

# YOUNG SOCIALIST DISCUSSION bulletin

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These discussion articles and resolutions were written for the Young Socialist National Convention to be held at the Manhattan Center in New York City, December 27-31, 1970. They were written by members of the Young Socialist Alliance from around the country.

Similar resolutions and discussion articles have dealt with other activities in which young socialists are involved. They are circulated prior to the convention to assure the fullest possible discussion on political perspectives and activities before the convention meets.

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PORTLAND DEFENSE WORK REPORT

by

Ruth Getts

In May 1970 we witnessed the changing role of the university in the revolutionary struggle as literally millions of students took part in the strikes which developed the concept of the "antiwar university." The profound importance of this development was obvious to revolutionary socialists and to the capitalist ruling class as well.

We have seen the response of reactionary elements to the May upsurge in campaigns led by Nixon and Hoover against the YSA and revolutionary political activity on campus, in letters to college presidents, the IRS guidelines and the new assortment of "anti-crime" legislation being passed in Washington--all an attempt to stem the tide of radicalized students returning to campuses this fall looking for revolutionary alternatives to the capitalist system and the war and oppression it breeds.

Even before the fall semester, however, the YSA was victim of several attempts by state and university officials to kick out summer schools, being held on major campuses where ever there was a YSA local, off campus and thereby set a mood and precedent for cracking down on political activity in the fall. In Portland, Oregon, our fight to get the YSA re-instated on campus with full constitutional and university rights as a recognized student organization held a particular importance for building the YSA in Oregon. The Portland local is relatively new and, at the time, Portland State University was the only campus where we had recruited comrades. If the State's Attorney General, State Board of Higher Education, and the PSU administration had been successful in enforcing their ban against the YSA summer school, it would have in effect outlawed the YSA in the entire state--for this would have set a strong precedent for enforcing a State Board of Higher Education ruling on political action on university campuses. Since then, we have recruited new members on three other campuses and in two other cities in Oregon. This would have been extremely difficult or impossible if the state had been successful in making the YSA an illegal student organization or in taking away our ability to hold forums and classes on socialism on campus.

The preamble of the Portland State University's Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students reads: "Portland State exists for the acquisition, diffusion, and preservation of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, and development of students, and

the general well-being of society. Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. As members of the academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth."

On July 24, YSA was informed by the school administration that permits for its summer school had been canceled. This was in accord with a new ruling on "Political Action" passed by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education in La Grande, Oregon, the week previously. It stated: "That the Board affirms that the system's colleges and universities, as institutions, must not become instruments of political action; and that their facilities, supplies, equipment, and other resources must not be diverted to partisan political use. (This provision is not intended to interfere with the traditional use of campus facilities as public forums, nor with the political rights of faculty members and students.)"

Later that week an administrative official announced a moratorium had been declared on political activity and that each political group would have to reapply and be "individually evaluated." The YSA promptly complied and was promptly disqualified once again under the La Grande statement from access to university facilities.

Our response was immediate. We quickly moved to help form an independent Citizens' Committee for Free Speech in Oregon. (Associate Professor of Anthropology Daniel Sheans was chairman and Niki Brorsen, a local comrade, was the Executive Secretary.) The main purpose of this committee was to inform as many people as possible of the situation at PSU and draw as much support as possible from the university and surrounding community for the struggle against this attack on the rights of all citizens.

We ran into major obstacles. For one thing, it was the middle of summer. Student body size was thereby decreased. Most students organizations were absent from campus. Only individual members were available to sign sponsor cards. However, by systematically using press conferences, TV coverage, radio and newspaper articles (including the school newspaper) we were able to sustain the atmosphere of an open forum both with the students and people all over the city.

We announced our intention to

and did confer with lawyers in the community about possible legal action. We held forums, a fund raising party for the committee, and a regular literature table on campus while continuing summer school classes at the local county library--all of which served the purpose of keeping the administrative ban on the YSA as the prime topic of discussion--in the halls, in the cafeteria, and in the school press. We also received excellent coverage from local TV stations. We systematically sought out sponsors among the faculty and student organizations that were present. We sent information to every prominent movement organization and individual in the city of Portland.

After about ten days of this activity, we were informed by an early morning telephone call from the school president's office that the acting president, Acting President Low, would like to confer with us, along with the Young Democrats and Young Republicans, in his office. We accepted and took our lawyer. We also maintained our stand on keeping proceedings open and public. We called a news conference for immediately afterwards where we were able to announce that the university administration had withdrawn all objections to the political content of our summer school and if we would simply remove the word "school" and make clear the disassociation between the administration and YSA, the ban would be dropped. We considered this a major victory. We had defeated a major attempt by state officials to assert their right to control political activity on college campuses in Oregon.

What followed was a brief exchange of letters between us and Acting President Low where he tried to hedge on the position he had taken in private, once again objecting to the "concept" of as well as the word "school" in our classes. We replied stating our position exactly--we would remove the word school, disassociate the classes from university sponsorship--but we would retain the same concepts, the same format and texts, the same revolutionary socialist ideas as before. The last YSA "Socialist Summer Forum" was held back on campus.

Throughout this campaign other radical tendencies on campus refrained from supporting our fight and openly attacked us as being reformist because we weren't "out front in the fight against Capitalism." Rather we were leading the people back into the system by reinforcing their trust in the judicial system. The only alternative Friends of PL and SDS offered to us and other students at the time under investigation for their actions in the May strike was, when questioned by the establishment, we should take the fifth amendment.

The YSA opposes this idea of

abandoning the legal arena to the ruling class and boycotting it because it is a tool of capitalist society. The objective result of such a policy is to give the ruling class an exclusive forum with the American people. We are well aware of the collaborative nature of the judicial system and the ruling class in a capitalist society. The people who are not yet aware of it (but who are becoming more suspicious every day) are the masses of working people who believe the myth that this government defends civil liberties. We use the legal system as a forum for our ideas and we lay the ground work of cooperation which will expose the hypocrisy of these institutions which purport to defend civil liberties when they actually become the tools for depriving individuals of these rights.

In addition, we do not consider the demand for free speech a bourgeois or liberal demand. We recognize all civil liberties, in whatever limited degree they may exist under capitalism, as hard won victories of the working class. Revolutionary socialists should always and everywhere be in the forefront of defending these civil liberties and extending them as far as possible to every sector of society. Bourgeois society now grants these rights only in glowing sentiments written on paper. It will be the socialist revolution which grants these rights in reality by making the material resources available to all citizens (students, workers, Blacks, poor whites, women, etc.) which will enable them to exercise these rights.

We were also attacked as "student power" radicals. By fighting for the rights of students to free speech on campus, SDS said, our position was analogous to attempting to establish "socialism in four blocks." This was an attack on YSA's whole perspective for the youth radicalization and our program for the red university. We do not support narrow student struggles for student power demands--but raise demands which link up the struggles of students and workers. The right to freedom of speech, inquiry, press, and the right to hear all sides of an issue are vital to students and workers alike. We will continue to organize on university campuses where a large part of the wealth and resources of this society are centered and demand that these be used in the interests of the majority of American people, for instance as antiwar universities, to end the war in Vietnam instead of being complicit in it. We see the student and working class radicalizations as contagious and complementary movements, as illustrated by the French events in '68, and not at all as contradictory. The student radicalization has a revolutionary dynamic of its own and therefore we consider it a major area of our work.

Throughout the Portland defense case we were able to illustrate to newly radicalizing students and other political tendencies how revolutionaries defend themselves--not by isolating ourselves or retreating from the struggle--but by mobilizing mass sentiment in our favor and bringing public pressure to bear on reactionary institutions while using these institutions and whatever other means are available to us to hold educational forums with as many people as possible, to expose the real nature of the capitalist system.

We were able to clarify many issues concerning civil liberties and the student radicalization. Most important of all, however, for our movement, we were able to defend freedom of speech in Oregon, the right of our own organization to function openly and freely, recruit new members, and keep the university campuses open in Oregon.

Portland

December 13, 1970

THE ARAB REVOLUTION

by

Michel Sidman and Rick Ehrmann

Introduction

No internal bulletin on Arab work has appeared as yet (Dec. 14) though the need is obviously great. This paper does not hope to answer all the questions which comrades may have as that would take several books. On that matter we refer comrades to the publications of Pathfinder, and for those who read French, to those of the French section of the Fourth International, the Ligue Communiste.

Our objective is to make a brief exposition of the essential traits of the Arab Revolution through a quick summary of our past, present, and possibly, future intervention, and finally, to trace the perspectives and organize the work. The goal is to homogenize comprehension within the whole YSA in order not to favor the appearance of "specialists" on this question, cut off from the rest of the organization.

It is not our purpose here to give a full analysis of the political situation in the Middle East, of the dynamics of the Palestinian resistance, etc., but to call attention to certain fundamental points for comrades to make use of.

\* \* \* \* \*

I. The Palestinian Revolution cannot be separated from the Arab Revolution:

A. We can speak of peoples of the "Arab Nation", grouping together the countries of Moslem religion and civilization, and of Arabic language. From the Marxist point of view, the fundamental reason for the existence of the Arab Nation is the very definition of a nation, i.e., a community of national consciousness of the majority of the inhabitants of a country, which has been formed during a historical process, singled out by a community of language, a geographic delimitation, and a social and cultural environment.

To illustrate this statement, we can briefly remark that:  
-- Arab bourgeois and nationalist movements have appeared and attained mass followings since the First World War. This is what enabled England to push Hussein of Arabia and his son, Faisal, to fight the Turks during the "Great War", under the promise (unkept) of being able to found an Arab State con-

sisting of the major part of the Middle East.

-- The division, at the end of WWI, of the Middle East into several states under imperialist "mandates" (Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon) appeared to the Arabs as diametrically opposed to all of their historical, religious, and cultural traditions.

-- The petit bourgeois parties, such as the Baath (founded in 1942) and the Arab Nationalist Movement (founded in 1953-4) have as a fundamental programmatic point, "Arab Unity". They are organized in each Arab country (regional section) with an interarab directorate (National Committee).

-- The petit bourgeois leaders (Sadat...) speak of the Arab Nation, of the necessity of uniting the Arab Orient.

B. The history of the Palestinian people is deeply tied to that of all of the Arab peoples of the area.

-- In the '20s and '30s, the struggle against Zionism and French and British imperialism was from the start an Arab question: The Zionists profited from the Balkanization of the Middle East and from the imperialist tutelage of the mandate system for these splintered the Arab national liberation movement. The creation of an Arab state including Palestine would, of course, preclude the establishment of a Zionist state in Palestine. The British imperialists facilitated Jewish immigration and the establishment of a Zionist state until 1939. So we see that the struggle for national liberation against imperialism and the struggle against Zionism are inextricably tied in those years.

-- The 1948 war was essentially a war between the Arab states (supported by Great Britain), under the direction of the feudalo-bourgeois forces, and Israel. The Arab defeat marked the downfall of such Arab feudalists as Farouk of Egypt, Abdullah of Trans-Jordan, and Nuri Sa'id of Iraq. Because of the lack of an organized revolutionary movement, the feudal leadership was replaced by petit bourgeois leadership of the Nasser ilk.

-- From 1948 to 1967: The scattering of 700,000 Palestinian Arabs at the frontiers of Israel (Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria...) and the demagogic utilization of the Palestinian question by the petit bourgeois Arab leaders (The Palestinian masses

waited for their liberation at the hands of the Arab governments, particularly Nasser's) reinforced this liaison.

-- Since 1967: the '67 defeat marked the total failure of the petit bourgeois direction in the realization of its national goals (pan-Arab) such as resolution of the Palestine question (This is but one aspect of the inability to lead to success the "National Democratic Revolution": agrarian reform, industrialization, Arab unity, consequential anti-imperialism...)

The appearance of autonomous masses, of the Palestinian resistance, on radical nationalist or revolutionary internationalist positions has transformed the political field in the Middle East, radicalizing the Arab masses and shrinking the margin for action of the various governments which appear clearly in their real role: lackeys of imperialism (Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia...), compromising petit bourgeois regimes (Egypt, Syria, Algeria...), incapable of resolving the Palestinian dilemma and more fearful at the thought of a Palestinian resistance (because of its political implications, and of its radicalizing effects...) than of Israel. How many thousands were lost in 1970; how many in 1967?

C. In practice, it is impossible to defeat Zionism without defeating imperialism throughout the whole area:

"What is the relationship of forces? The Palestinian people wage a struggle in which they have to confront Zionism which is fueled by imperialism; to the rear they are menaced by the reactionary Arab regimes which are sustained by imperialism. As long as imperialism has serious interests in the area, it is not conceivable that it will draw back its support to Zionism, its natural ally, and that it permit the latter to be overwhelmed. It will defend Israel, as the comrades of the Israeli Socialist Organization put it, to the last drop of Arab oil. In addition, imperialist interests and domination in the region cannot be smashed without overthrowing its subaltern allies in capitalist exploitation which are the ruling classes of the Arab world.

"The conclusion which we must draw is not that the Palestinian people must wait patiently for the downfall of imperialism in the region but that they must rally themselves to the larger struggle for social and political liberation of the entire Middle East." (Said and Machover; "Lutte Palestinienne et Revolution Arabe, Quatrieme Internationale, No. 39, our emphasis)

II. The Progressive Movements of the Middle East

The Palestinian organizations are principally the products of bourgeois and petit bourgeois movements (and not of local CP's). The result is that contrary to the Vietnamese revolution, there do not exist Palestinian (or Arab) organizations having a long history, a long tradition of revolutionary struggle. One of the causes of this fact is the failure of the Stalinist movement in the Middle East, due to its (Stalinist) politics of supporting bourgeois nationalists and the recognition of Israel by Stalin in 1948. Therefore we shall only make a few remarks about their CP's which are in the best traditions of Stalinist politics.

A. The Communist movement in Palestine, then in Israel:

The history of the Palestinian CP (then Israel) is one of a party torn by two antagonistic nationalisms, of a party divided into two sections in tow to their chauvinist bourgeoisies, and finally it is one of scission on the question of relations between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, then in Israel.

B. The Communist Parties in the Arab countries:

Because of their basically opportunistic politics and class collaboration, the Arab CP's have in reality, sabotaged the creation of autonomous parties of class politics, thus retarding autonomous action on the part of the proletariat and poor peasantry.

C. El Fatah

Fatah was created in 1956 in Gaza clandestinely. It launched its first military commandos (Al Assifa) in 1965.

-- In 1967, Fatah was only a few hundred strong, today it comprises over ten thousand fedayeen. Such an increase in so short a span of time implies "great risks" of bureaucratization because of the lack of political cadres and the relatively small numbers of real combatants (armies of the frontier, etc.)

Its political objective is the "creation of a democratic and secular Palestine where Christians, Jews, and Moslems can live without discrimination." Certain remarks are in order:

1. As it is impossible in practice to defeat Zionism without overthrowing imperialism in the entire region, it is theoretically absurd to present panaceas for the problem limited strictly to Palestine. This "solution" is purely reformist.
2. Even if one adds on, in a mechanical and opportunistic fashion, "Palestine is part of the Arab Fatherland," it is absurd to separate in fact the Palestinians from the Arab nation

in general (and from the revolutionary process which is unfolding.)

3. It is impossible to ignore the fact that the Israeli Jews constitute a national entity (different from world Jewry and the Palestinian Arabs) and not only because of the Jewish religion.
4. A "democratic" (and not socialist) state cannot resolve the national problem either of the Jews or of the Arabs; moreover, it cannot resolve the economic problems of the division of Israeli capitalism's property between the two communities (land, houses...). It must be kept in mind the Israeli capitalism is the strongest one in the area.

Presenting the problem as purely Palestinian, to be resolved in a purely Palestinian context, Fatah only asks the rest of the Arab world to aid its struggle, without paying any attention to the tie between the Palestinian struggle and the overall struggle in the Arab world. Fatah calls for "non-intervention in the internal affairs of the Arab states," which strongly implies a policy of compromise with the reactionary and petit bourgeois Arab states (secret dealings in Cairo and Amman, in particular with the butcher Hussein in October 1970, where Fatah came out as the only "legal" Palestinian resistance organization.)

The cadres of Fatah theorize about the inexistence of the revolutionary party, and to the question: "How do we guarantee the maintenance of the revolutionary line if it is not the role of a Marxist vanguard organized as such?" The unvarying response is: "Power at the front belongs to he who holds the rifle and it is certainly not the bourgeois." Past history of movements of armed struggle (notably in the Arab world... in Algeria) testify that this guarantee does not suffice.

One can, however, understand the logic of this policy if one knows the strategic conceptions of Fatah cadres: the revolution will be in two stages -- one stage of national liberation, then another of socialism; only then can we start talking about the class struggle... Here Fatah's position falls right in line with classical Stalinist conceptions.

#### D. Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

The two organizations, Popular Front and Democratic Popular Front, trace their origin to one organization, the Arab Nationalist Movement (MNA). The latter was formed in 1953-54, in every Arab country, as an "Arab Patriotic" organiza-

tion. The defeat of June, 1967, demonstrating the critical weakness of its petit bourgeois direction, caused a split. The Jordano-Palestinian section subsequently formed the P.F.L.P.

#### 1. The P.F.L.P.

Very early, a Marxist tendency appeared, which in February, 1969, split off and formed the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (D.P.F.L.P.) The P.F.L.P., meanwhile, under Dr. George Habash, pursues the traditions of the ANM, with an ideology dominated by a chauvinistic nationalism. It seeks to palliate the discrepancy with revolutionary phraseology and claims to Marxism-Leninism which are easily demolished by its methods of action (hijackings...) and the leadership of the national liberation movement which it attributes to the petit bourgeoisie... (at present it has close ties with the fearless hangmen of Bagdad...)

#### 2. The D.P.F.L.P.

The D.P.F., born of a split in the P.F. in February, 1969, can be briefly summarized thus:

- a. The D.P.F. claims that it is Marxist-Leninist... from whence comes its stated need for a revolutionary party, and its criticism of the petit-bourgeois regimes (Egypt, Syria, Algeria, etc.)
- b. As a fundamental method of struggle, it adopts armed struggle.
- c. It sees the tie between the Palestinian Revolution and the Arab Revolution; therefore, it puts forward an internationalist solution to the Palestinian problem: struggle for a socialist Palestine within a Socialist Arab Federation of the Middle East.
- d. It follows that the D.P.F. recognizes the status of national minority for Israeli Jewry (within a Socialist Arab Federation). That is why it seeks to create a base from which to collaborate with Israeli revolutionaries (Israeli Socialist Organization) for common objectives.
- e. The emergence of the D.P.F. is of great importance, for it is the first Arab organization having a mass (international) audience, implanted in the Palestinian masses and at the head of the revolutionary struggle in the Middle East, which lays claims to Marxism-Leninism (with the left wing of the NLF of South Yemen and the Dhofar resistance.)

We must note that this organization, integrated in a revolutionary struggle, has the most correct program politically (from the point of view of the theory of the Permanent Revolution.) This can be



explained by the failures and weaknesses of petit bourgeois regimes and parties, and by the shattering of Stalinist monolithism and the rising revolutionary tide (the appearance of "new vanguards").

Extremely weak at its inception (and the importance of international recognition cannot be underestimated in the early months of its formation), the D.P.F. has greatly reinforced itself. It (along with the P.F.) has been singled out for destruction and outlawed by the Jordanian Government (in October the government ordered the dissolution of the P.F. and D.P.F.; its militants were to join the only legal organization of Palestinian resistance, Fatah). Completely clandestine, it must gird itself for the future onslaught while continuing its successful work among the Jordano-Palestinian masses (See about the soviet of Irbid, etc.)

Nevertheless, it still is an organization in a state of flux, being neither a front or a party, because of its organizational weakness (it is starting to structure itself) and its political weakness (lack of cadres; heterogeneous leadership coming mainly from the ANM, and even a few local CP's and "Trotskyizing" movements); in addition, it is the main target of the Arab governments because of its program and actions (liaison with Lebanese revolutionary groups, intervention in important strikes in Jordan.)

#### E. The Israeli Socialist Organization (I.S.O.)

The I.S.O., publisher of the newspaper Matzpen, is an organization created in 1962. This organization calls for the dezionization of Israel as a necessary first step toward a socialist revolution and linking with the Arab world. It refuses to ratify the status quo and resolutely fights "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and Zionism. It holds as its principal objective the establishment of a United Socialist Federation of the Middle East where an Arab majority would live in peace with the hundreds of minority nationalities and ethnics.

For the "Israeli Jewish" minority, it calls for the status of 'national minority,' that is, after a victorious socialist revolution in the Middle East, the right to national self-determination: The only correct position in view of an integration which would be neither constraining nor repressive, and not as a form of encouragement to separation.

It is, of course, a modest beginning with only a "handful of revolutionaries," but it is the only Israeli organization which places itself squarely in the perspective of an Arab revolution, without caring about the artificial frontiers which are the heritage of imperialism.

It is the only organization which fights Israeli nationalism (Zionist or post-Zionist) in the name of proletarian internationalism.

#### III. Our Support to the Palestinian Struggle

Our support to a specific struggle remains contingent on the particular conditions as well as on the theoretical considerations. Insofar as the Arab Revolution is concerned, our support inserts itself into a radically different framework from that of Vietnam, even though certain organizations talk of the "same struggle" in a mechanistic and artificial way.

The Vietnamese Revolution was the spearhead of the world revolutionary upsurge of the 1960 s. Every one of us knows the importance which it had for the revolutionary groups just starting to arise, and the lesson in internationalism which it taught us. Especially for us, Vietnam was a breath of air, our center of gravity.

It is clear that for the Arab Revolution, the conditions are very different.

#### A. At the level of the Arab Revolution itself

The Palestinian resistance emerged at a time of global revolutionary upsurge: Vietnam is a powerful example, Latin America enters a period of prolonged civil war, the working class of the capitalist countries are combative (France, Italy...). Palestine, thus, is not the only front in the struggle against imperialism, nor is it the spearhead.

The presence of the State of Israel, the necessity for the fedayeen to struggle from bases in Arab states, their incapability of being like "fish in water" on their own battlefields (Israel has a Jewish majority, unlike Vietnam, where the foreign occupant is in a minority...), all these are great difficulties. We must not forget to add the particular character of the Jewish problem, to its real complexity and to the strong emotional factor which surrounds the whole matter; all this makes it difficult for us to get the mass support for the Palestinian resistance: how many have we met who express themselves in opposing directions when Vietnam and Israel are brought up?

#### B. Our reality and our propaganda

The multiplicity of resistance organizations mirrors the divergences which exist within the Palestinian people themselves (some are not represented as Hussein's air force, 60% Palestinian), and finds expression in

Western Europe and North America in the form of different organizations claiming to be part of the international working class movement.

We must not content ourselves with only a general support of the Palestinian resistance. We must develop all of our political line, explain why there is no solution except in a Socialist Federation of the Middle East, explain what are the rights of national minorities, and what are the unalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Not only must we refrain from using the Fatah slogan, "A democratic and secular Palestine", but we must be wary of the attacks of the left Zionists and others who contest the "progressive" character of Fatah and have no difficulty in uncovering reaction not far underneath, and thus add water to our enemy's mill. What is more, the slogan is false: Fatah will not succeed because it is incapable of solving the contradictions which have appeared even more clearly since September, 1970. Again, the presence of the world Zionist stronghold in the United States, and the emotional character of the Jewish problem, are such that any error on our part would have to be heavily paid. For Vietnam it was different in a way: mass support was present. For Palestine, nothing will be pardoned. The interests of not only US imperialism are present, but also those of the Zionists, whose demagogic propaganda forces us to be more rigorous politically and tactically. However, it must be made crystal clear that we support the Palestinian resistance movement as an anti-imperialist struggle, and not just with lip service. We do not wait for a movement to be led by Marxist revolutionaries to support it. But it is just as clear that we are going through a different period and as revolutionaries it is our duty to point out the present relationship of forces in the Middle East which point toward a socialist revolution.

We must be the counterweight to purely Arab petit bourgeois nationalist propaganda. Our revolutionary socialist analysis would permit us to demolish any left-Zionist arguments, and because of the weight of our case, compel many of these "socialist" Zionists to drop Zionism as untenable, and join the ranks of revolutionary socialists.

Propaganda against Zionism, as everyone knows, is special. It demands a serious theoretical construction in line with the complexity of the situation (such as the pamphlets of Rothschild & Weinstock, P. Buch, etc.).

While participating in coalitions to defend the Arab Revolution, we must be especially careful to maintain our own methods and analyses. Our position, in relation to others, must be made clear. Common slogans ("Defend the Arab Revolution"), wherever possible, should be put forward, and we must avoid sterile sectarianism, but at all times our goal -- a socialist Middle East -- should be recognized. Our qualified support to the DPF should be made clear. We do not demand that the DPF proclaim itself as "Trotskyist." We critically support it because its formation and especially its program, have been a major and decisive step for the Arab working masses and their revolution -- and its survival is important for the new-born vanguards throughout the world.

DEFEND THE ARAB REVOLUTION!

FOR A SOCIALIST MIDDLE EAST!

Washington, D.C.

December 14, 1970

REPORT ON THE MAY UPSURGE IN GAINESVILLE

by

David Rossi

In order to become a significant force in Florida, the YSA must successfully challenge the Regents, and then the Federal campaign to keep us off the campuses. The masses of students in the state have a well-developed consciousness in political awareness. They need, however, a pole of attraction which can steer them away from the reformism of student government politics and the reformism and sometime-ultraleftism of the remnants of new left groupings and Yippie-type elements which still infest the state campuses.

During the May upsurge in Gainesville, we had a clear indication of the influence of YSA politics and the influence of reformism and ultraleftism on one of the leading campuses in the state. SMC activity throughout the year had educated the student body to the need for massive, peaceful protest and democratic decision making in planning and carrying out mass activities.

When the Kent state events occurred, spontaneous responses took place. The Vets for Peace took leadership of the student body and called a strike for Tuesday, May 5. SMC leaflets which had originally called for Memorial Day demonstrations were hand-changed to build the strike.

YSAers immediately started publicizing the strike call. Most of the thousands of leaflets published that week were designed and run off by YSAers. At an open strike committee meeting on Tuesday evening held in student activities rooms, YSAers spoke for building the strike, for rallies in a central student mall, and for decision-making at the mass meetings. All of these points became the strike strategy.

Wednesday there were morning speeches in the mall. Antiwar banners surrounded the area--with the general theme of "Bring All the Troops Home Now" and "Out of Cambodia." At noon an official ceremony of commemoration was held at the mall, with the University President as central speaker. He ended his commiserations with a plea to end all activities and return to class.

The assembly then diminished from about 6000 to about 2000 people. The student body president spoke for a continued strike and elaboration of strike demands by strike committee that evening and a mass meeting Thursday to ratify the demands.

The evening meeting was held in a smaller room than Tuesday's and the SG president actively discouraged large

numbers of people from attending. At this meeting the old SDS ROTC line and defensive formulations in general were fought out. Our perspective, supported by almost all there, won. At this meeting, opportunist student government politicians were vocal, trying to divert the struggle into "constructive" action like cleaning up a nearby beer can-polluted lake. Their line was supported by the opportunist elements, but was not accepted as part of the strike strategy. During this period the SG president was yielding to massive student pressure and supported our position all the way. The ultralefts were unable to draw enough support to co-opt, so they went along with the majority. (During the day, following the Memorial service, masses of students marched through the campus. They marched onto the ROTC field--which was cleared of cadets just in time. Growing to about 2000, they then moved to the administration building to encourage those inside to strike. In the evening and through the night the ultralefts stayed at the building to obstruct those entering the next morning.)

On Thursday, strikers continued to speak to classes and build support for the strike. In the afternoon, a mass rally of about 3000 voted on the strike demands, including ROTC Off Campus, Disarm Campus Police, Out of Vietnam Now, End CBW Research. A march to the ROTC building followed, this one of about 4000. A march around the campus followed this, picking up support as it moved. When the march was voted on by the majority, some 200 ultralefts broke off and moved to a large auditorium. They disrupted the class, and then took over the building. As news spread and as the administration hesitated, more people moved to the building. Eventually some 3000 people occupied the building. Ultralefts dominated the early discussion and were booted and isolated. Then women's liberationists spoke, and SMCers. Late in the afternoon the university president came in, after meeting with the SG president and others not directly connected with the mass upsurge, and threatened to call in the police and national guard if the hall was not cleared by 6:00 p.m. and discussion ensued, during which it was made clear who was threatening and who was attempting to use violence, and a vote was taken to vacate before 6:00.

Plans for a candlelight march for Thursday evening, voted on during the day rally, continued. The university president had announced in the auditorium that classes were called off for Friday.

The Thursday evening candlelight march was led by the SG president and

supporters and opportunists who had earlier been in a minority. The independent voice of the students--the SMC, YSA, and other organizations--did not speak Thursday evening. This failure (partially a deliberate attempt to exclude the real leadership of the strike from the march) of YSA to speak to the largest assembled mass of students on the Thursday evening march (some 9000) contributed to future events which ended with a loss of momentum, interest and support for the strike. The speakers at the Thursday evening events did not mention the strike demands. The SG president spoke to the idea that the high point had been reached and nothing more could be done. If we had had a speaker we could have prevented the degeneration which followed.

Friday saw another mass rally on the mall, at which we sold all of the strike issues of The Militant and talked about the antiwar university. Enthusiasm was still high, but the earlier leaders of the strike and the right-wing element led by the SG president were visibly divided before the massed students. Debates took place on the speakers' stand and the ultralefts moved into view of the assembly, speaking all sorts of nonsense which diffused the focus of the rally. Again, the failure of YSA to speak at this juncture contributed to further demoralization and disorientation among the students.

Saturday a mass rally to build for a march into the city of Gainesville was held. The march had been voted on by the Friday rally, but the size of the rally had diminished considerably before the vote was called for. At the Saturday rally, a YSAer spoke for continuing the strike, building the antiwar movement, and reaching out into Gainesville with university facilities to broaden the antiwar movement. He was very well received by the 2000 people there, but many students left for the weekend, and no organizational effort was made to continue the strike. Instead, a Sunday "strike steering committee" meeting of opportunists, ultralefts, and one YSAer took place. At this meeting, the opportunists, led by the SG president, withdrew support from the strike. The ultralefts proposed a "hunger strike" to support the demands. YSA spoke for continuing the strike and got support from the ultralefts for a rally Monday. A vet at the meeting supported YSA.

On Monday morning, radio broadcasts of the university president's warnings that no assemblies or disruptions would be tolerated, along with Vets for Peace and Student Body leaders telling students to return to classes reduced the number of people at the rally to about 200. The rally voted to call off the strike, and a hunger strike was initiated.

The experience of the May upsurge at the University of Florida, in many ways the leading student activist university in the state, are in part as follows:

The SMC through its steady propaganda work and its building of demonstrations taught the lessons of mass action, democratic decision making, and peaceful protest. This was the overall strategy of the strike. Of course, YSA fought for these principles during the strike also, and though numerically very small--smaller than reformists or ultralefts--our concept of the "red university" was in fact, if not explicitly enunciated, put into practice. University mimeographing facilities, paper, telephones, rooms, etc., were used by students during the struggle. First steps were taken toward extending the antiwar movement into the communities. The faculty, students, and lower staff were for the first time working together to some degree in the campus-related antiwar movement.

Because of the massiveness of the upsurge, the smallness of the YSA in Gainesville, and the inexperience of the local as a whole in functioning as a team, opportunities to speak were missed. At crucial points--Thursday evening, Friday afternoon--one YSAer with the perspective of building and consolidating gains, could have exerted great leadership on newly radicalizing layers of the student community. A functioning team could have, without a doubt, led the struggle to a more impressive conclusion.

So, in general, a conclusion to be drawn is as follows:

The SMC was the base on which the whole May upsurge was prepared. . . from the previous September through May.

The presence of the YSA made SMC viable, and in the final analysis, the YSA contributed greatly to the foundations of the first antiwar university in Florida. With a larger cadre, and a more experienced cadre, we could have gone even further than we did. Paramount consideration should be given to the development of a smooth functioning Florida region. The Tampa local must set the example for the state in Bolshevik organization and resolute leadership.

Tampa

December 14, 1970

REPORT ON HOUSTON RECRUITMENT

by

Jeannette Tracy

There are two things to keep in mind in any discussion on recruiting new members to the YSA. 1) It is inevitable. 2) It is easy. This is not meant to be a facetious remark. Once a local develops this attitude towards recruitment, especially a new, small local, half the battle is won. The next step is to find methods and tools to use in recruiting new members.

The Houston local is approximately one year old. Throughout our first year we have experienced a steady gain in membership to where we now have an active local of 26 members. We hope that some of our experiences in the area of recruitment will be of use to other new locals around the country.

The first thing we learned is, before anyone will join your organization, they have to know it exists (not a very startling revelation, but it is the first step). Because we were a new local, we had to familiarize people at the University of Houston and the Houston community with the YSA. We found that one of the fastest and most effective ways to do this on the campus is to run in campus election campaigns. These campaigns give a new local the opportunity to reach a great deal of people in a short period of time. The publicity we gained in the spring campus election campaign through the campus newspaper, debates, buttons and leaflets did much to lay the groundwork for our YSA summer school. We netted 12% of the vote, not a bad figure when you consider that this was the first public intervention of the YSA at the U. of H. and that the previous student government president had been a member of YAF.

Our summer school was a great success, and an invaluable recruitment tool. Because it was well planned and well publicized we had a steady attendance throughout the summer and we recruited ten new people, six of whom have stayed in the YSA. We found that it is not difficult at all for new locals to have a successful summer school. We relied almost exclusively on "local talent," and did not feel that because we were a new local and many of our members were new that that should prevent us from having a summer school. The important thing was that we provided a forum where our ideas could be discussed and new members could be recruited.

It has been this past fall, however, that we have made our greatest recruitment gains. At the beginning of the semester we had tables up both at freshman orientation and during registration. We drew up a special leaflet--one side explained what

the YSA was and the other side was a pitch to buy a Militant subscription. At the end of registration we had sold approximately 25 subs and had a sizable local contact list.

We began a weekly forum series on campus which has been a great success. We usually have between 25 and 40 people at our forum every week. Besides listing the forum in the What's Happening column in the campus newspaper, we try to have a feature article in the newspaper on each forum, plus general leafletting and posters. We have found this has paid off and have built up a large periphery of independents. On weeks that we can't hold our forum for some reason it is necessary to announce it in the newspaper or people will show up anyway because it has become their regular Friday night activity to attend YSA forums.

Of course there is nothing like The Militant and the ISR if you want to reach people with your ideas. We have found that it is best to regularize our sales on campus on a daily basis. People begin to look forward to seeing "their" Militant salesperson who they buy a Militant from every week. It also makes selling Militant subs a lot easier. The same is true for the ISR. We also have literature tables up twice a week.

At the U. of H. there is a weekly function known as "Sound Off." Microphones are set up in front of the Student Union and students can discuss any issue they wish. There is usually a large crowd--75 to 125 people and anyone can speak. We make sure that the YSA is present each week since political topics are usually discussed. It has reached a point where now every week independents request that someone from the YSA speak on the particular subject because they are beginning to look to the YSA as the spokesmen and women for the radical movement at the U. of H. If your campus doesn't have a sound off, it would be well worth the time of a local to investigate the possibility of getting one started.

We recently had our first socialist educational conference and found it was a big help in solidifying our local and regional contacts. We also received extensive TV coverage which was an extra bonus. Because of the success of our first conference, we are planning on having one every semester from now on.

This report has mainly dealt with the public functions held in the name of

the YSA. Of course, much of our recruitment has come from our intervention and participation in various movements, particularly the SMC and the U. of H. Women's Liberation Front. We have learned several lessons which have expedited our recruitment in various areas of work. One is the question of red-baiting. In Houston, red-baiting comes from the radical right rather than the ultraleft. In every instance we have responded aggressively and immediately. We have been accused of "subverting" the SMC, and our response has been to issue press statements stating that not only do we work in the SMC, we are leaders and builders of the antiwar movement. By responding in this way, we have accomplished two very important things. We have gained the respect of the independents who work with us in various movements, and we have successfully countered and eliminated any semblance of a witch-hunt atmosphere that existed on the campus; essential tasks in providing an atmosphere where we can recruit the healthiest new radicals to the YSA.

Our campus fraction has regular discussions on recruitment so that we are always aware of potential new recruits. We use a variety of methods; individual discussions, inviting people to dinner for more lengthy discussions, parties, etc. As a result we have recruited heavily from the SMC and are beginning to

see the results of our work in the women's liberation movement.

In any discussion of recruitment, it is important to deal with the question of integrating new members into the functioning of the local so that once they are recruited they don't leave the organization. We have been quite successful in this here in Houston. This is reflected in our membership--24 of our members are consistent active YSAers. Every new member is given an assignment immediately after joining so that he or she contributes to the activities of the local. We have started a new members class which is open to new members and close contacts. We have encouraged new members to take an active part in the planning of these classes rather than having the whole series planned for them.

One last word on recruitment. There are many ideas and ways locals can recruit new members and each local has to experiment a little to find which things work the best for its particular situation. The most important thing is that every member in the local has a "campaign attitude" towards recruitment. We are the biggest and best organized youth group in the country and can take pride in our organization. With this kind of enthusiastic attitude, recruitment of new members becomes a natural part of YSA activities.

Houston

December 16, 1970

GIs AND THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

by

Bob Wilkinson

The last year has seen a tremendous growth in antiwar activity among active duty servicemen and servicewomen. One sign of this growth is the number of GI newspapers, now nearly 80, with one-fourth of them being published by GIs stationed overseas, particularly in Japan and Germany. The Concerned Officers Movement (COM), which came on the scene at the time of the November 15, 1969 march on Washington, has spread to a number of bases, and even has a chapter in Iceland!

A petition calling for immediate withdrawal recently circulated by the GI Press Service has received a total of nearly 2000 signatures, 300 of them from Vietnam. Current plans are to resume circulation of the petition in the near future, and at the same time raise funds to publish the petition as ads in major U.S. newspapers.

Also in the last year more GIs than ever before participated in mass demonstrations. On May 16, Armed Forces Day, 23 U.S. military installations were closed to the public after GIs and civilians called mass marches and picket lines around these bases. Several thousand GIs took part in the October 31 actions around the country; in El Paso, one of the chief organizers of the October 31 demonstration was the Ft. Bliss GIs for Peace.

The two most dramatic manifestations of GI antiwar sentiment are occurring in Vietnam and Germany.

In Germany a substantial section of the 20,000 Black servicemen stationed there have formed organizations to counter racial oppression. Rallies of as many as 1000-1200 have been held, and at many bases Black GIs have been able to win concessions from the brass. Black and white servicemen are cooperating to circulate antiwar petitions and publish newspapers.

But the impact of general antiwar sentiment in this country is nowhere more keenly felt than in Vietnam itself. The massive reluctance of infantrymen to engage in combat, which has been receiving increased attention in the bourgeois press, has hampered the Army's efficiency and must have been a factor in at least two policy decisions in Washington--the increased use of air power in Southeast Asia and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's recent announcement that Reservists will be used in future imperialist forays. This phenomenon has grown up alongside of the civilian antiwar movement. While the antiwar GI was

virtually unknown in 1965, especially in Vietnam, it is now almost commonplace that entire infantry units will make life miserable for commanders and NCO's. Nowadays it is the "gung-ho" GI who is a rarity. This attitude reflects the general sentiment of the population as a whole; it should be no more surprising today to hear of antiwar GIs in Vietnam than it is to hear of an antiwar referendum winning in Detroit. Although antiwar views are shared by a section of the American population which has a unique potential to end the war, it still remains for the mood of 3 million GIs to become a movement.

The organized GI antiwar movement, although it has grown considerably, is still in its infancy. There is no national GI organization with any authority, and communications among groups at different bases remains sporadic. Even antiwar groups which represent more than one unit on any given post are rare. Most groups are composed of GIs in one company, and it is hard for these groups to break out of this on-base isolation.

The contradiction between mass GI antiwar sentiment and the relatively small number of antiwar activists in the army points to the need for antiwar GIs to understand the relationship between on-post and off-post activity.

Antiwar soldiers have an excellent opportunity to reach out to other GIs by relating to the general civilian antiwar movement. Veterans and students are in a particularly good position to support antiwar GIs by helping out with the publication of papers and leaflets, getting space for meetings and other technical aspects of GI work. More important is the support civilians can give in struggles for the free speech rights of soldiers and the building of mass demonstrations which reach out to and involve all layers of the population, including GIs. Mass demonstrations and free speech fights make it very difficult for military authorities to suppress GI antiwar activity and open the door to massive involvement of members of the armed forces.

In fact, the amount of off-base activity soldiers engage in now increases the amount of activity they will be able to carry out on-base in the future. Because of the support antiwar soldiers have received from the antiwar movement, commanders find it harder and harder to prevent GIs from speaking at rallies, taking part in demonstrations, going to

civilian antiwar meetings, and writing and circulating GI newspapers off-post and out of uniform. On-post, however, it is still difficult for GIs to exercise their constitutional rights by holding meetings, distributing newspapers, etc., even during off-duty hours. The formation of GIs United at Ft. Jackson, S.C., in which soldiers gathered to discuss the war on-post and in uniform was a significant advance in the GI movement, just slightly ahead of its time. Many more GI activists will have to learn the lessons of the Ft. Jackson case before such formations become the norm.

Aside from Army regulations and military law handed down from the Pentagon, commanders have at their disposal local base regulations which they can change from day to day to harass antiwar GIs. When these fail, the military may resort to punitive transfers and administrative discharges to eliminate dissident servicemen. These informal methods of punishment are extremely difficult to challenge since they usually take place too quickly to get out any publicity or initiate legal action. When such cases do hit the courts, the Army tries to hide their punitive nature by disguising them as administrative action to meet normal command requirements. Joe Miles' transfer to Alaska last year is a case in point. Recently, however, Federal courts have begun to intervene in cases of this type. In a case now underway at Ft. Hamilton, N.Y., a court has temporarily stopped the Army from transferring antiwar GIs to Vietnam and Korea. A victory here could set an important precedent in future cases involving punitive transfers.

Also in the courts now are a number of cases involving the right of GIs to circulate antiwar papers on post. One of the most important of these is the legal suit for on-post distribution rights of Bragg Briefs. This suit was initiated by Joe Miles and Ft. Bragg GIs United in 1969. A hearing on the case will be heard in Federal court early next year.

This brief sketch of the current stage of the GI antiwar movement indicates the motivation behind the orientation the YSA takes toward this area of activity. We see the causes of GI antiwar sentiment as being basically the same as the causes of general civilian antiwar sentiment, because GIs are civilians temporarily in uniform. Their temporary conditions of life as servicemen introduces a certain uniqueness to the GI movement but does not separate GIs from the rest of the antiwar movement.

Our emphasis on Vietnam as the central issue should be obvious because of the soldier's direct and immediate relation to that war. Every member of the armed forces, draftee or "volunteer," officer or EM, is affected by the Southeast Asian

war. Most are opposed to the war and many are ready to do something about it. (A note on "lifers:" Even career NCOs are not immune from radicalization. While most identify with the Army's interests, they still have to live with the lower ranking GIs. A few lifers--e.g., Don Duncan--have left the Army to join the antiwar movement. As the war continues we can expect more multi-striped hawks to change their feathers--and what a group of experienced NCOs who opposed the war could do inside the Army would be incredible.)

Because GIs are citizens with all the constitutional rights, we emphasize open, legal activity. Many GIs are sympathetic with other soldiers who are thrown in the stockade for individual acts of resistance, and at times frustration runs high in the military, but they will not take part in large numbers or for very long in actions which will lead only to their own victimization. The vanguard of the GI movement are not the first ones to get thrown in the brig, but the ones who can effectively involve their buddies in massive, legally-protected actions which the brass cannot ignore, hide or destroy. When GI activists function openly and in a way which will minimize the chances of victimization and consequent demoralization, many more GIs can be drawn into antiwar activity.

The best example of the success of our orientation toward GIs is the Ft. Jackson case. GIs Speak Out Against the War, published by Pathfinder Press, elaborates in detail the lessons of that struggle. It is a virtual handbook for antiwar GIs and their supporters.

With the increase of GI antiwar sentiment, our opponents have played more of a role in the last year. Conscious reformist tendencies have not had a large impact so far on the GI movement, but we can expect that as the 1972 elections approach their intervention will be larger. A few GI groups, such as Baltimore GIs United and Reservists Against the War, have given editorial support or raised money for "peace" candidates in the 1970 elections, and a number of other independent groups have supported various proposals to reform the military.

The Communist Party and the Young Workers Liberation League are virtually out of the picture as far as work with GIs is concerned. In the past they were oriented toward individual resistance, such as the case of Ron Lockman, who refused to go to Vietnam.

The American Servicemen's Union (ASU) is the largest single organization of antiwar GIs, and their paper, The Bond, is the oldest GI paper still in existence. Initiated by Youth Against War and Fascism, ASU's leadership is ultraleft,



seeing stockade rebellions, etc., as the spark which will somehow lead to an upsurge among GIs. In addition it is one of the most thoroughly sectarian groups in existence; claiming to be the movement, it tries to take credit for everything done by antiwar GIs. But this orientation does not go much beyond the national spokesmen and a few ASU organizers. GIs looking for an antiwar group to join who happen to run across a copy of The Bond need only send in a dollar to be a member of a GI union (no less)--but this does not make them ultraleft sectarians. In fact many ASU "locals" are simply independent antiwar groups which call themselves ASU and most ASU members are politically healthy--after discussion, they will tend to agree with our approach to the antiwar movement.

The Movement for a Democratic Military (MDM) is a much smaller group. As its name might suggest, it is the RYM II of the GI movement, which identifies with groups like the Panthers and has a vague "anti-imperialist" program. They have a few chapters in California, the Chicago area and some contacts on the East Coast, but their ultraleft rhetoric isolates them from the majority of GIs.

Last summer elements of the New Mobilization Committee set up and ran the GI Alliance. GIA managed to put out a few mailings and hold some small regional conferences before folding. The conferences were small, involving no more than 10-20 GIs at a time, and because the organizers had no real action perspective, the meetings accomplished nothing. Lack of momentum and friction within the staff led to its being disbanded early this fall. More recently, Rennie Davis has been talking to a number of GI activists about the People's Peace Treaty and his plan to "shut down" Washington this May. Whether Davis and others opposed to our mass action perspective will make a concerted effort to win GIs away from the April 24 demonstrations remains to be seen.

A number of pacifists, not all of them aligned with Dave Dellinger's outlook, have been working with GIs in recent months. AFSC and other groups have set up counselling centers near some bases. Many GI groups have included conscientious objector counselling among soldiers. Not a few of these have given advice on how some deserters have started new lives in Canada or Sweden.

Pacifist sentiment, like ultraleftism, is alive and growing within the ranks of the military, but because of its nature, it cannot become a rallying point for masses of GIs.

All of the competing perspectives for the antiwar movement--reformism,

ultraleftism, and independent mass action--are reflected among the organized groups of antiwar GIs. These differing perspectives will continue to compete with each other from here on out. The organized GI movement, however, is in no position to embroil itself in sharp factional battles, and most antiwar GIs, new to political activity, gain little from the experience but demoralization. We are for the maximum unity of GIs in antiwar activity with civilians, and we support independent GI antiwar formations.

At the same time, the restrictive nature of the military does not permit working with other approaches to GI work on a coalition basis. A GI antiwar coalition which includes individual resistance type activities along side of legal mass action would subject all members of the coalition to military repression and would isolate its members from the majority of antiwar GIs. The security of the GIs we are working with, and the responsibility we have as leaders of the antiwar movement, requires that we strictly adhere to the three point approach outlined in the GI section of the NEC antiwar resolution.

As leading activists in the Student Mobilization Committee and the National Peace Action Coalition, YSAers can play a major role in orienting the antiwar movement toward GIs in the coming period. Both NPAC and the SMC should establish a GI task force to involve GIs in the April 24 demonstrations and solicit their endorsement for the spring antiwar activities, and support civil liberties cases of antiwar soldiers. This activity not only builds the GI movement, it is also an important means of showing the seriousness of the antiwar movement as it reaches out to other sectors of the population--particularly labor and Third World forces.

A priority task will be re-establishing the GI Press Service as a regularly publishing means of communication with antiwar servicemen and service-women around the world. Local SMCs can circulate GI Press Service among GIs near military bases, bus and airline terminals, and to draftees at induction centers. In addition the paper should be shown to civilians so they can see what is happening in a sector of the antiwar movement about which too little is generally known. Civilian financial support, through subscriptions and donations, also makes possible free distribution to GIs.

When YSAers are drafted, they are put on leave of absence for the duration of their military service. This is to protect the member from victimization on the grounds that he is "under control" of an outside organization. But YSAers enter the Army with a background of political experience, and a realization of

the opportunities they have to be part of a significant and powerful component of the antiwar movement. They also know their rights and can talk with their fellow servicemen about the war and encourage them to participate in mass, legal antiwar activities. Many servicemen, as a result of their opposition to

the war, have become much more open to socialist ideas, and many of these GIs can be recruited to our socialist perspective.

New York

December 19, 1970

REPORT TO THE BOSTON YSA ON "A CRITICISM OF TWO ASPECTS OF THE NEC  
RESOLUTION ON THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT"

by

Bob Geb

In the document I submitted to the convention discussion at the end of November, I put forward the thesis that the feminist movement is equal in political significance to the labor movement and the movements of oppressed nations and nationalities. Let me start by giving my reasons for this.

The determining factor in history is the existing division of labor. In contemporary capitalism there are three fundamental divisions of labor -- labor is divided by sex, by class, and by nation. In each of the three cases, the division is exploitative and oppressive, and in each case the only thing that can end the oppression is the dismantling of capitalist society and the construction of world socialism.

As a result, this three-way division of labor produces a feminist movement, a labor movement, and national liberation movements. Each movement is objectively pro-socialist from the start, and each ultimately becomes a consciously socialist movement. As the NEC resolution phrases it, each of these "is a revolutionary struggle in its own right."

As brief as this is, it's necessarily a very simplified analysis. But I believe that it is a fully valid simplification.

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Some comrades have wondered what were the concrete implications of this analysis, that make it differ, or might make it differ, from the recent traditions of our movement. As an example I offer the question of the party.

Since historical forces find their concrete expression in political parties, you can understand a political theory very well just by observing how it evaluates various real, and hypothetical, political parties and types of political parties. A basic feature of Trotskyist theory is that we draw an emphatic class line in evaluating parties; likewise, another basic feature of our tendency is that we draw an emphatic national line, between parties of an oppressor nation and parties of an oppressed nation or nationality -- how many non-Trotskyists understand the significance of La Raza Unida?

We favor labor's organizing itself into a political party, and we favor

oppressed nationalities organizing into political parties, because political parties are the ultimate weapon of sectors of society. Since we view the struggle of labor, and of oppressed nations and nationalities, as revolutionary and worthy struggles in their own rights, because they are the struggles of oppressed fundamental sectors of society, therefore we recommend to labor and to the oppressed nationalities, that they create and employ their ultimate weapon, a party. We feel that this step is the decisive step in these struggles.

Those comrades who share my analysis, feel that the same logic applies in the case of sexual oppression. Hence we conclude that the decisive step for the women's movement is the building of the political party of the female sex -- a party for women, as La Raza Unida is a party for Chicanos.

If this concrete projection is accepted, then important means of practical implementation are already relevant. First, Trotskyists in our general political work, should advocate the concept of a female political party, as we advocate the concept of a Black political party.

Furthermore, major gains in this direction can be made even in the present historical period. These mainly relate to those areas where exceptionally favorable conditions exist, such as in Boston, where there is a very strong and very healthy feminist organization, Female Liberation. If you agree with my basic analysis, then you should agree that comrades should begin to advocate that Female Liberation run candidates for political office in the general elections, viewing this as a step toward the formation of a comprehensive women's party. In the present period, the present program of Female Liberation is basically adequate for this purpose, for the same reasons that the present program of La Raza Unida is basically adequate for the present period.

To adopt this concrete orientation, would be a significant innovation in the traditions of Trotskyism, and comrades should be conscious of this and not treat the matter casually. I'm not mainly a scholar, so I'm not the best authority on the subject, but I don't know of any case in the history of our movement internationally, where we supported a women's party, or where we even said that

we might support a women's party. I can report that in my own education on the subject, most of which came with the discussion of giving critical support to Herbert Aptheker in New York in 1966, I was taught that the principles of Trotskyism permit our supporting a specifically socialist party, a labor party, or a party of an oppressed nation or nationality -- and that a party which was none of these must necessarily be reactionary. No mention was made of a women's party, hence presumably it was not included in the category of parties we can support.

My feeling is that the reasons why we support labor and oppressed-national parties, logically must also apply to a women's party. This is a good example of what I mean when I say that the women's movement should be viewed as equal in political significance to the labor movement and the movements of the oppressed nations and nationalities.

I will close by pointing out the snowballing tendency that exists when sectors of the oppressed organize themselves

into parties with which to fight their oppressors. The basic idea of which La Raza Unida has been such a good example, could be spread nationally much faster, if Female Liberation and groups like it in other cities took the first step of running candidates against the bourgeois parties in their local elections. What could possibly set a better example, what could better accelerate the process of the formation of a Black party and a labor party?

(Post script: a decision to carry out the policy I advocate, should not be made hastily, and so I don't propose that the convention make that decision. Further, such a decision should not just be a YSA decision, but a decision of the whole American Trotskyist movement, a decision that the YSA and SWP make together. My purpose has just been to get comrades to give serious consideration to the idea.)

Boston

December 19, 1970

BUILDING A CAMPUS BASE  
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

by

Sharon Naiman

Washington, D.C., is a city with five major universities. In order to do effective campus work we felt that we should concentrate on one of these campuses with all our forces. George Washington University is centrally located in the city and also tends to be a major political center due to the numbers of national actions held in Washington throughout the last few years.

In the fall we had nine members on campus, five of whom were full time students, and the rest of whom worked on campus. Since that time we have recruited six new members from campus and have the possibility of recruiting four or five more before the end of the term.

Most of our SMC work and most of the women's liberation work is concentrated on George Washington. We have held city-wide SMC meetings as well as GW SMC meetings on the GW campus. We initiated a campus women's liberation group before the August 26th strike which was small at the time, but gained enough members to build and sponsor a women's educational conference which was the largest gathering of women in the city outside of August 26th and the women's workshops at the Constitutional Convention.

In viewing the tasks of the GW campus fraction, we felt that the fraction, in order to truly become a force in campus politics, must function as autonomously as possible; that is, it would almost be a local within a local with a person in charge of sales, literature, antiwar work, etc., and the fraction head coordinating the overall work. We projected each campus member having an assignment within the fraction, not just being assigned to the fraction. Frequent fraction meetings were necessary, sometimes twice a week as activities in the fall increased. Since most of our antiwar work and most of our women's liberation work was concentrated at GW all the women comrades had double assignments, which made it necessary for frequent consultation and planning.

We also took a very serious attitude towards the campus press. Every opportunity that presented itself was taken advantage of by our members. The GW Hatchet constantly attacked us for our antiwar work, red-baiting us without end. Each of these attacks was answered by us or by non-YSAers. The Yippies who are very big on campus and have quite a following,

made their *raison d'etre* to attack the YSA and the SMC, often trying to physically break up our meetings. These attacks were also answered in the campus press, at one point calling for an open debate between us and the Yips which they refused.

We initiated campus coalitions around the Palestinian revolution, the repression in Quebec and have made it a point to get articles about these areas into the campus paper. But since there are not many radical campus groups outside of the Yips and a few Radical Student Union types who concentrated their energies solely on the Constitutional Convention, the coalitions were not terrifically viable. Limited success resulted from both coalitions.

It should be explained that GW has no student government. The student government resigned last year over its powerlessness. What exists is three boards of directors for university affairs made up of students, professional administrators, and professors. The three boards combined total about twenty people, and since they control all campus policies and all campus money, they are a *de facto* student government. On the left, other than ourselves, is the Radical Student Union, the Yippies, the SMC, an inactive Black People's Union, and an Organization of Arab Students which has only one active member. There is really no middle like the Young Democrats, and there are no other organized tendencies other than ourselves. There is a well-organized right wing (YAF) which frequently tries to bring suit against the university for closing down classes during the May events last spring. There is also a large and active Zionist organization.

At this point, the demand for a real student government has not been raised and the student body seems neutral on the issue. The struggle for a student government that has real power and control over the university will probably grow out of a strike against the war or other issues where the whole question of who controls the university can be raised along with the demands for a red university.

The YSA at George Washington also has an office in the student center, which is a combination bookstore-headquarters. Originally, we had projected having regular office hours so that literature could be sold, etc., but this has been difficult to maintain. Next

semester we plan to open the term with a series of YSA classes to be held on campus for those people who are interested in joining the YSA. Other than women's liberation work and SMC work, all the campus members feel that it is extremely important for the YSA to maintain a presence on campus through such activities as YSA classes, selling papers, etc., so that we are not only known as the most active campus antiwar people and feminists, but revolutionary socialists as well.

In initiating SMC and women's liberation groups we were careful to set up broad steering committees which took responsibility for carrying out the work. The most active people in women's liberation and SMC were integrated into the leaderships of these groups, making it difficult for the Hatchet and others to bait us.

Recruitment to the YSA was not an overnight process; it took 2 -3 months of consistent work and constant contact with these people so that they went through each development and experience with us and drew the same conclusions that we did.

It has been our experience that campus work can only be carried out effectively by members who are on campus, either as workers (secretaries, clerks, etc.) or students. In order for us to build a base, a periphery, and to become an integral part of campus life it was necessary to be there - in the student center, selling The Militant, etc. - all the time. Although non-campus members participate heavily in our major areas of work on campus, it is the campus members who are known as the consistent activists, the ones who write letters to the paper, the ones who initiate the coalitions, the ones who can always be seen leafletting on the corners. The results we've had implementing the campus orientation at GW show that a serious attitude about building a campus fraction can increase the YSA's involvement and influence on the university, so that when another May explodes, we will be in a position to play a leading role in the events.

Washington D.C.

December 19, 1970

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW - SUBS AND SALES

by

Lee Smith

During the fall subscription drive, the ISR projected a national quota of 2,500 new readers. This quota was based on the belief that one in six new Militant subscribers would also buy a sub to the ISR. Since this was the first large-scale attempt to sell subscriptions to the ISR, there was little in the way of past experience to indicate what a realistic quota might be. The 2,500 mark, which was high in conjunction with The Militant's 15,000 goal, was viewed as a challenge, and was based on two primary assumptions about the ISR which proved to be entirely justified by the final sub drive total of 2,320.

The first assumption was that the nature of the current radicalization - the serious and fundamental questioning of capitalism by massive numbers of young people who have shown commitment and dedication in their participation in the antiwar, women's liberation, student, and Third World movements - provided the potential climate of acceptance for and interests in the ideas of revolutionary socialism. This belief prompted the initiation of the new ISR last May, and the fall sub drive was our first chance to really test its validity by aiming for a significant broadening of the subscription base.

The second assumption underlying the sub drive effort was that the ISR could be sold to the same people who buy The Militant - that a good percentage of those who are interested in the movements and issues covered each week in The Militant would want to increase their understanding by following the in-depth analysis each month in the ISR. This assumption was also born out by the success of the sub drive. In areas where the sales of subs were organized as originally proposed (that is, to ask each new Militant subscriber to buy an ISR sub), often even more than one in six responded positively.

These two assumptions upon which both the initiation of the magazine

and the sub drive effort were based, are now more than hypotheses. They are facts. These facts have not ceased to be relevant with the termination of the sub drive, but can be very useful to comrades in organizing sales of the ISR for the duration of the school year. The introductory offer of 3 months for \$1.00 will continue, and subs as well as single copies can be sold.

Sales of the magazine should be organized as the sub drive was, in conjunction with sales of The Militant. Each YSA local should assign a sales director or sales committee to coordinate sales of both publications. Since the ISR can and should be sold wherever The Militant is sold - whether by each salesperson taking both, or by assigning some comrades to sell The Militant and some the ISR - separate sales directors are unnecessary. The sales director (or sales team, if the local has a sales committee), by being responsible for sales of both publications, can better keep informed about and adjust bundle orders, finances, sales figures, and all other aspects of sales.

With this approach toward ISR sales, one of cooperation and coordination of sales with those of The Militant, maximum advantage can be taken of the potential readership for both publications, without having separate sales structures for the two and trying to reach a different audience with each.

The ISR belongs on a library shelf. It also belongs on demonstrations, at women's liberation and antiwar meetings, on literature tables, street sales, and wherever YSAers are. The Militant should be there too. So let's kill two birds with one stone and sell them together.

New York

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