

YSA

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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Struggle For A Socialist America

30 cents

YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

YSA, BOX 471, COOPER STATION, N.Y., N.Y. 10003

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Black Nationalism And The Struggle For A Socialist America

Black nationalism continues to deepen in the Afro-American community. This is exemplified by the ghetto rebellions, the widespread popularity of the ideas of Malcolm X, the fracturing of the civil rights movement, the development of the movement for black power, the new black consciousness that is sweeping the nation's colleges and universities, the growing tendency among black militants to view the struggle for black freedom in an international framework, and the evolution of nationalists like Carmichael, Rap Brown, James Forman into explicit opponents of capitalism. Thus, the thesis, advanced by Leon Trotsky in Nationalism and Self-Determination and by George Breitman in How a Minority Can Change Society, that the 22 million blacks residing in the United States will be in the very vanguard of the struggle for the socialist transformation of American society, has finally begun to descend from the realm of anticipation into the realm of living reality. This constitutes a giant step forward toward the third American revolution.

The 22 million Afro-Americans will not only be in the vanguard of the American revolution, but will be a key element in the final victory of the world revolution. Since the biggest obstacle to the world revolution is North American imperialism, the social group that is central in the task of destroying U.S. imperialism in its homeland, will also be central in providing revolutionary leadership for the world. This is foreshadowed by the impact that Malcolm X had in Africa, Europe, and Japan, and the impact that Carmichael is having in Latin America, Europe and Asia.

It is no accident that Afro-Americans will assume a vanguard role. That role has been in the making for the last 400 years. It began when the first shipload of slaves was brought from Africa into the wilderness of North America. North American capitalism was nourished upon the trading of black Africans into slavery. The ideological premise of slavery was that the black man is not a human being but an animal, a super-exploitable beast of burden. It was from the slave trade that North American and European capitalism accumulated much of the necessary capital for the beginnings of manufacture and industry. The peculiar thing about North American capitalism was that it found it useful to keep one half of the country under the slave system in order to get through this initial period.

After the slave system was overthrown, it was still in the interest of the ruling class to perpetuate racism in order to reap the benefits of the continued super-exploitation of black people and to better "divide and rule" the working class as a whole. Racism was also used to justify the imperialist subjugation of non-white peoples. The capitalists cannot abolish racism in this country because it serves their interests to maintain and perpetuate it. This basic fact pushes the struggles of black people toward an anti-capitalist, pro-socialist path. Racism cannot be destroyed unless capitalism is dismantled, and socialism cannot be established until racism is destroyed. Thus the problems of black people will not be completely solved until massive numbers of white workers move into action, and

the problems of white workers will not be solved until they forge a unity with black people in action against the ruling class. Since blacks constitute the vanguard, it will never be incumbent upon them to dilute the militancy of their struggle in order to forge a unity with white workers.

Any organization in the United States that calls itself revolutionary, and sets out to radically transform this society, must have a profound comprehension and appreciation of the dynamics of the Afro-American liberation struggle. Any organization which lacks such understanding and appreciation, or is defective in its analysis of the black struggle, will simply not have what it takes to lead the American revolution. This is why the YSA considers a correct analysis of the black struggle to be of paramount importance. If organizational unity is to be forged among black and white revolutionary youth, it will be in an organization that is unequivocal and sincere in its opposition to racism and white paternalism. Paternalism has been the form in which racism has historically masqueraded itself in "radical" circles.

The Dual Nature of the Black Liberation Struggle

All wisdom on the black struggle begins with the recognition that black people suffer a dual oppression, national oppression based on racial difference and class oppression. The two are inextricably linked. Black people are oppressed because of the color of their skin and because they hold membership in the working class.

White capitalist society has inflicted cultural genocide upon black people for the last four centuries. It has relegated black people to the rock bottom of capitalist society. It has been able to fulfill the "American dream" in respect to white European immigrants and has restricted black people to urban reservations called ghettos. Thus it is white capitalist society itself that is responsible for creating the fertile ground for the growth of black nationalism, the healthy response of black people to their conditions arising out of the slave system of the West.

Black nationalism is a specific historical phenomenon, different from the bourgeois nationalism of the 18th and 19th centuries, and possessing many similarities to the nationalism of the oppressed peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The bourgeois nationalism of the 18th and 19th centuries involved a struggle by the bourgeoisie to destroy the local feudal lords and to unite the localities into one nation, constituting people who spoke a similar language and had a similar tradition and culture. This nation then served as the basis for a free trade market in which there were no tariffs or customs. The establishment of a national market was a necessary stepping stone for a nation to be in a position to start colonizing other parts of the world.

On the other hand, the nationalism sweeping the Third World is the nationalism of oppressed nations, nations that were enslaved by Europe.

Whereas bourgeois nationalism was a product of the birth of capitalism, the nationalism of the colonials is a product of the epoch of imperialism. This epoch signals the entrance of world capitalism into its final phase, its death agony. The epoch of imperialism is marked by the suppression of nations, the trampling over the right of small nations and national minorities to self-determination. The nationalism of the Third World seeks to regain the land for the colonized and to resurrect the national tradition and culture.

In this country, black nationalism arises from a people who are overwhelmingly proletarian, members of the regularly and irregularly employed. This proletarian character gives black nationalism even greater revolutionary force. That is all the more so since no real black bourgeoisie exists.

In the colonial countries, the more the peasantry is proletarianized, the greater the revolutionary socialist potential. In Cuba, the agricultural laborers played a very important role as the revolution unfolded and provided a firm base of support for the collectivization of the land and the nationalization of industry. Similar situations exist in Latin America and southern Africa.

The nationalism of oppressed Afro-Americans is expressed in the demand for "black power," and in the demand for "black control of black community." Black nationalism inculcates a sense of pride in blackness, and seeks to rescue the history of the Afro-American from the centuries of slander, distortions, and omissions.

Black people are re-examining their history and finding that it is a history of the development, over time, of a "nation within a nation." Each step in American history, during which the policy of consistent super-exploitation and dehumanization of black people has been enforced, has been part of the process leading to the development of black nationalist consciousness. It is this race consciousness, this feeling of separateness and of common identity which has finally begun to raise in the minds of black people the concept that they have a right to determine their own destiny.

When black people began to intensify the struggle for freedom in the 1950's, it was natural that its first attack would be against the most visible sign of oppression--legal segregation. The demand for simple equality within a class system was a democratic demand raised along the road toward the development of the most radical democratic demand--that is the right of self-determination. The demand for legal equality and integration

are favored by the liberal bourgeoisie as a substitute for the revolutionary demand of self-determination.

Although the Afro-American struggle developed through a period when "integration" was one of the slogans raised--the black masses have never chosen "integration into this society as an answer. Their fight was for every day equal treatment under the law--the right to drink a coke where they want, not necessarily next to a white; the right to sit on a bus where they want, not necessarily next to a white; etc. All these demands are democratic demands raised during the awakening of all oppressed nations.

Black Separatism

The central idea underlining the revolutionary socialist viewpoint of black nationalism and separatism is that black people in this country are a national minority, a national minority which has the right of any nation to self-determination. While black people in Africa constitute national majorities, black people in America constitute a national minority. The right of self-determination for the Afro-American masses must include the right to politically separate from the white majority if Afro-Americans so choose. Political separation involves separation from the government in Washington D.C., the creation of a new state.

Black nationalism is the expression of the desire for self-determination. Self-determination means the resolving of a nation's own destiny, the resolving of whether that destiny will be in the creation of a separate state, or in the building of a multi-national American state.

Since its aim is the creation of a nation-state, black separatism would correspond with the nationalism of the colonial world. Whereas, all separatists are undoubtedly black nationalists, all black nationalists are not separatists. Both the black nationalist and the separatist can unite to fight for black control of the black community. Then, the separatist goes one step further and says, "Not only do we want to control our communities, but we want to completely separate from the hell called America."

Separatism must not be solely judged by the forms that the idea has assumed so far, such as the Nation of Islam and other small separatist attempts and groupings. These are only forms, and small forms at that. They are not the last word.

The test of a revolutionist in the United States will be whether he or she understands and supports the right of black people to self-determination. As Trotsky said in Black Nationalism and Self-Determination, "99.9 percent of the American workers are chauvinists, in relation to the Negroes they are hangmen and they are so also toward the Chinese. It

is necessary to teach the American beasts. It is necessary to make them understand that the American state is not their state and that they do not have to be the guardians of this state. Those American workers who say 'The Negroes should separate when they so desire and we will defend them against our American police!-Those are revolutionists, I have confidence in them.'

Whereas in the early 19th century, it was the revolutionary bourgeoisie, that championed the right of nations to self-determination, in the 20th century, the right of nations to self-determination can only be realized through the proletarian revolution. This is the essence of the theory of the Permanent Revolution.

Marxist Theory and Black Nationalism

Both Trotsky's theory of the Permanent Revolution and Lenin's views on nationalism and self-determination are key to understanding the black struggle in this country and the nationalist demands of the colonial revolution.

Lenin's ideas on the right of nations to self-determination were developed in the heat of the struggle against Great Russian chauvinism. The Great Russians comprised the oppressor nation in Russia, while 57 percent of the population was composed of various oppressed nationalities, such as the Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Jews, Georgians, etc. In order for the Bolsheviks to unite the divided proletariat and poor peasants into one party, Great Russian chauvinism had to be fought against, and the right of the various nations to self-determination championed. It was this policy that enabled the Bolshevik Party to take power and hold together the nation through three years of civil war.

It is only through such a policy, the policy of guaranteeing the black nation the right of self-determination, that the American revolution will triumph over the most powerful capitalist class that history has known.

Key to our understanding of the black struggle is the class oppression inflicted upon blacks. Black people make up the decisive segment of what is known as the industrial reserve army. The industrial reserve army is American capitalism's reservoir of lowly paid, irregularly employed, unskilled laborers. These laborers are a supplementary part of the regularly employed wage-laborers. The industrial reserve army has two chief functions.

One of these functions is to act as a restraining force upon the wage demands of the regularly employed. If the whole work force were employed, the capitalists would find it more difficult to replace the workers who get "unruly." The larger the pool of unemployed, the more docile and tame becomes the working class. Labor radicalization frequently takes place in

an economic upturn, not in an economic slump.

The other function the industrial reserve army serves is that it can be drawn upon in a period of prosperity or war when large numbers of laborers are needed to take on the hardest and dirtiest jobs. As soon as the period of prosperity or war is over, this supplementary labor force is sent back to the rural areas or urban ghettos to waste away until it is needed again. The most massive migrations of blacks from the South to the North took place during World War I and World War II and is now taking place during the boom that has marked the 1960's. But despite the unprecedented boom and the migration, the unemployment for black people as a whole is still double that of whites. The unemployment rate for black youth is three to four times the rate of whites. The average income of a black family may have increased over the last ten years, but relative to the average income of the white family, it has decreased.

The rebellions reflect the increasing unwillingness of black people to play their part in the industrial reserve army. In this role black people are not only doubly exploited, but triply-exploited: as members of the irregularly employed labor force, as members of the regularly employed labor force, and as members of an oppressed national minority, restricted to the least desirable jobs.

The War in Vietnam and the Black Struggle

As with all other sectors of American society, the stepped-up aggression of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam has tended to increase the activity and militancy of the Afro-American struggle. The Vietnam war affects all areas of Afro-American life, from the church to the sports arena. The government revelations that the number of black youth in Vietnam, the number of black youth killed in the war, and the number of black youth drafted are all out of proportion to the percentage of black people in this society, only serve to add fuel to the fire of opposition to the war. The fact that the government can send 600,000 troops 10,000 miles supposedly to guarantee free elections in south Vietnam, and yet doesn't lift a finger to guarantee free elections in the American South, only serves to further irk and irritate Afro-Americans. As the weak-kneed poverty program falls victim to war inspired cutbacks, even the worst of the reformist leaders have to come out and criticize the war.

Over the past couple of years, Afro-American organizations against the war have come and gone. Two years ago, the black opposition took the form of Afro-American committees against the war, now the form of the anti-draft committee is the most popular.

However, the black community, pregnant with opposition to the war, has yet to give birth to an organizational form that will be able to activate this sentiment.

The Black Uprisings

The black rebellions have shattered illusions about the stability of American society. They served notice to the world that the American body politic is not immune to the fever and fervor of revolutionary change. The shocks of Newark and Detroit were especially inspiring to the colonial vanguard,--those sitting in Havana at the OLAS conference, and that which is organized in OSPAAL, Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Everytime a rebellion takes place, its impact is immediately felt by black soldiers fighting in Vietnam. White America seems to be split over what to do. Some whites have had the blinders of racism torn from their eyes, while many others have started stock-piling arms in preparation for the coming of Armageddon.

The ruling class and its henchmen in Washington have correctly gauged the ghetto upheavals, not as any coming Armageddon or racial war, but as a prelude to their revolutionary demise if sections of the oppressed white population should follow the same course. This is why they stress law and order and constitutional change. While the politicians and news media discuss minor urban reforms and how the southern countryside can be made palatable so as to keep blacks from migrating to the cities, the Pentagon prepares the National Guard for "two, three many Detroits."

The rebellions have instilled a new sense of self-confidence and self-awareness in the masses. The actions have generated a new image of black people, a people that can immobilize whole cities with just the threat of street action, a people that has the potential to challenge the American imperialist rulers if given sufficient organization and coordination.

That sector of black society upon which the rebellions have left their deepest imprint are the youth. Black youth are a very formidable force. Close to half of the black population is under the age of 25. It has been the youth who have been in the forefront of the rebellions, organizing defense against the white merchants and the occupation forces. And from the actions that have taken place in junior high schools, high schools, and on the college campus, these same youth have taken the struggles of last summer into the schools. This means that there will be no let up, but continuous upheavals. The struggle is not only being waged against the cop on the street, but also against the 'cop' in the classroom.

Radicalization of Black High School Students

The motion in the high schools is significant in that the students themselves are initiating the action. Up until now, with a few possible exceptions, the parents and ministers have

led the struggle to correct the prison-like conditions of the schools. These struggles for the most part, were oriented toward obtaining better education for black students through integration of the school system. To realize the goal of integrated schools, there were a number of school boycotts, mass demonstrations, and other similar types of actions. The movement for integration was progressive in so far as it revealed the abominable conditions existing in black schools, and brought to light the depths of racism in white America.

Now the movement has passed over from a struggle limited to full equality in capitalist society, to the struggle for black power. The black power movement sees the integration of schools as irrelevant to the needs of the black community. If several black students integrate an all-white school, the conditions in black schools don't change. The problems of the few are solved, but the overwhelming majority still go on suffering from lack of facilities and over-crowded conditions. The black power movement poses the demand: black control of the schools. This demand not only hits at the conditions in which classroom instruction goes on, but at the classroom instruction itself. An important aspect of this development is the demand that black culture and black history be taught.

This concern with Afro-American and African history is of great importance in the struggle for black liberation, for one of the underpinnings of racism is the systematic distortion of the history of black people. The fact that several thousand high school students came out on the demonstration in Philadelphia because the teaching of Afro-American history was denied at one high school shows the power and attractiveness of this demand. Movements launched around this demand quickly raise the question of who controls the school system. Since many of these youth have the draft and a quick death in Vietnam waiting for them when they get out of school, the war question will figure in these protests and in any high school organization that arises from them.

Black College Students

On another plane is the movement of black college students, North and South. The protests that have raged at black colleges and on campuses attended by black students are a totally new phenomenon, totally new in the sense that it hasn't happened before, but expected in the sense that it falls right in line with events taking place in the 60's.

Just taking a cursory glance at the situation, it would seem that this generation of black youth never had it so good. The scholarships, loans, and grants that have been made available to them would seem to make them the most fervent supporters of the American way of life. The opportunities offered to these black youth were inspired by the Civil Rights movement,

and traditionally, the black student has been the most conservative of students in this country.

However, upon closer scrutiny, the above picture begins to crumble. In the South, the black college is the most tyrannical of all the educational institutions in this country. The Uncle Tom administrations have never heard of the notion that students have rights. Since these administrations have to kowtow to the southern regimes, arch-conservative Negro church associations, and white capitalist benefactors, they are just mere puppets. But despite these features, the black college in the South has become known as the place 'where the action is.' Nationalism has given black students a new identity and a new way of looking at things. All of the administrative abuses and mistreatment heaped upon them before, have become intolerable.

It is a similar situation with black students in the North who attend predominately white institutions. They see themselves and the white students representing two different and distinct nations of people. The fact that many of the black students come from the ghetto, makes the distinction that much greater. Nationalism serves as an instrument to maintain black identity and as a deterrent to the identity crisis that black students suffer in a sea of double-talking whites from suburbia. This has meant that at any university, no matter how few black students are in attendance, a black student organization usually comes into being.

Although the organization may be primarily a social one, the problems of black liberation will invariably be discussed. In many instances, the nationalist student organizations have carried on militant protests against discrimination on campus. Some of the protests have resulted in violence because of the tendency on the part of school administrations to resort to the use of the police and National Guard to put down student protests which bring into question the right of the administration to rule. At one university the football game was cancelled in the school stadium because black students had threatened to burn it down if the situation wasn't changed.

The southern black campus tends to be less organized. This lack of organization is prompted by the ease with which black militants communicate on a black campus. The more numerous the whites become on a campus, the more it becomes necessary to organize the communication.

However, this is changing as militants see the need for organized discussion and action. Since students are placed in a situation where they can carry on extended discussion and research, plus study world events, their ideological growth will be swift, promising a solution to the crisis of black leadership and organization. An interesting after effect of this radicalization is that now that black students want control of their

campuses, the southern regimes and puppet administrations have started the implementation of plans to integrate these schools to squelch the cry of black power. Whether the plan will work or not is another question.

Organization of Nationalist Sentiment

With the advent of black power and the ghetto rebellions, there has been a proliferation of nationalist organizations, newspapers, and magazines. Added to this are the various conferences that have been held in different parts of the country. These conferences have served the purpose of bringing together the various tendencies in the movement. Here is where militants meet and exchange ideas and experiences. In this exchange, ideas are hotly contested and debated. The conferences also serve the purpose of allowing the majority of nationalists who don't belong to any organization to participate. To keep in touch, attempts have been made to start nation-wide newsletters at the last couple of conferences. This is the first step toward establishing a nation-wide organization. However, this is still quite a ways off because of the ideological differences in the movement.

A better understanding of the ideological differences in the movement can be gained by the recognition that three major currents of nationalist thought can be delineated. They are: culturally oriented black nationalists, plain black nationalists, and revolutionary or international black nationalists. Because nationalist thinking is still in a state of rapid flux and development, these different currents are not completely or clearly differentiated, but overlap with one another.

The black nationalists with a cultural bent are those nationalists who steep themselves in African culture and black history. Their distinguishing feature is that they consider the study of African culture and black history not as part of a general revolutionary development but as an end in itself. The cultural nationalists are usually not concerned about engaging in political struggles. What concerns them most is acquiring the most elaborate of African garb, writing poetry, and talking about the glorious black past. In other words, "thinkin' and lookin' black." In many cases, this is the first step for many Afro-Americans into black consciousness. Some stay on that step, others go on.

Of the nationalist organizations, those organizations specifically devoted to culture are the most numerous. Many of the black student organizations can be classified as culturally nationalist. These organizations are the first stage in the awakening process for many students. Those cultural nationalist organizations, such as the Yoruba Temple in New York or Forum 66 in Detroit, composed mainly of adults, can be considered the hard and fast type. At the same time, a lot of political discussion goes on in these groups. The main service these organizations perform is to contribute to the 'cultural revolution' now taking place in the black community.

The cultural nationalists and the plain black nationalists overlap each other. However, the plain black nationalists are distinguished by the fact that they are concerned about the political struggle, the struggle of confronting the rulers over the ills that exist in the ghetto. The plain nationalists probably speak for more people in the ghetto than the cultural or revolutionary nationalists. They speak for more people because they simply reflect the reaction to the racial oppression that all Afro-Americans suffer.

Many of the plain nationalists work in the federal government's poverty program, or are organized in small groups like Ron Karenga's US in Los Angeles or Charles Kenyatta's Mau Mau in New York. Reverend Albert B. Cleage, chairman of the Citizens Citywide Action Committee (CCAC) in Detroit, is a good example of a plain nationalist. Another example is Floyd McKissick and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

The plain nationalist tendency embraces a wide spectrum of nationalists. Some are shifting to the left in the direction of the revolutionary nationalists. Others are shifting to the **right** in the direction of being co-opted by the government. And still others mark time, thus occupying the center.

One of the problems which plain nationalist organizations such as CORE and CCAC face is to keep themselves independent of the power structure. In many cases, the government-financed poverty programs, corporation-funded urban reform projects, and city governments attempt to co-opt nationalists into heading or playing a major role in their "pacification" projects for the ghetto.

Coupled with this problem is the tendency among some nationalists to support a political candidate solely because he's black. CORE got caught in this trap when it supported Carl Stokes for mayor in Cleveland. It is not enough to support a candidate because he is black; he must be black and independent of the capitalist parties.

The primary concern of CORE and other plain nationalists is the ghetto. What the plain nationalists lack is an analysis that points out the specific relations between the black freedom struggle and the world-wide colonial revolution. The plain nationalists will protest the war in Vietnam as a white man's war, as a war that diverts needed funds from the ghetto, not as a war in which the freedom of Afro-Americans is inextricably linked with the freedom of the Vietnamese.

Viewing the Vietnam war in the latter fashion is one important mark of the difference between the plain nationalists and the revolutionary or internationalist black nationalists. The major difference is that the revolutionary nationalists see the establishment of real black political power only through

revolution, and not through support to some black Democrat camouflaged in nationalist verbiage. For example, Rap Brown's reaction to the Cleveland election was to call Stokes a "neo-colonial Tom."

The revolutionary nationalists are mostly composed of youth. Among the proponents of revolutionary nationalism are: SNCC leaders such as Stokely Carmichael, James Forman, and Rap Brown; the Black Panther Party of Oakland, Calif.; black youth organized around newspapers like the Detroit Inner City Voice and the Boston Rebellion News; and black students in the North and South who are knowledgeable about the writings of Fanon, Guevara, Castro, Mao and Malcolm X. The revolutionary nationalists understand the two-sided nature of the oppression of blacks in this country. They consider themselves socialists or Marxist-oriented. This segment of the black vanguard has been brought to socialism by the example of the colonial revolution, specifically by the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese against U.S. imperialism, the Cuban and Chinese revolutions, the OLAS conference, and the example set by Che Guevara.

The evolution of the SNCC leadership from the plain nationalism of early '67 to the position of revolutionary nationalism today is one of the most promising developments. The position of plain nationalism is most evident in Carmichael's and Hamilton's book Black Power. The gravitation toward revolutionary nationalism began when leaders such as Forman, Lester, Carmichael, Cellers, and others started visiting Africa, Asia, Cuba, and Europe. Upon returning from their travels, the SNCC leadership, especially personified in Carmichael and James Forman, has begun following the same ideological path as the late Malcolm X.

Ultra-leftism

However, among some of the revolutionary nationalists and among the younger elements of the plain nationalists, there runs a strong streak of ultra-leftism. This ultra-leftism is fed by the magnitude and ferocity of the summer explosions, and the use of guerrilla warfare as one of the main instruments of struggle on three continents. Some of the militants feel that in light of the militarization of the police, the arming of white suburbia, and the general hardening of the attitudes of the federal and local governments, the only thing to do now is to prepare for armed resistance. To some of these militants, fascism seems just around the corner.

What is overlooked is that the U.S. is not an agrarian country, and that guerrilla warfare has not been a tactic pursued by colonial revolutionists in the city. Much more important, ultra-leftism overlooks the fact that despite the struggles that have gone on, the majority of black people still have to be organized and drawn into the struggle. It overlooks the fact that the only way this will occur, will be through a process of education and organization which will destroy the illusions that black people have about the nature of this system. A clear reminder of the existence of these illusions was when, even after a rebellion, the black residents of

Cleveland turned out over 90 percent of their votes for Carl Stokes, a black man who belongs to the same party that is headed by LBJ.

Ultra-leftist thinking moves from a correct rejection of the Republican and Democratic parties to the incorrect conclusion that there is no point in taking part in elections at all. It thus ignores the most important task facing revolutionaries at this time -- the building of a black political party, and the destruction of the capitalist monopoly of the electoral system. Such a party is a necessary instrument for struggling toward black political power in this country. In order to pose a serious alternative to the present white rulers of this country, black people must have a party of their own, a party which can challenge them at the polls as well as in the streets. By running in elections with a party of their own, black people have a vehicle for showing they seriously intend to take over their communities.

In addition, by forming a black party, black people have the power to break up the present two-party system through which the capitalists rule this country. Black people can destroy the Democratic Party as a winning party simply by not voting for it, thus throwing the white working class supporters of the Democratic Party into a crisis. More important, the formation of an independent black party provides a valuable example for these white workers who also need a party independent of the capitalists through which to wage their own struggles.

The perspective of challenging the capitalist parties at the polls does not imply any illusions about the willingness of the capitalists to allow for a peaceful democratic transformation of society through the electoral process. In fact, participation in the elections is the principal way to destroy the illusions about American democracy which are held by the masses of black people. The masses will only rally to "illegal" struggles after they have learned through concrete experience that there are no legal paths open to them.

Despite the fact that it uses the stick as well as the carrot to keep black people in line, the U.S. is still a bourgeois democratic country. If and when the U.S. goes 'fascist' as some say and starts to implement the final solution to the black "problem," they won't be letting militants run around the country telling everybody about it. The U.S. still tries to maintain the facade of a peaceful settlement of the racial crisis. While having no illusions about the "democracy" practiced in this country, it is to the advantage of black radicals to fight for and use to the fullest extent what freedom of speech, assembly, and organization is available. If this is done, the pretenses of "freedom and democracy" perpetrated by the ruling class can best be used against them.

Objective reality has a way of keeping the actions of the ultra-lefts on a verbal level. As long as all layers of white

workers remain politically quiescent, ultra-leftism will continue to be **an important** problem for the black movement. What we can do is to patiently explain the reality of the situation and point out how the capitalist government uses the ultra-left verbiage to separate and isolate the militants from the masses. The Statue of Liberty case can be used to illustrate how the government uses police agents to victimize militants. But the main education will come from the experiences of the struggle -- which will teach that revolutionary struggles, in order to succeed, must be carried out with defensive formulations and must be calculated to win the support of the masses.

Malcolm X was a master at explaining the struggle in terms which put the blame for all violence and abrogation of freedom where it belongs -- on the ruling class. He did this because he had supreme confidence in the ability of the masses to eventually unite in struggle.

At this juncture, government attacks against the nationalist or black power movement have increased. Some of the most blatant frame-ups are the cases of the Texas Southern University five, the case of the 17 arrested in New York and Philadelphia on charges of **attempting** to "assassinate" some Uncle Tom leaders, the charges lodged against Rap Brown for "inciting" Cambridge to riot, and the ridiculous charge against a youth at the University of Chicago for trying to "poison" the Philadelphia police department. One case that has not received too much publicity is the case against Oakland Black Panther Party leader Huey P. Newton for allegedly killing one cop and seriously wounding another.

Right now, there seems to be a tendency among black radicals to try to get the broadest amount of support and publicity when they are victimized. This is contrary to the attitude of a few years ago when militants would often fatalistically accept the frame-ups out of a feeling of powerlessness to wage any struggle in the courts.

The YSA should publicize the cases in our press and build fund raising meetings where it is possible. The case of the TSU five is a good example of this.

Alliances With Whites

Black radicals are beginning to shed some of their ideas about the impotency of white radicals as they view the actions at the Pentagon, the New York anti-Rusk demonstration, and the demonstrations during Stop the Draft Week. The size of the actions and the new militancy displayed, as well as the attitudes of the cops toward the demonstrations, are forcing nationalists to take a second look.

As the Vietnam war internationalizes the outlook of many nationalists, they begin to consider ways of linking up and coordinating activities with the predominately white antiwar movement.

The existence of black student organizations throughout the country facilitates this link-up. The organizations of black high school students will also help in forging a united front. However, the bulk of the black nationalist youth are not embraced by any organization. Because of the organizational fragmentation, even the organized nationalists have no easy time remaining part of the coalition. The epitome of this situation was revealed when two-thirds of the black contingent at the October 21st March to the Pentagon left the march to hold a conference in the Washington ghetto. The alliances between white radicals and black nationalists will continue to be unstable until there exists a national black youth organization or a national black political party.

The lack of such an organization not only affects the alliances with the whites around specific issues, but affects the attempts to defend victimized militants and the overall organization of the ghetto. Anytime black militants get together in single-issue organizations, such as defense committees or antiwar committees, they immediately begin to discuss the feasibility of turning these organizations into general radical organizations.

This is an indication of the objective need that an independent black political organization would fulfill. Such an organization would be the solution to the maxim: "There will be no real unity between black and white until there is first some black unity." The formation of a black party would make it easier to organize defense efforts and united-front type actions in the ghetto. A black party would be able to conduct campaigns around: teaching of black history and culture in the school system; forming tenant unions to fight against the unscrupulous practices of absentee landlords; launching cultural associations so as to provide an arena in which black artists can express their talents usefully, and deepen the cultural revolution in the ghetto; organizing consumer educational associations to combat the high price schemes of the white merchants; helping in the establishment of black cooperative stores and in the patronizing of black businesses; fighting the racist hiring practices of employers and trade unions; organizing lowly paid and poorly treated black workers in the service industry; organizing black trade union caucuses to fight for the rights of black workers against the trade union bureaucrats; carrying out a campaign around the constitutional right to bear arms and organizing defense councils to defend black people against the cops; providing the means for collaboration and coordination of the black freedom struggle with the colonial revolution.

Such would be a few potentialities of a national black political party. Just the establishment of a black political party would be an event of great historical significance. It would signal the end to the more than century-long support to the Democratic and Republican Parties by black people. It would also serve as an instrument in forcing the whole labor movement

out of the two-party system by sparking and setting an example for the development of a party that embraces the whole class.

The tasks outlined above for a black political party would be directed toward one goal: black control of the black community. These tasks make use of all methods embodied in the slogan: "By any means necessary," which speaks to the many sided nature of the struggle. It is through struggles like these that the masses will be won to the banner of a black political party.

The job of a black party will be two-fold: to fight for political power in the black community, and to help create coalitions with other revolutionary forces on a national scale to fight for self-determination.

The only mass black political organization is currently in Lowndes County, Alabama. On the local level, it is the best example of a political party engaging in the day to day struggles of the people, from getting running water into people's homes to the task of buying land to set up co-op businesses. At the same time it maintains the perspective of taking power in the county, by running candidates for sheriff and other top offices.

Slowly but surely, the idea of building a black political party is beginning to be seriously raised and discussed by nationalists. At the Black Youth Conference held in Baltimore over the Thanksgiving holidays, a SNCC militant raised the idea of such an organization. James Forman, in a speech at the Black Youth Conference in Los Angeles, called for the building of local organizations independent of the Republicans and Democrats. In addition, Paul Boutelle was successful in having a resolution passed in favor of such a party at the political workshop of the same gathering. This is just the beginning of the debate, which will be accelerated as November 1968 looms closer.

Puerto Rican, Indian, and Mexican National Minorities

As a consequence of the rise of black power, other national minorities, less numerous and not as strategically placed as black people, are becoming agitated. There has already been outbursts in the Puerto Rican community, and American Indians have participated in antiwar demonstrations and started to organize themselves. In the state of New Mexico, Mexican-Americans have seized land with arms in hand. Recently in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Mexican-Americans, Indians, and black nationalists got together to sign a peace treaty. The Marxist concepts and ideas utilized to understand the black struggle, can also be used in understanding the struggles of other minority groups. Wherever possible, we should try to establish relations with and keep abreast of the struggles waged by Puerto Rican, Indian, and Mexican-American youth.

On account of the bureaucratized trade union movement, saturated with the toxin of racism, there will continue to be sharp conflicts

between it and the black struggle. The conflicts will ensue no matter what color collar the movement wears. Some of the sharpest conflicts in 1967 were those between the teachers' unions and the black communities in New York and Philadelphia. In both cases the union bureaucrats opposed the demands and struggles of the black community, and instead of educating the rank and file on the mutual interests existing between the unions and the black community, they actually played upon and encouraged the racism of the white teachers. The white teachers are going to have to learn the hard way that projecting demands and staging actions that go against the struggles of the black community will cut across their own class interests.

In such conflicts between the white and black workers, it is of prime importance to raise demands which will unite them against the ruling class wherever possible. At the same time, this unity should never be at the expense of diluting the militancy and demands of the black community. Cataclysmic jolts will be administered to the class before it can find its way to the struggle for state power. In preparation for the recruitment of white working class youth into the YSA, we will give no quarter to American racial prejudices.

Black Reformists

The black reformist leaders offer their services exclusively to the black middle class. They are especially noted for their verbosity in explaining away the unfortunate use of the term "black power." Within this tendency, Roy Wilkins occupies the extreme right, while Martin Luther King sits on the left. The reformists are very worried because the ghetto rebellions demolish any pretenses of leadership they may have had over the masses. Even the white newspapers are forced to point out the impotency of these leaders in controlling the revolts in the ghettos. After the rebellions the reformists run back to the white ruling class in an attempt to blackmail some concessions to buttress their alledged leadership. The participation of Wilkins and Young in the frame-up of the accused 17 Afro-Americans represents a low-point of their high-handed collusion with the government. King and SCLC have been in the forefront of this tendency in trying to steal the thunder of the black power advocates. King's opposition to the war in Vietnam and his criticisms of Johnson are part of this attempted steal. However, he still pursues the policy of non-violence and tying the struggle to the Democratic Party. His proposal for a massive civil-disobedience campaign for Washington, D.C., next summer is an attempt to regain some of his lost prestige. But, he may start something that he can't stop.

Black Nationalism and Our Opponents

The DuBois Clubs and Communist Party continue to try to adapt to the nationalist mood in order to channel the struggle into the Democratic Party. The National Conference for New Politics (NCNP)

was an example of their opportunism at its worst. Here, they were the principal exponents of giving the black caucus half of the votes, not out of any sympathy for nationalism, but in a dishonest and underhanded move to use the black vote for their own purposes. Sometimes, the CP comes out and shows its true colors, such as when Claude Lightfoot attacked Che Guevara at a memorial meeting, and the Worker attacked Carmichael as a red-baiter in Cuba because he dared to attack the CPUSA. The CP's true colors were also shown in its support to Stokes and Hatcher.

The DuBois Club has lost a lot of its black members because its actions in support of nationalism do not match its verbal support. They lost Franklin Alexander, their national chairman, because among other things, they didn't agree with his actions down at TSU last spring. The Stalinists have a very negative image among the nationalists, especially the revolutionary nationalists who take note of the attitudes of the Soviet Union and the actions of various Latin American CP's toward armed struggle.

Progressive Labor continues to suffer a decline in its influence on black militants. It has no clear approach to or understanding of the theory or the revolutionary potential of black nationalism. It boycotted the Newark Black Power Conference on the basis of its being a conference of "bourgeois nationalists." Its line seems to flip-flop between abstention from the struggle to trying to appear as the leaders of the nationalist movement. PL's attacks on Cuba along with the decline of international Maoism will further contribute to its diminishing fortunes.

Students For A Democratic Society

SDS supports black nationalism but doesn't really understand it. They support it, which is a healthy response, because the black power advocates have been the most militant in denouncing the Vietnam war, and have vocalized the festering grievances of the ghetto.

SDS, however, doesn't feel the responsibility to take part in the black struggle, or in the discussions going on over tactics and strategy, because it sees its role as one of organizing white middle-class radicals while the nationalists organize the black community. It is impossible for SDS to have any other outlook since it does not look to the working class as a force for social change. If SDS were a working class tendency, it would have to develop strategy and tactics which unite the class in the fight for political power.

SDS is a student organization that reacts specifically to the problems of white middle-class youth in rebellion against the status quo. Whereas SDS is a reflection of that student rebellion, the YSA recruits students, working class youth and black nationalist youth to a working class program that is revolutionary internationalist in character. Although SDS'ers approach the black struggle from a moral, humanistic viewpoint, this

viewpoint can be the first step in achieving a deeper understanding of the struggle.

Perspectives for the Coming Year

In the coming year, the SWP election campaign will be our primary instrument in getting across our ideas on the black struggle. The campaign has already been useful so far in establishing contacts with black militants in the South. The election campaign gives us an opportunity to discuss with black militants the need for a black political party, the relation of socialism to the black community, the relationship between the black movement and the revolutionary socialist youth movement, the question of why black people should support Halstead and Boutelle. The campaign also gives us a broader arena in which to distribute literature and increased opportunities for recruitment.

While in Europe, Carmichael issued a call for a boycott of the 1968 elections. The motive behind the boycott position is good in that it shows a rejection of both capitalist parties. But it also puts the militants in the position of abstaining from the struggle because they have no alternative. Our position will be that of explaining the necessity for independent political organization at the ballot box as well as on the streets. The degree to which black radicals support Halstead and Boutelle will be an indicator of the degree of their independence from the two-party system.

The Southern tour shows that many black militants will endorse the campaign by signing Afro-Americans for Halstead-Boutelle cards. Where we have locals, we should start now in getting Afro-American support for the campaign.

Another way of getting across our ideas will be the use of Afro-American history petition campaigns and black history classes. Petition campaigns can be utilized on the college campus as a means for collaborating with the various black student organizations and other radical or liberal groups. Of the many colleges and universities in the U.S., there are very few which offer courses in Afro-American and African history.

The only Afro-American history petition campaign undertaken by the YSA was in Detroit at Wayne State U. back in the fall of 1965. The end results of the campaign was a number of black contacts, not to mention the addition of two African history courses to the curriculum. The contacts made were then enlisted to help build a black antiwar committee.

Besides the petition campaign, YSA locals should have consistent internal and external classes on black history. These classes accomplish the dual purpose of educating the YSA, and providing a specific arena in which contact work with black

college and high school students can be carried on. There is a great deal of interest being exhibited by black high school students in Afro-American history.

The above tasks are directed toward one main goal: the recruitment of black militants into the YSA. Since the last convention, recruitment of black militants to the YSA has slowly but steadily risen. This is in line with the overall recruitment pattern. With the formation of fractions responsible for black work on the local scale, the importance of centralizing and coordinating local work in this area is being realized.

In order for the YSA which is currently composed primarily of revolutionary socialist youth from the oppressor white nation to recruit and train revolutionary socialist youth from the oppressed nation, it is absolutely necessary that we have a firm understanding of black nationalism and its relationship to the struggle for a socialist America. With such an understanding we can approach the recruitment of black militants with full confidence.

We not only try to convince black militants of the necessity of a black political party, but we try to recruit them to the revolutionary socialist program and to the YSA. We don't demand of black militants before they join the YSA that they agree with us on every point in our program on the black struggle or every point in our whole program. Probably not a single YSAer fully agreed with or understood the program of the YSA before he or she joined the organization. Some black militants may achieve socialist consciousness and disagree with our point about a black political party. And some black militants can be convinced of the socialist perspective but are not dyed-in-the-wood nationalists. If a black militant has basic agreement with our program, it is better to educate him or her about his or her disagreement inside rather than outside the YSA.

Black YSAers will play major roles in the struggle as black youth gravitate toward the ideas of nationalism and socialism. Black comrades will have the dual task of educating the YSA about the black struggle, and educating black militants about the nature of the national and class struggle and what is to be done.

The YSA as a whole must continue to establish and strengthen relations with black militants. The distribution of literature goes hand in hand with this task. Our literature will serve as a major instrument in preparing the ground for eventual recruitment.

January 6, 1968