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## EXCERPTS FROM ANTIWAR REPORT TO JUNE, 1972 YSA PLENUM

by Fred Lovgren, Brooklyn YSA

(The following contribution consists of excerpts from the Antiwar Report approved by the June 1972 plenum of the YSA National Committee, dealing primarily with the spring 1972 antiwar upsurge.)

A study in the May Scientific American revealed that from 1965 to 1971, the U.S. government exploded 26 billion pounds of explosives in Indochina. That is over twice the total used by the U.S. in all of World War II. Of those 26 billion pounds, 21 billion were exploded in South Vietnam, or 487 pounds per acre of the country, or 1215 pounds for every person in South Vietnam, including Thieu. Those bombs and shells have left an estimated 21 million craters in South Vietnam, displaced 2.75 billion cubic yards of earth, and sprayed fragments over 26 million acres of the countryside. That study is now totally outdated since the most intense bombing of the war has come this spring.

That study is just one clear indication that U.S. imperialism is continuing to pursue a course of seeking a military victory over the Vietnamese liberation forces. And in response to those actions of the U.S. in Indochina, there has developed a mass antiwar movement, unprecedented in scope and in breadth in the history of America.

We are now in one of the most decisive periods in the history of the struggle of the people of Vietnam for self-determination. In reaction to the powerful offensive launched by the Vietnamese liberation forces, the U.S. has assembled in Indochina one of the largest air and naval armadas in the history of imperialist warfare. Threatened with a possible victory by the liberation forces, the U.S. government pulled out the stops on all its military options in Indochina.

Bombing Hanoi and Haiphong has been described as a routine practice, the harbors in North Vietnam have been mined, and a genocidal policy of massive saturation bombing throughout Vietnam has been instituted. It has become commonplace to read of airstrikes in the vicinity of China, bombing missions that have destroyed major factories, bridges, rail lines, hydroelectric plants, and petroleum storage facilities throughout North Vietnam, and to learn of the mass destruction of schools, hospitals, and residential areas in Hanoi, Haiphong, and elsewhere.

The scope and rapidity of the U.S. response to the gains made on the battlefield by the Vietnamese liberation forces confirms our analysis that Vietnam is the center of world politics today. And the continued impact of the war on American politics was reconfirmed by the events this spring in the American antiwar movement.

In response to the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong in the middle of April, and to the blockade of North Vietnamese harbors in early May, there occurred the longest sustained series of mass antiwar actions in the history of the antiwar movement. On the nationally coordinated days of antiwar action of April 22, April 29, May 4, May 13, and May 21, hundreds of thousands of young people took to the streets of this country to demand that the U.S. get out of Vietnam now. Combined with the five nationally coordinated days of mass antiwar action called by the SMC, NPAC, and others in the antiwar movement, there were two intense periods of antiwar activities on the campuses.

As the political report to this plenum pointed out, those were the most significant campus explosions since May, 1970. The first wave of the upsurge this spring began immediately after the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong on April 15-16. This wave of activity continued through the mass national antiwar demonstrations called for April 22, and then declined after Nixon's April 26 speech announcing further troop withdrawals and the return of the U.S. to the Paris peace talks. The second wave of the upsurge began on May 8 immediately after Nixon announced the mining of North Vietnamese ports. That upsurge, that wave of activity, ended with the May 21 March on Washington and Nixon's arrival in Moscow in the morning of May 22.

### ANTIWAR MOVEMENT PRIOR TO APRIL 15

Before analyzing this spring's antiwar upsurge, it is important that we take a brief look at the activity of the antiwar movement in the pre-upsurge period. The period from December to the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong in April was one of modest antiwar activity. It was characterized by smaller SMC meetings, teach-ins, rallies, and picket lines.

This was part of an overall lull that existed in the student movement. It was due to illusions that the war was winding down, that Vietnamization would be a success, and it was due to another illusion that either Nixon would end the war in an effort to get reelected, or that a Democratic peace candidate would be elected who would end the war. One confirmation of these illusions and of a lull in activity was the February SMC national conference, which reflected the narrowing activist base of the student antiwar movement at that time.

In drawing a balance sheet of the period before April 15, two important points should be made. First, through following a consistent strategy of building an independent antiwar movement, the Student Mobilization Committee was able to

strengthen its authority and influence in the student movement, even during the lull in activity. This was shown at the February SMC conference, where representatives of the McGovern, Muskie, and Lindsay youth campaigns, in addition to the International Student Movement for the United Nations, and the National Student Lobby, attended the conference and supported the proposal for demonstrations on April 22.

Second, the building of April 22 paved the way for both the SMC and the YSA to intervene fully into the upsurge that developed. The maintenance of an independent, mass action oriented antiwar movement, which was projected at the YSA convention in December, played an important role in the initial reaction of people on the campuses to the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong.

And this reaction was preceded by steady months of consistent organizing work, done on both a national and local scale, by both the SMC and NPAC. The fact that April 22 had been a long-standing focus date for the movement was one of the key reasons that it was the largest of the actions that took place throughout the upsurge.

#### CAMPUS ANTIWAR UPSURGE

Now I want to take up the upsurge that did develop after the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong and after the mining of the harbor.

This stage of the upsurge was uneven in size, in scope, and in duration across the country in both the first and the second waves of activity that occurred. There was not a general student strike at any point, as there was in May, 1970.

An American Council of Education survey, released after the first wave of activity, shows that during the first wave, antiwar activities took place on more campuses than in May, 1970, but that the actions were not as large and did not involve as many students as those of May, 1970.

This upsurge spread to the high schools in only a few, limited instances. One of the few examples of high school involvement was the activity among Black high school students in Washington, D.C., especially at Eastern High School. One of the main developments in the high schools that did occur was the formation of a number of high school chapters of the Student Mobilization Committee.

But in general, antiwar struggles did not break out in the high schools to a significant extent, and the major participation of high school activists was in the nationally coordinated mass actions.

The upsurge, though, did illustrate the depth of antiwar sentiment on the campuses and throughout the population as a whole. The escalations quickly reactivated many of those who had slid into inactivity in the period before the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong. In addition, a willingness to act against the war was shown on the part of very large numbers of students. Mass meetings and demonstrations of 5,000 and over were held at Berkeley, Madison, Kent State, Michigan State and elsewhere. Thousands of people demonstrated at the University of Maryland, Santa Barbara, UCLA, Boulder, University of Illinois in Champaign, University of Florida, and other places throughout the country.

A willingness to act against the war was further indicated by the agreement reached immediately after the announcement of the mining of the harbors in North Vietnam, by the National Peace Action Coalition, the SMC, the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice, Americans for Democratic Action, sections of the trade union movement and others to come together to call the May 21 March on Washington. It's our opinion that before the sharp edge of the upsurge was taken off by Nixon's trip to Moscow, a mass explosion of sentiment was very close to the surface. There was an agreement by major reformist forces including SANE, ADA, and major sections of the trade union movement to seriously build the May 21 March on Washington. That agreement created the potential for a gigantic outpouring of sentiment on May 21.

McGovern's initial statements about the danger of World War III, and a couple of New York Times editorials reflecting this same basic theme, indicated that there was a division developing within the ruling class. In the May 1970 upsurge a similar division in the ruling class over the government's actions in Vietnam spread right up into Nixon's cabinet. During this recent upsurge, such a division could very well have had a decisive effect, but of course it was cut off.

And as we discussed before, it was cut off because world Stalinism intervened and accepted Nixon, one of the world's top war criminals, into the Kremlin and dissipated completely the sense of urgency among antiwar activists in the United States.

The blockade of the North Vietnamese harbors, in a military and a political sense, was an action comparable to the Cuban missile crisis in the early 1960s. However, there was one major difference--there was not the unity around the President on the part of the population that occurred during the Cuban missile crisis. In fact just the opposite occurred this spring. There was a strong sense of solidarity and identification, especially among young people, with the Vietnamese liberation forces--the supposed enemy. The feeling of solidarity that spread through-

out the upsurge was not with the United States government, but with the embattled people of Vietnam and their struggle for self-determination.

### ROLE OF THE SMC

Throughout the upsurge, the political and organizational role that the Student Mobilization Committee was able to play reaffirmed the correctness of the strategy of building a powerful national student antiwar organization, on a united front basis of mass action in the streets for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Indochina.

This spring the SMC on a national scale was able to step in immediately to project a mass action strategy for the upsurge. This was possible because the SMC alone has assimilated the lessons and the experience of seven years of antiwar activity especially the May 1970 student upsurge. Within a span of five days, the Student Mobilization Committee was able to call, build, organize and successfully hold an emergency national student antiwar conference which helped provide national direction and leadership to antiwar activists on the campuses and high schools. Such a move was definitely needed in the development of the May 1970 upsurge but it was one the SMC was unable to take.

The SMC was also able to immediately set up and organize a National Information Center that was looked to by activists throughout the country and that helped give national coordination and direction to campus activists through the publicizing of nationally coordinated mass actions such as those of April 22, May 13, and May 21.

Three special issues of the Student Mobilizer were printed by the SMC National Information Center. Through the National Information Center, the Student Mobilizer, the emergency conference, the nationally coordinated mass actions that were called, and the work of SMC activists throughout the country, the dominant political slogan, the dominant theme that ran throughout the upsurge, was "Out Now!"--not "Support the Seven Points," not "Set the Date."

The popularization of the demand of "Out Now!" was at that time, and is continuing to be, especially important, as Nixon and the U.S. government are carrying out a two-fold strategy in their attempt to achieve a military victory in Indochina.

The first part of the U.S. strategy, outlined in the beginning of the report, is to physically bomb the Vietnamese into submission through a genocidal policy of massive, saturation bombing throughout Southeast Asia. The second part is an attempt to enlist the aid of the Soviet Union and China, who appear to be cooperating, to bring pressure to bear on the Vietnamese people to negotiate away their right to self-determination.

In this decisive period in the course of the Vietnamese revolution, never has it been clearer or more important that the demand raised by the American antiwar movement must be the only demand that is in accordance with the right of the people of Indochina to self-determination, "U.S. Out of Southeast Asia Now," "Out Now," and "Immediate Withdrawal."

Through the role that the SMC played nationally as the organizer and builder of mass actions during the upsurge, the SMC's authority and its influence in the student movement has greatly increased. Just one indication of this is that for the first time an article on the strategy of the antiwar university appeared on the op-ed page of the New York Times.

Each period of mass antiwar activity that has developed has been unique in its nature and in the objective situation in which it takes place. This spring's upsurge was no exception. It was different from May 1970 in that, although large numbers of students expressed a willingness to take action against the war, there was not a general student strike as in May 1970. In fact, there was a great deal of confusion among activists on what a strike means. Often debates over open vs. closed picket lines consumed large amounts of energy and reflected a lack of understanding of the necessity of building a movement with the perspective of reaching out and involving the antiwar majority in action.

Even though thousands upon thousands of students took antiwar action throughout the country, especially in the second wave of the upsurge after the mining of the North Vietnamese ports, the upsurge itself was not marked by the creation of mass antiwar organizing centers or the creation of antiwar universities.

### NEED FOR LEADERSHIP

One of the major problems the student movement faced this spring, a problem that will continue to face the student movement, was the lack of a clear political leadership. At this time in our development, the YSA is not strong enough to fully provide that necessary leadership ourselves. And at the same time, on many campuses across the country, moderate student leaders, like some student government representatives and newspaper editors either abstained from or outright opposed the mass independent upsurge and its development.

Just one example is the Berkeley student government president who utilized the trashing actions that took place on that campus to call upon students not to take part in demonstrations of any kind, but instead, to begin to do McGovern precinct canvassing for the California primary.

One of the keystones of our strategy in building the antiwar movement is the building of united fronts around specific

independent actions or around the establishment of mass anti-war organizing centers, around the establishment of the anti-war university. That was what we did around the May 1970 upsurge--build those united action coalitions and establish the antiwar university in a number of places.

But due to the election year pressures on the movement, many forces that in the past we have been able to involve in those united action coalitions in the antiwar movement are moving away from independent antiwar action and into the swamp of the Democratic Party. They have all come together now around George McGovern's candidacy for president.

Staggering numbers of young people have become involved in the day to day work of the McGovern campaign. In California alone, between 50,000 and 100,000 people participated in the canvassing of the entire state for McGovern. The energy put into the McGovern campaign is a tremendous drain of energy away from the independent antiwar movement.

The effect that an election year has on independent movements and their development was very well described, strangely enough, by R. W. Apple, who covers the Democratic primaries for The New York Times. In the May 5 Times, he commented:

"The goal of the American political system is to contain protest and rage within the electoral process, thus keeping it from bursting onto the streets as revolution. The goal of the political parties is to provide a vehicle to contain such protest."

The abstention and the hostility of these moderate student leaders took place against the background of the tremendous frustration and anger at what the United States government was doing. This frustration and anger developed because the war is still continuing after more than seven years of antiwar activity and the anger against the war was freshly fueled by the outrageous acts of United States imperialism in mining the harbors of North Vietnam. Those two factors accounted for the temporary ascendancy on many campuses of ultraleft tactics like trashing, highway blockades, and other forms of civil disobedience. Those factors--the frustration and anger and the abstention of the moderate forces--resulted in and accounted for some of the weaknesses of the upsurge. However, in spite of these objective limitations, the SMC was able to increase its influence and authority during the upsurge and to win many activists across the country to a mass action perspective.

Now, this May, as compared to May 1970, the level of frustration was even increased by the fact that there was not a general student strike against the war. This spring the SMC was in a position of agitating for the creation of mass antiwar organizing centers, rather than explaining and giving direction to developments that were already underway, as was the case in May 1970.

We learned through the upsurge that we have to be able to

explain to people exactly what the antiwar university is. People don't know what those words mean by themselves. We have to explain that the strategy of the antiwar university is a concrete strategy of struggle, utilizing the university, not as the alienating, robot-producing machine, as it is under capitalism, but as generators of antiwar action that links the struggles of a politicized student community to the decisive sectors of the American population, to the working class, to the armed forces, to the oppressed nationalities, mobilizing them in independent mass action against the war.

In agitating and explaining the antiwar university strategy to activists, we learned that we must be able to concretely explain what we want to see happen. We have to explain exactly how the art departments, the printing presses, the phones, the classrooms, the financial resources, and all of the other facilities and resources of the universities can be used to build antiwar actions.

What usually develops in a situation of mass antiwar upsurge, and this was especially the case this spring, due to the frustration and anger that I described before, is that there is a tremendous, overwhelming desire to take immediate, visible action against the war. The YSA is 100% for that. The strategy of the antiwar university has been developed to make that immediate action that the students want to take the most effective possible type of action. That is, action that can reach out and involve new forces in the struggle. We are completely in favor of students mobilizing day after day in action against the war, utilizing their base on the campus to link themselves in action with other sections of the population.

The YSA itself gained valuable experience through the course of the upsurge. With the exception of May 1970, our experience in the antiwar movement was mainly limited to the organizing of periodic mass demonstrations and open democratic conferences. Now we have tested our strategy and practice in the heat of an antiwar upsurge and it has been confirmed. We learned valuable lessons and gained valuable experience in intervening in, leading and organizing mass upsurges. Those experiences will prove to be invaluable in the struggles to come. Our ideas and our strategy have been communicated to hundreds of thousands of activists across the country and won the respect and allegiance of significant numbers of people.

The YSA has proven itself to be an organization that thrives on mass upsurge and that grows and recruits out of struggles that change society. It is in that context that I want to take up two opposing currents in the antiwar movement in relation to their role in the upsurge.

## NATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The first of those is the National Student Association. A lot of comrades probably first heard of the NSA as a national force in the antiwar movement at the time of the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong when they called a national student strike for Friday, April 21 -- a strike that the SMC supported and built.

The NSA itself is an amalgam of ultralefts and reformists who have come together in a very loose association inside the NSA national office to carry out various projects--for example, the People's Peace Treaty. They are now involved in pushing Rennie Davis's three point "Set the Date" plan, which is a pro-McGovern gambit.

On a national scale the NSA is an even looser association of student governments who come together at very chaotic conventions to elect officers. The main function of the NSA during this upsurge was one of serving exclusively as a national information center during the first wave of activity. In their antiwar work, the Communist Party and the Young Workers Liberation League have attempted to counterpose the NSA to the SMC, as the national student organization that is building the antiwar movement. In reality, the NSA consists primarily of a national office with little or no apparatus outside that national office to implement the proposals and schemes that they come up with.

## PEOPLE'S COALITION FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

The next opposing current in the antiwar movement that I want to take up is the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice. One of the most significant developments that has occurred in the recent period inside the antiwar movement has been a shift in the relationship of forces between NPAC and PCPJ on a national scale. NPAC and the SMC are now viewed by major sections of the movement, by the media and the population as a whole, as the organization, the coalition, that organizes major public expressions of opposition to the war.

Through NPAC and the SMC's steady political organizing and correct political perspective in building April 24, November 6, April 22, and May 21, NPAC has gained considerable authority and influence as the national antiwar coalition. In New York, where the Vietnam Peace Parade Committee has been looked to as the authoritative antiwar organization, New York NPAC is now recognized as one of the leading builders of the antiwar movement.

A similar process has begun in Los Angeles around the building of April 22. That shift in the relationship of forces--and it's not a complete one yet--has already been of considerable concern to both the CP and the YWLL, who are the main forces behind PCPJ.

At a recent YWLL convention, which was reported on by Donna Ristorucci in the June 7 and 8 Daily World, the YWLL began to recognize the gains and the increase in authority that have been made by the SMC recently. She reported on, and strongly encouraged, the formation of student unions for peace and justice, a development that at this point is mainly limited to the West Coast. The SUPJ is organized on a multi-issue reformist basis of "ending racism" and "setting the date."

The YWLL is now encouraging the formation of SUPJs wherever possible. Although they do not exist in most areas, where and when they appear, the SMC should go after them and seek to involve them in building joint actions against the war with the SMC, such as the upcoming Hiroshima-Nagasaki actions and the fall program of activities that will be coming out of this summer's antiwar convention. Where SUPJ chapters exist, the YSA should also take an aggressive approach getting in contact with the YWLL members who function in the SUPJ and explaining our approach to struggle against imperialist war, our approach to Black and Chicano nationalism, feminism, and especially, how to make a revolution in the U.S. The YSA should keep close tabs on the development of SUPJ.

## PERSPECTIVES

This spring's antiwar upsurge has also reaffirmed that the current political strategy in the antiwar movement is the continuation of a powerful independent mass movement for immediate withdrawal as the best way to defend the Vietnamese revolution. The key role that the SMC was able to play reaffirms our analysis of the need for a national student antiwar organization that can unite all students into an organization that can take action in uncompromising struggle against the war. We want the SMC to be the national student antiwar organization, involving campus organizations, student governments, women's liberation groups, Black and Chicano student groups, McGovern campaign organizations, as well as individuals and activists in the movement against U.S. aggression in Indochina.

The recent upsurge also pointed out the need for the YSA to strengthen our campus base, especially on those key political campuses that are the bellweathers of the American student movement. Campuses like Berkeley, Madison, Harvard, places that had large actions during this recent upsurge. To do that, we need to recruit the best antiwar activists to the revolutionary socialist youth organization. All those who fundamentally understand the need to change the system responsible for the war in Vietnam should be in the YSA. Our ability to intervene in and to lead a mass upsurge will be in great measure due to the numerical size of the YSA and the establishment of a strong campus base nationally. During periods of antiwar upsurge it is especially important to com-

bine our antiwar work with direct recruitment activities through our election campaigns, sales, and contact classes in order to win serious activists to revolutionary socialism.

Our central task in the antiwar movement in the fall will be to continue to help build the Student Mobilization Committee. We want to help deepen and strengthen the influence of the SMC on campuses and high schools throughout the country.

The upsurge in antiwar activity that took place this spring has had a tremendous impact not only in this country, but throughout the world. This spring has seen the revitalization on a large scale of the international antiwar movement. Antiwar organizations and activists throughout the world now look to the American antiwar movement with solidarity and for inspiration and leadership. Mass actions, timed to coincide with the actions we held in this country this spring, took place on every continent in the world. The movement to stop U.S. imperialism in Vietnam and in defense of the Vietnamese revolution has grown and made major advances in international coordination this spring.

The moves toward accomodation with U.S. imperialism by both the Moscow and Peking bureaucrats pose grave potential dangers for the Vietnamese revolution. Nixon's trips to Moscow and Peking have increased the importance of building a mass independent antiwar movement in the streets of the U.S. and throughout the world in defense of the Vietnamese revolution. The best answer to any attempts to negotiate away the rights of the Vietnamese to self-determination is a massive and powerful antiwar movement in the streets of the United States demanding immediate and unconditional withdrawal. In a very real sense, the antiwar movement on an international scale is now one of the major allies, more so than ever before, that is fighting in defense of the people of Vietnam's decades' long revolutionary struggle. The YSA has been and will continue to be in the forefront of the international movement to defend the Vietnamese revolution. By what we have already done and by what we are projecting in the continuation of our work in defense of the Vietnamese revolution, we will have played a historic role in helping advance the world revolution.

June, 1972



## YOUTH CULTURE

by Marty Rothman, Los Angeles YSA

"I welcome the remarks that were made here yesterday about the so-called cultural revolution and about the so-called sexual revolution. The sickness of a society that has outlived its usefulness takes many forms, and millions enter the radicalization process at personal and cultural rather than social and political levels. The beginning of the breakup of the authority of American capitalism can be seen in changing attitudes to morals, in re-evaluations of sexual norms, in the many varieties of escapism we can see around us. To better understand this breakup and its political significance, we ought to pay more attention to the cultural superstructure, beginning with our press. Perhaps the next time we have a conference like this we can have a full session on this question."

George Breitman, from his  
speech at the August 1970  
Oberlin Educational Conference

### PREFACE: THE NEW RADICALIZATION

In its document on "the worldwide youth radicalization" the 1969 congress of the Fourth International opened a discussion of the explosion of radicalism among youth. The document sought to probe the origins of the new rebellion and to assess its potential.

In the United States a year later, the 1970 Oberlin Educational Conference took up the discussion and added greatly to it. At Oberlin, "independent movements for social change" were pinpointed as the characteristic form of the "new radicalization." Each movement was considered in detail and it was concluded that not only were the movements expressions of a sizable radicalization but that this radicalization was the single most promising radicalization of the century.

Though the above conclusion might seem obvious to those of us who have known only this radicalization, the conclusion came as the culmination of a long period of political re-evaluation. Only a few years before the Trotskyist movement had expected something entirely different to happen.

The assumption had been that the trade unions, built in militant struggle during the thirties, would again be the likely organizational vehicle of the next period of radicalization. First there would be a socialist revolution lead by the workers, and then, the other problems would be dealt with.

As it happened, the "other problems" became the focus of the radicalization and the traditional working class organizations have not yet been moved to action.

It is to the unique credit of the Trotskyist movement that it was able to understand the character of the new radicalization. Meanwhile, the discussion which was initiated at the 1969 congress of the Fourth International continues.

This article is part of the continuing discussion and it is concerned with the cultural side of the worldwide youth radicalization, often called "youth culture." This article is specifically intended to be relevant to the YSA.

### WHAT IS CULTURE? YOUTH CULTURE?

To begin with, we must define culture. Here is Trotsky's definition:

"Culture is everything that has been created, built, learned, conquered by man in the course of his entire history, in distinction from what nature has given, including the natural history of man himself as a species of animal." (Literature and Revolution, p. 83)

In other words, the word "culture" covers a huge territory which includes the natural sciences, history, philosophy, language, politics, etc., and all of them since before the dawn of history.

To say the least, the discussion of "youth culture" is considerably narrower than Trotsky's definition would indicate (several dictionary definitions were almost as expansive as Trotsky's). "Youth culture" is limited to the concepts, habits, arts and institutions of protest that have sprung up as part of the process of the current radicalization. It covers a lot of territory, but not the entire history of the human race!

Even after defining down "culture," the term "youth culture" is still misleading. "Youth culture" is neither restricted to youth nor adhered to by a majority of young people. To make matters more difficult, "youth culture" lacks any definite boundaries and is always changing.

Unlike science, cultural topics can not be defined in an absolute manner. Cultural currents are often amorphous, contain contradictory elements, and are extremely difficult to define. Trying to be absolute in a discussion of culture presents the same problems that are posed in a discussion of art.

Nonetheless, it is both possible and necessary to define our subject. Here is a definition of "Youth culture": Youth culture is the process, occurring primarily among youth during the last two decades, (footnote - I am purposefully avoiding

assigning a date for the beginning. It should also be noted that the previous radicalizations also saw upsurges of cultural rebellion.) of re-thinking and re-evaluation of the norms of class society. It is an international phenomenon of protest, affecting the workers' states, advanced capitalist countries, and the underdeveloped countries. It is an always changing process which has the goal of arriving at a more humane society. It is a protest against reality based on the discrepancy between what exists and what could exist.

I believe this is a fair definition of youth culture in the way that the term has been used so far in the discussion of youth culture.

### YOUTH CULTURE OR YOUTH RADICALIZATION?

At this point you might ask, "But isn't your definition of youth culture the same as what the Trotskyist movement has meant by "worldwide youth radicalization?"

The answer is yes.

In reality, the terms "worldwide youth radicalization" and "youth culture" can be used interchangeably. The only difference is that "worldwide youth radicalization" has been used to refer to the more politically conscious expressions of the general rebellion and "youth culture" has indicated the less political forms of rebellion. The two categories contain each other.

Art Maglin expressed this thought in the July-August International Socialist Review:

"... the youth culture and youth radicalization are elements of the same process--youth culture being the least politically conscious, most primitively experimental expression of the radicalization process, and the youth radicalization being the most conscious expression of the cultural rebellion, and that therefore, for most purposes the terms 'youth culture' and 'youth radicalization' may be used interchangeably, depending on which aspect of the process one wishes to emphasize."

### THE CULTURAL MILIEU

This point is important to note because it places our own movement within the context of a process much broader than the confines of a few thousand political activists. It puts us, instead, in the context of a milieu of millions.

In fact, it is the existence of this broad milieu that has allowed the recent growth of American Trotskyism. The youth culture is our recruiting ground.

To make matters more concrete, let's pause for a

moment and ask ourselves where the present members of the YSA have come from. At one time most of us were anarchists, advocates of "life-style revolution," ultralefts, straight kids who began by questioning the war, marijuana smokers who couldn't understand why it had to be illegal, or advocates of some kind of personal or escapist solution. Many of us went through several stages before we decided to approach the task of changing society in a conscious, political way.

But all of the directions from which individuals have arrived in politics share in common the content of protest against the norms of class society. Furthermore, this common protest has tended to cement together an international cultural identification of millions of people.

### FORM AND CONTENT

What are some of the forms of rebellion that have enabled a common cultural identification to be made? The forms include: long hair, antiwar demonstrations, the underground press, rock and roll, the women's liberation movement, be-ins, illegal drug use, clothing styles, sexual questioning, and many more. It is true that not everyone who is part of the radicalization identifies with all or most of these forms, but it is undeniable that a wide variety of forms have played important roles in the radicalization process itself.

These forms have stood out importantly because each is invested with the content of rebellion against the status quo of class society. The rebellion is directed against bigotry, militarism, authoritarianism, bureaucracy, private property, traditional religion, aesthetic conformity, status seeking, puritanism, and other outmoded values.

Though the forms change with time, the content remains that of rebellion. This process is the crucible in which the consciousness of masses of people is being changed. We, in the Trotskyist movement, are part of this process, and our task is to guide the process in the direction of overthrowing capitalism. In this way the generalized protest can achieve satisfaction.

### FOR EXAMPLE

Let's turn to an example. A good one is the women's liberation movement.

The women's liberation movement consists of a wide variety of kinds of people. These include housewives, students, working women, and gay feminists. Within the movement many political shadings exist ranging from republicans to socialists. Furthermore, many women identify with feminism although they do not consider themselves to be "feminists."

At this time the main thrust of the feminist movement is in the direction of either political action through established channels of reform (like the equal rights amendment) or towards "individual solutions" like women's centers, abortion referral services, and women's clinics.

The movement now embraces, in some fashion, millions of women, though not a majority.

The alternative of independent mass action exists as a minority position within the women's liberation movement.

How does the Trotskyist movement react to this?

Our response has been to recognize the implicit challenge this movement represents to the nuclear family (one of the "pillars of capitalism") and to sexual oppression in general. We support feminism, help spread it further, and adopt it as our own. When consciousness raising groups are formed we do not hesitate to join them. We read feminist newspapers. We know that we have a lot to learn from the feminist movement.

Far from shunning the "cultural" (non mass action oriented) aspect of the feminist movement, we accept these modes as positive experiments which are capable of both involving women in some kind of feminist activity and in propelling them forward in political consciousness.

When crystalized groups of women arise who consciously oppose mass action (living room feminists, organizations to elect women Democrats, etc.) we polemicize with them in a careful and studied manner, since they are not hardened enemies, but honest people whom we are seeking to win over.

We recognize that the feminist movement is not frozen in time. It is a living, changing movement. We support it even though its present forms are limited, contradictory, faulted, and socialists are a tiny minority.

#### CULTURAL FEMINISM

Within the context of the feminist movement we are, in fact, what might "humorously" be called cultural feminists. I am referring to the practice among feminists of cutting their hair short, not shaving body hair, wearing pants, not wearing bras, and insisting upon specific language changes. Women members of the YSA are not merely enthusiasts of these practices, but regard them as an important part of feminism.

Also important to feminism is its protest against the subtle and sometimes not so subtle cultural exploitation of women through advertising, fashion, in literature, and in the arts.

The point is that the "cultural" side of the radicalization

cannot be separated from the "political" side, and both are quite valid. It is all one radicalization and the terms "youth culture" and "youth radicalization" only indicate a relative emphasis.

The women's liberation movement is not the only movement that would make a good example. Any of them would do as well.

#### WHAT ABOUT THE OPPONENTS?

The opinion of our left-wing opponents on youth culture is predictable. It is the same as their opinion of the youth radicalization as a whole. In other words, they don't like it.

Here is an extreme example from The Campaigner, the Labor Committee's theoretical magazine:

"Not only must the political practice of protofascist anarcho-syndicalism be attacked but we must vigorously challenge its pretensions to producing a revolutionary culture.

"Anarchism because it is the extreme political expression of bourgeois individualism gives birth to fascism--the most radical bourgeois political movement. The rock-drug 'counter'-culture, ideological expression of anarchism, is likewise merely a particularly vicious extension of previously existing bourgeois cultural trends."

Aside from its absurd crudeness, the Labor Committee's position is the position of many of our opponents on the left.

If you are interested in the Communist Party's attitude, it is spelled out in an entire book by Gil Green called The New Radicalism, Anarchist or Marxist? In this clever volume, Green slickly equates both the "youth radicalization" and "youth culture" with anarchism and wags his "Marxist" finger at them (Art Maglin spends a lot of discussion on Green and other opponents in his article, "Is Youth Culture Revolutionary?" in the April 1972 ISR, so I do not feel it necessary to use up more space on this.)

#### REVOLUTION WITHOUT THE REVOLUTION

There is a second important pole in the discussion of youth culture. This is represented by Theodore Roszak's The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition, and Charles Reich's The Greening of America. There is also a handful of Yippies and Anarchists who fall roughly into this bag.

According to this view, a revolution will be made merely by transforming the consciousness of individuals, and thereby transforming the existing institutions of society. Political organization is not necessary, the overturn will occur gradually, peacefully, hardly anyone will notice it has happened.

Dedicated political organizations, an intense struggle for power, these ideas are treated by the Reich's and Roszak's as pretty much irrelevant (again see Maglin's April, 1972, article).

### THE YSA

In regard to our own movement, the mistake made by Roszak and Reich is not any real problem.

In my opinion the other mistake is the one that we must be leery of--taking a sectarian attitude towards the cultural (less politically conscious) side of the youth radicalization.

The source of our own problem is found in our history. There was a time not so long ago when Trotskyism was a tiny political movement without important ties to the mass movements. During this period, the YSA gained the stereotype of a group of straight people with crew cuts. In fact, that is what we were.

Today we still have a tendency to fall back into the attitude of a small isolated organization. It is nothing like it once was--the YSA has grown. But if you imagine the YSA as a mass revolutionary youth organization you will realize that we will have to change a lot more.

A YSA with a membership of tens or hundreds of thousands will be an organization which commands a strong cultural identification far beyond its own ranks. By its sheer weight it would function as the central pole of attraction of the entire youth radicalization. Many of the mistakes and much of the despair typical of the youth culture today would be effectively combated.

The road to becoming a mass organization demands a complete acceptance of the legitimacy of what the youth movement has to offer and a willingness to become involved in its manifestations.

The new monthly being launched by the YSA is a step in the right direction. It is important, however, that this newspaper not appear to students and youth as if it had fallen from the sky. We need a newspaper that can relate our politics to the concerns of people who are in the youth culture.

The new magazine should be written with humor and should turn its attention toward music, art, and literature as well as reporting on our own political activities. Centerfold posters, cartoons, and articles of a human interest and satirical kind should abound.

A good example for us to emulate can be found in the Canadian Young Socialist, particularly from the fall of 1970 through spring 1971.

A few examples: The May 1971 Young Socialist published an exclusive interview with John Lennon and Yoko Ono in which the two came out in favor of socialism. The June-July 1971 issue contained a thirteen page cartoon strip on the "real history of British Columbia." The April 1971 issue had a centerfold poster of several scruffy-looking comrades in front of a typically urban brick wall, fists raised and broad grins, with the slogan hand painted on the wall behind them, "We are the people our parents warned us about!" On the bottom of the poster in big red letters was JOIN THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS. During the spring of 1971 the Canadian Young Socialists launched a drive to sell \$4,000 worth of "socialist victory bonds." For ten dollars you could buy a twenty dollar bond redeemable "after the withering away of commodity production." When the Young Socialists held their summer 1971 educational conference their poster was a big drawing of the "keep on truckin'" figures of R. Crumb above a list of Young Socialist locals and the date and time of the conference.

The Canadian Young Socialist was willing to take some chances and to try out some ideas. The result was a political newspaper that could attract people outside of the political movement.

We should study the Canadian example and adopt its style for our new monthly.

### IN CONCLUSION

It is time to banish all of the remaining vestiges of small group insularity and to head decisively away from sectarianism and down the road of becoming the central force of the entire radicalization.

It is past time to reverse the trend of grossly unmet projections for growth that we have experienced in the last two years.

We cannot afford to view ourselves as apart from, above, or unaffected by the "cultural" currents which sweep around us. The culture of rebellion is the milieu in which we swim. And although the youth culture is confused, contradictory, and often despairing, we cannot afford to ignore it, and we must realize that much of the confusion and despair comes from the lack of a mass revolutionary youth organization like the one the YSA is seeking to build.

September 9, 1972

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We'll be discussing what we can do to end the war, fight for women's liberation, win high school rights, fight for Black and Chicano liberation, and support revolutionary struggles around the world.

A special feature of our convention will be a huge wind-up socialist campaign rally for the Socialist Workers Party campaign. Both Linda Jenness and Andrew Pulley will be there, as well as hundreds of Young Socialists for Jenness and Pulley.

- I would like more information about the YSA and the convention.
- I'm coming—send me material to help build the convention.
- I want to join the YSA.

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