. Otherwise, the common defense would be greatly weakened.

Overlooking these elementary truths leads to the worst of catastrophes. The workers movement learned this to its cost during the rise of fascism. At that time, the "genius" Stalin invented the theory of "Social Fascism." According to this theory there was no difference between the "revisionist" Social Democrats and fascists. It was even proclaimed that the Social Democracy had to be defeated *before* the struggle against the Nazis could be won.

While the Social Democratic and Communist workers were happily bashing each other's heads in—the reformist leaders shared the responsibility this time equally with their Stalinist counterparts—Hitler came to power, massacred thousands of worker militants, and dissolved all the workers organizations. Thus, he made possible a temporary, if somewhat embittered, reconciliation between the Social Democrats and the Communists . . . in the concentration camps. Would it not have been better, while not making any concessions in the ideological struggle against revisionism, to fight together against the Nazis and prevent them from taking power?

On an infinitely smaller and less tragic scale, the situation in the university can lead to a dilemma of the same type overnight. All the left tendencies are fighting to gain recognition of their right to carry on "political activities" on the campus. But it is quite possible that the administration will take the incidents surrounding Garaudy's visit as a pretext for banning any more political lectures. What other course, then, is there but to fight together to win minimum political freedom in the university? Would it not be preferable to respect the rules of workers democracy from now on, since they conform to the common interests of the workers movement and the student confrontation movement?

In 1957, in response to the official revelation of Stalin's crimes made at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party (which he approved of at the time), Mao Tse-tung stressed the necessity of distinguishing carefully between how to settle differences among the people—by persuasion, debate, practical experience—and how to proceed in conflicts with the class enemy. Here he was only implicitly reaffirming the need to uphold workers democracy "among the people."

But this distinction has meaning only if it is based on *objective* criteria. The capitalists (and in less industrialized countries, the landlords) are the enemy. The people are the mass of producers, whitecollar workers, and, in semicolonial countries, the poor peasants.

If subjective criteria ("Anybody who doesn't support every one of my tactical turns is a capitalist and a counterrevolutionary, even if he served as president of the People's Republic of China and vice-chairman of the Chinese Communist party for twenty years!") are substituted for these objective criteria, then you fall into complete arbitrariness. You end, of course, by wiping out the distinction between "contradictions among the people" and "conflicts with the class enemy," treating the former more and more like the latter.

Of course, it is impossible to make an absolute and total separation between the two. Marginal cases are possible. We advocate frank debate in meetings of strikers. We do not think that we need restrict ourselves to polite discussion with strikebreakers.

In every marginal case, however, we must distinguish acts (or crimes) from opinions and ideological tendencies. Acts must be proved and judged according to clearly established, well-defined criteria of the workers' interest (or after the overthrow of capitalism, of socialist legality) so as to prevent arbitrariness. Failure to distinguish between acts and opinions can only result in extinguishing workers democracy, lowering the level of consciousness and mobilization of the workers, and progressively robbing the revolutionists themselves of their ability to orient themselves politically. . . . □

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consists in knowing
what to do next...**

James P Cannon