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THE JUNE 21 ACTION AND THE "DIALECTICS" OF MINORITY VIOLENCE

By Steven Fuchs, Austin Local

The experience of the revolutionary movement in Latin America since the last world congress has provided concrete evidence supporting the criticisms and justifying the warnings raised by the minority five years ago. The "turn" has been tested. It has been condemned by events.

While the discussion on perspectives for our European sections is necessarily less concrete, there has been evidence which has shown us "in practice" the real meaning of the IEC Majority Tendency draft European resolution. One example is the June 21 action of the former Ligue Communiste.

A meeting of the fascist grouplet "Ordre Nouveau" was held in Paris on June 21, attended by under one thousand people. The Ligue had called a counter-demonstration to prevent the meeting from taking place. The counter-demonstration was co-sponsored by some small far-left groups. Numbering about three thousand, the anti-fascist demonstrators engaged in battle with the cops. The government had sent twenty-six hundred of them to protect the fascist meeting. Using as an excuse the confrontation, the most fierce since the "Night of the Barricades" of May 1968, the French government banned the Ligue, ransacked its headquarters, and imprisoned Alain Krivine and Pierre Rousset, two of its leaders.

As a concrete expression of the new strategy proposed for our European sections, the June 21 action represents a dangerous diversion from the task of building a revolutionary party. Its confrontationalist nature can be justified, not by the objective unfolding of the class struggle, but by the logic of "minority violence" and "initiatives in action."

To avoid false issues being brought into the debate: to what does the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction not object?

--Calling for a united front demonstration to protest a fascist meeting.

--Planning the counter-demonstration to be at the same time, by the same place as the fascist meeting.

--Sponsoring the demonstration even if we are joined by not a single other group, large or small. Participating in the counter-demonstration even if our comrades are there alone.

--Preparing to defend our counter-demonstration against the eventuality of attack by the fascists or police.

We view this as part of our revolutionary responsibility.

To what do we object?

I. The Nature of the June 21 Action

The expressed purpose of the anti-fascist demonstration was to prevent the Ordre Nouveau meeting from taking place. In a statement issued by the Political Bureau of the Groupe Internationale Marxisten - the German section of the

Fourth International - it was explained:

"The entire revolutionary left in France /perhaps an exaggeration/ agreed to unity in action to prevent this gathering /the Ordre Nouveau rally/ from taking place. The Ligue Communiste, which had been in the front ranks of the antifascist struggle and had initiated all the important actions in this area, also stood in the forefront this time." (Intercontinental Press, July 23, 1973, p. 888)

The far-left weekly Lutte Ouvriere ran the text of an appeal for the formation of a National Committee Against Dissolution of the Ligue Communiste, which read in part:

"And the height of hypocrisy: the decree dissolving the Ligue Communiste refrains - and for good reason - from mentioning the purpose of the June 21 counterdemonstration, which was to prevent Ordre Nouveau from holding a meeting in the middle of Paris aimed at arousing hatred and contempt against the foreign workers and at developing a racist campaign whose possibilities are shown by the events in Grasse." (IP, July 16, 1973, p. 853)

Krivine put it this way in a statement at a press conference on June 25:

"No freedom of speech for racists and anti-Semites! And since all the traditional workers and democratic organizations have failed to assume their responsibilities, the revolutionists have had to do it." (IP, July 9, 1973, p. 830)

All the publicity for the counter-demonstration included formulations on the matter that were anything but elliptical. And in any case, supporters of the IEC Majority have never objected to this characterization of the purpose of the June 21 action; they have chosen to defend its perspective.

A minority action could prevent the Ordre Nouveau meeting only by violence. Confrontation by the police would be inevitable, not in order to defend our right to hold a rally, but in order to achieve the rally's purpose of preventing the fascist meeting. The tone of the publicity was necessarily confrontationalist.

"Even by Latin Quarter standards the battle of June 21, as they now call it in revolutionary circles, was a spectacular affair. It was not just another confused hot summer night scuffle between students and police, a simultaneous expression of high spirits and mutual detestation. To begin with, it was planned, and the civilian demonstrators were at least as well prepared and equipped as the "Forces of Order", the government's name

for riot police. Not just long-haired students in jeans chucking a handful of ideological stones before returning to the bosom of their bourgeois families in the outer suburbs. But tough, apparently rehearsed, combat troops of street warriors, clad in Clockwork Orange uniforms of crash helmets, goggles, heavy boots and neck-scarves expertly fastened over mouth and nostrils as a prophylactic against tear gas." (David Leitch, New Statesman, July 6, 1973)

"...leftist youths in motorcycle helmets and wielding sticks and iron bars tried to halt a rally against immigration to France of workers from Africa." (New York Times, June 23, 1973, p. 2)

I cite these quotations, not as a part of a criticism of being prepared, but as further demonstration of what the Ligue had proposed prospective participants in the rally be prepared for: offensive confrontation with the cops to "halt" the Ordre Nouveau meeting.

As the tone set for the anti-fascist counter-demonstration was confrontationist, participation in it was small, limited largely to members of the Ligue and the other co-sponsors.

This does not reflect a permanent refusal by the broad masses to confront the bourgeois state or the fascists with arms. It reflects the significance of the difference between minority violence and mass violence. These terms are not numerical descriptions but political ones.

Mass violence is that which is carried out by the working class through their organizations (not just the Communist and Social-Democratic Parties, but strike committees, defense committees, unions, action committees of various kinds, etc., and later, soviets) as they see the need through their struggle, to defend their interests with arms. This concept in no way ignores the role of the revolutionary party in the process.

"As in every other aspect of the struggles of the masses, we play a vanguard role. We take the initiative within the masses on such questions as the formation of strike pickets and workers militias or, in certain situations, guerilla units to defend the mass struggles of the peasants. We take initiatives as members of the mass organizations, and in the name of the mass organizations, even if initially few besides ourselves are involved. The course followed by Hugo Blanco in Peru and the course followed by the Trotskyist leaders of the 1934 Teamsters strike in Minneapolis offer constructive examples." ("A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe' - An Initial Contribution to the Discussion", by Mary-Alice Waters, International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. X, No. 3, p. 26)

Minority violence is that carried out by a "vanguard" outside the forms in which the class struggle is actually

developing, as either a substitute for mass violence, or an "example" of the use of arms for the masses to follow.

The June 21 action earned a minority character because its violence flowed not from the masses through their understanding of the present needs of their struggle, but rather from the vanguard as the masses' (temporary or permanent) stand-in.

The June 21 action is defined as isolated from the real class struggle because its violence developed as a form of struggle outside those forms in which the masses were struggling at that time on that issue. It was a form of struggle that corresponded only to the subjective preoccupations of the vanguard.

The fact that the action could be "linked" to some political issue in which the working class was interested does not change things. Neither does the assertion that violence against fascists can be "understood" by the French working class. Such arguments dissolve the concrete question we have posed (the relationship between this specific vanguard action and the masses) into an abstraction (the general concern of the working class for the same issue, the general attitude of the working class toward violence against fascists). Such arguments ignore the restrictive political contexts of minority and mass violence, that is, their opposite relationships to the unfolding class struggle.

II. Why the June 21 Action Was Not Justified

The "dialectics" of being in the "vanguard" of the masses, and falling into a trap of the bourgeoisie

"The CDFT /Confederation Francaise Democratique du Travail - French Democratic Confederation of Labor, the second largest trade-union federation in France/ /said that/: Taking advantage of the fact that the Ligue Communiste fell into the trap of a provocation, the government has just banned this organization." (Excerpt from Le Monde, translated and reprinted in IP, July 9, 1973, p. 826)

"The Trotskyist Communist League, and the fascist New Order movement have both been proscribed... It was all very predictable, so much so that even the most pro-government commentators have been wondering whether the situation had not been set up in advance." (New Statesman, July 6, 1973)

"L'Humanite, Le Monde, and le Canard enchaîne all published similar reports: Marcellin and the prefect of police were said to have set things up so that the confrontations would take place in the worst possible conditions for the police." (Article from Rouge, reprinted in IP, July 23, 1973, p. 884)

"It appears to us that police authorities deliberately

exposed the police and exploited the resulting incidents to create a pogrom climate against revolutionists." (Political Bureau, Ligue Communiste, IP, July 9, 1973, p. 829)

Hindsight has been sufficient to convince almost everyone that the government had consciously set a trap to snare an excuse for banning the Ligue. It has not been sufficient to convince the IEC Majority Tendency that the action was ill-conceived from the outset; that its very nature left the Ligue vulnerable to such a trap.

The bourgeoisie sought such an opportunity because it knew the Ligue was its most dangerous enemy, the best organized, most influential organization to the left of the reformist parties. Through the struggle against the Debre Law, the weight of the Trotskyists was felt throughout the country. Through its work in support of the immigrant workers and the Lip workers, the Ligue had strengthened its roots in the working class.

These struggles had been mass struggles. The Debre Law fight, for example, was the most important student mobilization in France since May 1968. It was precisely by virtue of their role in these mass struggles that the government had been able to take no offensive action against them at that time. Not staging minority acts of violence "linked" to the concerns of spectator masses, "understood" from the sidelines, the Ligue had been part of a mass struggle. In the instance of the student upsurge, it represented the central leadership. An attack on the Ligue at that time would have been a direct attack on the mass movement.

But on June 21, having planned an exemplary act of minority violence, the Ligue acted in isolation from the actual mass struggles of whatever campaign to which their action was "linked." The bourgeoisie knew to break a chain at its weakest "link."

It was all an unfortunate verification of Mary Alice Waters' warning:

"At first, it may seem like the ruling class hardly pays attention /to acts of minority violence/. . . . But then they choose the moment most politically advantageous for them, move in, and try to isolate and crush the organization." ("A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe' - An Initial Contribution to the Discussion," IIDB, Vol. X, No. 3, p. 25)

What was the purpose of June 21? Reason No. 1: "Crush fascism in the egg!"

In his statement to the June 25 press conference, Krivine explained:

"We are not putschists. Only mass action can put an

end to the fascist gangs But you cannot avoid your responsibilities. As long as it is not too late, fascism can be crushed in the egg. We are young but we have better memories than the older people. We do not want to see a recurrence of what happened a few decades ago. When fascism raises its head, there is always the same reaction:

"They are no threat, there will always be time to act, etc.'

"And then one fine day it is too late.

"No freedom of speech for racists and anti-Semites! And since all the traditional workers and democratic organizations have failed to assume their responsibilities, the revolutionists have had to do it.

". . . We have shown the way.

". . . We have set an example."

Are we to conclude from this statement that the June 21 action was conceived as part of a battle against the rising threat of fascism, one that had better be waged immediately, lest we find "one fine day it is too late"?

Such an evaluation would stand in contradiction to that made by the European perspectives document: "Today the objective conditions for a new rise of fascism have not yet come about in capitalist Europe" ("The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe", International Information Bulletin, No. 5 in 1972, p. 10).

Presumably, supporters of the IEC majority subscribe to the analysis in their European document. Many, however, have justified the June 21 action precisely as part of the struggle to crush fascism now.

Insisting on the need to violently crush fascism now before it is too late, underscoring the urgency by "initiatives in action" which run the risk of serving the government with convenient pretexts for selective repression, while at the same time holding that "the objective conditions for a new rise of fascism have not yet come about", is a confusing basis for an anti-fascist struggle. It confuses not only supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, but the French working class. A call for mobilization against a real fascist threat that may develop in the future would, no doubt, be viewed with skepticism by a working class which has heard so much loose talk about fascism before.

And if fascism were really an immediate danger, was the June 21 action the correct tactic?

Ignoring the political context in which the violence of the June 21 action took place, Krivine could explain that

"We have shown the way... We have set an example."

According to this thinking, minority violence prepares the masses for participation in mass violence. But the method of the Transitional Program is to mobilize the masses in struggle. That is the important thing. The tactics for the struggle flow from its actual development. Through struggle, aided by the intervention of the revolutionary party, the masses will come to see the need to defend their interests, arms in hand when necessary, against the violence, legal or extralegal, of the ruling class. But the primary preparation consists in mobilizing the masses. A mass, peaceful demonstration, arising out of the real needs of the class struggle, prepares the masses for mass violence more than does a violent minority action.

The logic of the June 21 action takes a different approach. Prioritizing the use of violence above the mobilization of the masses, its "example" is the wrong one. As the violence had been initiated from outside the actual struggle of the masses, they had no experience of their own from which to draw the lesson of the need for armed struggle. Inasmuch as the masses accept the "example", it is by accepting the role of spectator to their struggle, leaving it to be carried out by their vanguard saviours. Inasmuch as they justifiably reject the "example", it is by rejecting leadership bid of the vanguard.

The working class is really prepared to intensify its struggle in another way as well: gaining confidence in their capacity for victory. Thus, tactics of armed confrontation must be carefully considered in the light of the relationship of opposing class forces. The June 21 counter-demonstrators were called on to confront forces more powerful than a fascist grouplet still in incubation. In reality, the action was less against a small fascist organization than against the repressive apparatus of a powerful bourgeois state. This is precisely because "the objective conditions for a new rise of fascism have not yet come about in capitalist Europe." For this reason, too, the June 21 act of minority violence was ill-conceived.

What was the purpose of June 21? Reason No. 2: It was part of the campaign in support of the immigrant workers

During the debate in Austin between Comrades C. Charles and Steve Clark, Comrade Charles, representing the IEC Majority Tendency discussed the June 21 action at some length. He explained the action was part of the ex-Ligue's campaign in support of the immigrant workers. The real point, you see, was not so much that there was a rising threat of fascism, but that the government, in its attack on the immigrant workers, was using the Ordre Nouveau as an instrument for rousing racist hatred against them.

This doesn't improve the IEC majority's case.

The very nature of the June 21 action prevented the par-

ticipation of any large layer of immigrant workers. Could there be a more explicit expression of substitutionism than this justification of the action. The June 21 action, they say, would be decisive in the struggle of the immigrant workers, decisive enough to risk the banning of the Ligue. The immigrant workers cannot participate in this integral part of their own struggle, lest they be victimized and deported. It is, therefore, up to the revolutionary left to fight for them.

The immigrant workers themselves, however, have found forms of struggle in which they can participate; they are forms of mass struggle. Their participation in the class struggle has produced results far more decisive than those of the June 21 action. They have played a vanguard role in the class struggle. They mobilized in a general strike this September. They have participated in mass actions, as through their contingent in this year's May Day demonstration. On May Day, 1973,

"For the first time the ranks of French unionists were swelled by foreign laborers - whose plight as a new sub-proletariat has begun to catch the nation's conscience and engage its unions' support." (New York Times, May 2, 1973, p. 7)

What contribution to the struggle of the immigrant workers was made by the June 21 action? According to Comrade Charles, it provided "concrete answers" to the problems confronting the struggle, presumably on the need to use violence. In this regard, those who justify the June 21 action by its "concrete answers" to the immigrant workers' struggle, makes the same mistake as those who justify it as an "example" for the struggle against fascism. "Concrete answers" on the need for mass violence cannot be taught from the outside by an act of minority violence.

The real answer was to extend the mass struggles of the immigrant workers, as they were learning to do. When the need for armed defense of these struggles arises, the immigrant workers can take part and face less risk of victimization than did the ex-Ligue on June 21. Such armed action, as opposed to that of June 21, is an organic part of the real struggles of the masses of workers.

In any case, the prerequisite to providing "concrete answers" is making clear what concrete questions you're answering. Until I heard Comrade Charles explain it, I had no idea what, I now suppose, the action was all about. Perhaps the French working class, not having heard these debates, is still unaware.

The solidarity campaign

Pierre Frank poses a question:

"We would like to see a minority comrade explain to us... why this alleged leftist action of June 21 not

only has not caused the isolation of the French section of the Fourth International, but has provoked the largest movement of solidarity and defense which has been seen in France in a long time if not the largest ever. How does one explain that a violent minority action won the support of relatively large working class layers." ("Two Ways of Constructing the Revolutionary Marxist Party and Engaging it in Action", IIDB, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 12)

Referring to the massive campaign that developed to protest the dissolution of the ex-Ligue, Comrade Frank asks us to explain a phenomenon that never occurred. "Relatively large working class layers" were not won to the support of a "violent minority action." The "alleged leftist action" had not "provoked the largest movement of solidarity...in a long time if not the largest ever." The June 21 action was considered as a mistake by most of the organizations which later participated in the campaign in defense of the ex-Ligue.

"...in relation to the July 4 meeting protesting the ban on the ex-Ligue, sponsored by more than twenty organizations, including the CP and SP, and attended by more than 10,000 people, we must return to an important political question. Several speakers referred to the Ligue's methods of action, which they do not share. By this they meant minority actions, which is what they consider the June 21 counterdemonstration to have been." (Article from Rouge, reprinted in IP, July 23, 1973, p. 886)

According to the Nouvel Observateur, much of the harshest criticism of the ex-Ligue's "propensity", according to them, "to fall into provocations," came from the far-left (Article from Nouvel Observateur, reprinted in IP, July 30, 1973, p. 922).

It is important that we not equate defense of the ex-Ligue's right to exist with support for the June 21 action, for to thereby conclude that the action was correct is to justify its repetition.

Massive support was won to the defense of the democratic rights of a working class organization. The solidarity campaign was "provoked" by the government's decision to ban the former Ligue, and by the revelations of government complicity with the fascist group and deliberate provocation.

Once the question is posed correctly, the answer does not justify the June 21 action.

How does one explain that the largest solidarity campaign to take place in a long time in France if not the largest ever developed in support of the rights of a working class organization that staged a violent minority action?

1) The French working class jealously guards its democratic rights.

One way to demonstrate this is to explain one reason the

Communist Party decided to join the solidarity campaign.

"The communists noticed that during these past months, and especially during the election campaign, the most "electric" questions their sympathizers were asking them were those dealing with the defense of democratic rights. They also noted the voters' sensitivity on this point. Thus, in May they launched a big campaign for democratic rights...So when Marcellin "mounted his provocation" on June 21, the Communist party was the first to protest..." (From Nouvel Observateur, reprinted in IP, July 30, 1973, p. 923)

The masses had been prepared for a massive campaign to defend the former Ligue by the mounting government repression, the furor over government wiretapping, the campaign against this repression, the campaign of protest against the murder of a Maoist auto worker.

It was clear to the CP that the working class would mobilize to protest the dissolution of the ex-Ligue. Not wanting to be isolated from such a mass movement, they sought to win control of it.

The working class has often mobilized in support of the rights of their allies when under attack. Such support in no way reflects agreement with the tactics, or even program, of the group involved. One can imagine an organization which the IEC majority would agree was ultraleft, committing acts which the IEC majority would agree were terrorist, being victimized by the government and defended by the working class against that attack. What is the appeal of a defense campaign? "An injury to one is an injury to all", despite political differences.

2) The ex-Ligue has become more of a recognized part of the labor movement.

Therefore, the government's conspiracy against the former Ligue was against an organization viewed by a large part of the working class as one of its legitimate representatives. The response had to be all the more powerful.

Not the June 21 action, but the ex-Ligue's role in the campaign to defend the immigrant workers, its work in support of the Lip workers, its leadership of the Debre Law fight, its consistent defense of democratic rights, its participation in the women's liberation movement, has begun to so firmly root it in the working class.

As an acceptable tactic in the new strategy proposed for our European sections, the June 21 action was not conceived by the IEC majority as an action to be staged only once, but as a test (a successful one at that, we're told) of the entire line.

If there are more June 21s, the IEC majority will learn the hard way that the solidarity campaign did not develop

out of agreement with the tactic. Imagine another June 21, and the possible response of the working class:

"Well, Rouge did it again. They were banned again. We must defend their right."

Imagine another. "Won't Rouge ever learn? Well, it is our duty, I guess, to defend them."

Imagine another. "Oh, no. Not again! Well, they asked for it. This is their problem."

The ex-Ligue won the sympathy of broad masses against the government's conspiracy to crush them. The only role the June 21 action played was to provoke the situation in which they would desperately need sympathy. But the task of building the revolutionary party of the working class requires that we convince the masses of the correctness of our program, our strategy, and of our capacity to determine correct tactics. The French working class almost unanimously recognized the tactic as a mistake. Their sympathy for our plight does not outweigh their recognition of our errors in strategy.

III. The Real Meaning of the June 21 Action: A New Strategy for the Revolutionary Party

"...it does not seem possible that our comrades in France would have moved as they did if the possible banning of the Ligue Communiste had entered into their calculations" ("The Underlying Differences in Method", IIDB, Vol. X, No. 12, p. 40).

While agreeing to grant our comrades the benefit of the doubt, a statement by Pierre Frank referring to an action similar to that of June 21, that took place two years before, must give us pause.

"When it comes to armed struggle it is more than ever necessary to make a concrete study. Let me give an example, that of the Ligue Communiste in regard to the meeting of the fascist organization "Ordre Nouveau." You are certainly up to date concerning the facts. After all, this was an armed struggle, a punctual one certainly, not linked to a general political line, but to a propaganda campaign. There was a difficult delimitation with ultraleftism, so much more than ultraleft groups participated in this action. Moreover there was the danger of a banning of the Ligue. Didn't we risk a reversal on our building of a revolutionary party? It wasn't an action linked with large masses, only with a vanguard." (Letter to /1971 SWP/ Convention from Pierre Frank, Internal Information Bulletin, No. 6 in 1971, p. 15)

What is the logic that would allow the Ligue Communiste to walk into a trap aimed at provoking an incident that would serve as an excuse for the government to outlaw them? Where does it come from?

The Ninth World Congress resolution on Latin America schematically derived tactics from general historical trends, adapted to the subjectivism in the concerns of the worldwide "vanguard", and thereby subordinated the need to build a revolutionary party to the "strategy" of armed struggle. The European perspectives document proposed by the IEC majority and its concrete expression in the June 21 action represent an extension of that method.

To be sure, on some important points the two documents differ greatly. But a common and incorrect approach underlay both resolutions. I will not take up all the questions in this regard, but rather just those that relate directly to the subject of this article.

Both resolutions saw the need to win a "breakthrough" in our attempt to resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership lest the decisive battles, which are either already in progress or conjuncturally on the agenda, be fought with the working class unprepared. Such a breakthrough could be won by 1) demonstrating our capacity for initiatives in action; 2) crystallizing the "vanguard", through orienting to its concerns, into an independent force capable of intervention in the class struggle to break the working class from the grip of the Stalinists and social-democrats; and 3) providing in action the answer to the main debate raging in the working class between the peaceful and armed revolutionary roads to socialism.

June 21 and "initiatives in action"

The main concern of the European document is to provide a strategy that would enable our sections to take advantage of the historic opportunity that has developed for transforming ourselves from propaganda groups to organizations capable of leading some "revolutionary vanguard action."

"Only when the revolutionary organizations have demonstrated not only the lucidity and correctness of their program but also their effectiveness in action, if only on a limited scale, will the defeats brought on by the opportunism of the traditional leaderships and the antibureaucratic revolts inspired in turn by these setbacks result in massive influx into our organizations. The stage that leads from the essentially propagandist group to the revolutionary party, in the scientific sense of the term, is therefore one in which a revolutionary organization begins to sink roots in the class, that is, to achieve through its intervention in the class struggle a relationship of forces enabling it to project itself as a credible alternate leadership for the workers' movement, beginning with a vanguard sector of the working class." ("The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe", International Information Bulletin, No. 5 in 1972, p. 13-14)

Thus it proposes "organizing national political campaigns carefully chosen issues that...offer a chance for demonstrating a capacity for effective initiative, even if still modest, by our section..." (Ibid., p. 24).

Our sections should always try to take initiatives to advance the class struggle. But to transform this goal into a strategy, one which should determine the issues for our campaigns, is to abstract the concept of initiative from the real development in the class struggle. We should want to take initiatives within the real class struggle that correspond to its needs, not outside it to prove ourselves.

If a mass struggle develops in which we cannot take sufficient initiative, cannot lead the vanguard in action, should we take initiatives outside it, just to prove we can do it? If the antiwar movement had developed such that we could take no great initiative within the mass movement, should we have initiated a smaller, more revolutionary vanguard movement that we could lead, just to prove that we can do it?

This is the logic of the strategy of "initiatives in action." The "stages theory" of party-building will not root us more firmly in the masses, for we will be acting in forms outside those in which the masses are actually struggling.

The problems of this schematic concept as expressed in the June 21 action, was discussed in the sections on fascism, the immigrant workers, and the solidarity campaign. Our initiative was wrong; we proved the wrong things.

June 21 and the new mass vanguard

The European document proposes, ". . . organizing national political campaigns on carefully chosen issues that correspond to the concerns of the vanguard, do not run against the current of mass struggles. . . ." (Ibid., p.24)

The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction responded that our "carefully chosen issues" should be based on the needs of the masses, not the concerns of the vanguard.

Pierre Frank rejoined, "Let's move to the reproach that is made of our orienting ourselves to the 'concerns' of the vanguard in opposition to the needs of the masses. We have never created such a counterposition for the simple reason that the 'concerns' of the vanguard are the needs of the masses. For a very simple reason. The 'radicalization' in Europe, in contrast to that in the United States, is a powerful revolutionary rise in the working class." ("Two Ways of Constructing the Revolutionary Marxist Party and Engaging it in Action," IIDB, Vol. X, No. 14, p.8, Emphasis added)

While insisting that he does not believe the new mass vanguard to be a substitute for the revolutionary party, Comrade Frank endows it with the characteristic that above all defines the revolutionary party: an appreciation of the real historic and immediate needs of the masses in their struggle for liberation, as expressed in the party's program. The party represents the organizational expression of the highest consciousness of the needs of the mass-

es. Only if one holds that questions of program are unrelated to those of immediate activity, can one so praise the vanguard's "concerns."

It is enough to recall that in Argentina, where there was a "revolutionary rise in the working class," there were no small differences between the evaluation of the needs of the masses made by the PRT (V) and the PRT (C).

The June 21 action was oriented to the concerns of the new mass vanguard. Their concerns were manifested in a subjective mystification of armed struggle; a subjective longing to prove themselves "in action" to be as revolutionary as the heroic Vietnamese liberation fighters, the guerrillas in Latin America, the IRA Provisional terrorists, or those who fought fascism with arms in the thirties and forties.

Through the June 21 action, the vanguard, as an independent political force, could not have helped recompose the workers' movement (break it from Stalinist or Social-Democratic control), even if it were there in all its strength. For inasmuch as it acted as an independent political force, it was independent from the real struggles of the masses. As I showed earlier, the lessons the masses must learn for their movement to be recomposed cannot be taught by actions that take place in isolation from them.

The real needs of the masses were not appreciated when the June 21 action was conceived, or if they were, it was only through the eyes of the new mass vanguard, who, "revolutionary rise of the working class" or not, don't always see too straight.

June 21 and providing the answer of armed struggle

The supporters of the Ninth World Congress resolution on Latin America reduced the "debate in the Latin American vanguard" to one between the peaceful and revolutionary, armed roads to socialism. Proponents of the former were supposed to be mainly the Stalinists and Social-Democrats. Proponents of the latter were supposed to be the real vanguard.

The European document proceeds in the same spirit. The traditional bureaucratic parties endorse the peaceful reformist road. The vanguard consists of those who have radicalized outside the control of the Stalinists and Social-Democrats. The vanguard understands the need for armed struggle. That is the common program of the vanguard.

The primary task facing all our sections in Europe, which, remember, are defined by the concerns of the vanguard, are thus conceived in the framework of the concept of armed struggle.

That the working class learn the lesson of the need for revolutionary armed struggle is, of course, of decisive im-

portance. The need for armed struggle is a general historical law which none in the Fourth International would dispute.

But the IEC majority abstracts the concept of armed struggle from its context: that it arises out of the very course of the class struggle, that the masses learn of its need through their participation in the class struggle. The IEC majority gives the concept of armed struggle an independent existence by defining the vanguard by its understanding of the need for armed revolution, and thereupon defining our tasks by the "concerns" of the vanguard.

If the concept of violence is considered independently of the actual unfolding class struggle, then the distinction between minority violence and mass violence is secondary. The violence and not its political context is the important thing.

If the concept of violence is considered independently of the actual unfolding class struggle, then minority violence (of the type of June 21, Honeywell-Bull, the Argentine embassy) and mass violence of elementary workers' self-defense both prepare the working class for mass violence on a wider scale, because they both use violence.

If the concept of violence is considered independently of the actual unfolding class struggle, then it would seem valid to try to teach the working class of the need for arms by "example," by "initiative" from the outside, at almost any conjuncture, on almost any issue. The only considerations are technical ones.

The real logic of minority violence

This is the logic that justifies the June 21 action. It represents an adaptation to the ultraleft preoccupation of placing the gun above politics, an extension of the method of the Latin American resolution. It has also been manifested in the IMG's justification of the terrorist bombing campaign of the politically backward IRA Provisionals (see Gerry Foley's article, "The Test of Ireland," IIDB, Vol. X, No. 17), in the IEC majority's refusal to label the Chilean Unidad Popular a popular front (see Derek Jeffers's article, "The Strategy of the Gun Before Politics in Chile," in Young Socialist Discussion Bulletin Vol. XVII, No. 6), in the ex-Ligue's justification of the Honeywell-Bull and Argentine Embassy incidents and in their internal debate on minority violence (see Mary-Alice Waters's criticism of the draft European resolution, IIDB, Vol. X, No. 3) and elsewhere.

The concept of minority violence considers armed actions independently of the real development of the class struggle. It therefore has an independent logic.

"The arbitrary 'voluntaristic' initiation of violent actions opens the door to adventurist acts that can escalate, lead to terrorism and the substitution of such acts for the mobilization of the masses in struggle. . .

"While such acts of violence by a handful may be ostensibly 'linked to political objectives,' they have their own logic and develop along their own path -- from window-breaking sprees, to Molotov cocktails, to plastic explosives, to kidnappings, to assassinations, etc. At first it may seem like the ruling class hardly pays attention. They may even tolerate, if not abet, certain kinds of actions for some time, as they increase their deployment of agents-provocateurs. But then they choose the moment most politically advantageous for them, move in, and try to isolate and crush the organization." ("A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe' -- an Initial Contribution to the Discussion," IIDB, Vol. X, No. 3, p. 25)

But Pierre Frank objects. "We don't doubt that there are some people who act according to the 'logic' exposed by Comrade Mary-Alice. It is not solely the 'logic' of ultra-lefts. It is also the 'logic' of the common petty-bourgeois sentiment that is expressed in France through the aphorism 'whoever steals an egg will steal an ox.' But that has nothing to do with our logic. . ." (Two Ways of Constructing the Revolutionary Marxist Party and Engaging it in Action," IIDB, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 9)

That is the logic of ultralefts, we agree. But that is because the concept of minority violence is ultraleft, and this logic is its basis. The European resolution buys the concept. The logic is part of the package.

* * *

The YSA and the entire Fourth International must continue its campaign to defend our French comrades. We must continue to place all responsibility for the attack where it belongs: on the French government.

But to defend our movement, we must also subject the June 21 action to critical evaluation. The experience in Latin America proved all too clearly the dangers of persisting in a course proven wrong. The next world congress must reject the method that underlay the June 21 action, by rejecting the resolutions on Latin America and Europe proposed by the IEC Majority Tendency. It would thereby reaffirm the method of the Transitional Program for building the world revolutionary party.

December 14, 1973

By Peter Graumann, San Francisco Local

I. What's Wrong with the NEC's Resolution?

While there are some changes, shifts and modulations, the fundamental method and essence of the current NEC "Draft Political Resolution" are merely a repeat of the incorrect perspectives outlined by the YSA leadership for the last several years. These misprojections and the false analysis have failed to meet the test of the actuality of the North American revolution as it unfolds, and therefore must be opposed and countered.

Campaigns into which we threw a large section of our membership have now disappeared--yet only a sentence or two explaining the demise of the antiwar movement and abortion struggle are offered by the NEC. It is an understatement to say that no serious balance sheet has been drawn regarding our past work. Moreover, the NEC reveals that the theoretical basis for their perspectives remains the "Worldwide Youth Radicalization" document which erroneously projects an international and inter-continental strategy and orientation centering on the university campuses, to be carried out by the world Trotskyist movement.

We believe that the errors made by the YSA leadership spring from two important sources: first from an initially forced and later self-imposed isolation from the working class and its struggles; and second, a corresponding theoretical adaptation to the political outlook of the primarily student and petty-bourgeois milieu which became the almost exclusive focus of our work. The result has been a misassessment of the current state of the radicalization in the United States, an orientation on a world scale toward the student milieu with the concomitant exaggeration of the strength and potential of petty-bourgeois layers, and the adoption of non-Marxist multiclass ideologies of nationalism and feminism. This was followed by the extension of this multiclass approach to other areas of work. This approach, taken by our national leadership, leads to abstention from the key task for revolutionaries in the current period: sinking roots in the working class and especially among the young workers, broadening and directly relating student struggles to those of the class, and intervening to raise the level of struggles to one in which socialist conclusions are overtly posed.

The Debate in the Fourth International

The recent decision by the National Committee of the YSA to endorse the political platform of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) in the Fourth International is the logical extension of the erroneous course of our leadership. This action preceded any discussion by the membership of the YSA on the specific political questions under dispute. This decision must be reversed and the YSA leadership's precipitous method of action called to order. In the current division among the cadres of world Trotskyism, the LTF has emerged as a

right wing, aiming to overthrow the leadership of the Fourth International without offering viable alternative political lines for Latin America and Europe. While the European sections have made impressive gains in recent years especially in their turn to the working class--the YSA currently features a legal suit against the government all out of proportion to what its relative weight could be in a period of internationally ascending class struggle. While the IEC majority supporters (IMT) of the International utilize our socialist Transitional Program and explain the colonial revolution in class terms, the YSA leadership publically presents the conflicts as merely having a democratic character. The IMT raises the class nature of society and the role of the working class in the women's liberation and national liberation movements while the YSA adopts the non-class ideology of feminism and nationalism in relating to these fights. And on the international level, where our leadership sees the detente as the cornerstone of world politics today, supporters of the International majority recognize the rise in the class struggle and the crisis of imperialism to be center stage.

The American Trotskyist movement, once so prestigious in its proletarian composition and revolutionary militant outlook, now shows all of the classic characteristics of that right wing: a middle-class orientation, an adaptation to electoralism, a conservative approach to struggle and raising political consciousness, accusing the left wing of being too pro-violent and a deepgoing hostility to any semblance of International democratic-centralism. This last issue is particularly disturbing because it is so provocative.

Thus the NEC's false theoretical outlook flowing from accommodations to non-Marxist ideology, their refusal to critically assess our past work, their failure to project the necessary tasks for our movement in the coming period, their incorrect international alignment preceding democratic discussion--all these require us to call for a rejection of the NEC draft political resolution.

The Internationalist Tendency in the YSA has been formed by YSA members in general agreement with the political perspectives outlined in the documents of the International Majority Tendency in the Fourth International, and who now also recognize the need to project an alternative to the incorrect perspectives presented by our leadership in the YSA regarding our tasks in the United States.

II. The Theory of the New Radicalization: A Challenge to Fundamental Principles.

The erroneous theory of the YSA leadership must be discussed and analyzed at length, but it can be essen-

tially summarized as follows:

We are presently in the midst of the broadest and deepest radicalization in 20th century American history, characterized largely by the appearance and growth of mass independent movements outside the industrial working class. It is true that all of these movements have been, with our organization's assistance, organized around essentially democratic demands--for "Out Now," "Repeal Abortion Laws," "Black Control of the Black Community," "For an Antiwar University," etc. However, because of the Theory of Permanent Revolution and the incomplete character of the bourgeois revolution in the United States, the democratic demands of these movements take on explosive transitional characteristics.

But at some point in the future this present stage of radicalization will be superseded by a "revolutionizing" when the workers enter as a class in full force. This will transpire as the product of current mass independent movements. Our main task now is to build cadre and political authority for our youth organization, only relating to union struggles where there are significant openings. When the working class moves into action it will provide leverage for, give impetus to, back up and join the vanguard of the existing mass movements --which are going to continue and deepen at the CENTER of the advance of the radicalization. It is at this time that we will concern ourselves with matters of industrial concentration and proletarian work as a major orientation.

The persuasive aspect of this theory flows from two facts. First, the theory appears to be loosely based on the so-called "classical model" of the revolutionary process, in the sense that students, intellectuals and nonproletarian social layers have traditionally become radicalized before the industrial working class itself. And these social layers and their struggles cannot be ignored; for one thing, they often raise important political issues for the whole population. Second, the theory is especially attractive to all of us who look back with justifiable horror on the many years of isolation imposed by historical forces upon the Trotskyist movement.

Nevertheless we feel we must challenge this theory in a fundamental sense--especially in regard to its interpretation of the role and weight of democratic and transitional demands; the tasks of the Leninist vanguard; and the process by which the proletariat will be propelled into action and won to a revolutionary leadership.

Furthermore, we feel this theory has been disproven by the daily argument of the past several years, as we watched the very same allegedly mass movements that were to supposedly deepen, endure and remain at the CENTER OF THE ADVANCE OF THE RADICALIZATION, drift instead into a 3-year lull--to use the term "lull" very generously. We believe these movements have exhibited the classical characteristics of movements based on middle-class social layers. These layers--although unquestionably im-

portant--are incapable of a consistent pattern of growth and endurance in and of themselves. We cannot accept the argument, advanced in the new draft resolution, that the radicalization of these and other movements are still deepening, only--because of the contradictory character of the period--it is merely not being shown in visible and organized forms.

We ask the comrades to reflect a moment on the question of whether the past political perspectives of our movement really paid off. The Internationalist Tendency asks:

"What happened to the mass independent feminist movement, the mass student movement, the incipient mass movements for Gay liberation, ecological reform--all of which were supposed to be DEEPENING, at the CENTER OF THE ADVANCE OF THE RADICALIZATION, each backing up and pushing forward the others, etc.

"When we ask where have all these movements gone; when we ask the fate of these movements; when we ask how and why these movements declined and deteriorated in total and complete contradiction to what the leadership had projected, we think we are asking some very basic questions about the way the YSA leadership misunderstands the process of the present radicalization." (IT counter-resolution)

We urge all the comrades to go back and re-examine the collection of speeches and articles contained in the Pathfinder Press publication, Toward an American Socialist Revolution. This volume is the SWP leadership's major theoretical contribution in regard to the present radicalization. It is our opinion that the method employed in this anthology by the SWP leadership (with which the YSA is in political solidarity) is one that begins by dividing society upon the basis of consciousness rather than starting scientifically with an understanding of the relation of different social layers to the means of production. We are told that there exist a series of mass independent, primary movements: the student movement, the anti-war movement, the Feminist movement, the Black and Chicano movements. In addition, there also exists a series of secondary movements, smaller in size: the prisoners movement, the gay movement, the youth culture movement, the ecological reform movement, the movement of rebellious priests.

The IT counter-political resolution highlights the method used by the YSA leadership:

"First we are told that because there exists significant consciousness around this or that general concern, there exists a movement. If there occur some demonstrations by partisans of those concerns, we are told that these movements are independent and in the streets. If there are a lot of these demonstrations, then we have a MASS INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT IN THE STREETS which is OBJECTIVELY ANTICAPITALIST."

According to both the YSA and SWP leaderships, the appearance and dominance of these kinds of supposedly

mass independent movements, anticapitalist in thrust and logic (to use the jargon) comprise the first stage of the revolutionary process--the period of deep radicalization, which we are now in. The fact that the political slogans and demands of these movements, and consequently the slogans and demands that our leadership forwards, are limited to democratic demands, is not to be seen as a peculiar or disturbing feature because the democratic single issues on which these movements are based, allegedly flow from the incomplete character of the bourgeois revolution in the United States. For example, the YSA leadership believes it is correct to elevate "Legalize Abortion" and "Black Control of the Black Community" to central demands, whereas we believe that they are both minimal and secondary and should be supported only in such a way as to be directly linked to more potent clearly class-oriented demands.

Now, how is the YSA leadership's approach explained? Since the Transitional Program of the Fourth International states the important weight of democratic demands in the backward and under-developed countries--due to the theory of permanent revolution--all it takes is a little analogy between backward countries and the United States to have democratic demands achieve almost the equivalent political weight of transitional demands. The analogy begins by depicting the Black liberation struggle in the United States as possessing essentially the same features and characteristics as a national liberation struggle in an under-developed country; and then these features, having to do with an alleged dynamic and logic of the Black struggle, are transposed to the feminist movement and other so-called mass independent movements.

Combined Revolution

To say that the coming American revolution is going to be of a combined character because it combines the struggle of Blacks and Chicanos for national liberation with the proletarian struggle, is one thing and may seem reasonable as a handy terminology in certain contexts. But to call the North American situation "combined" in such a way as to make analogies with the combined character of revolutions in underdeveloped colonial countries--this is a qualitatively different matter. The combined character of revolutions in imperialist-dominated backward countries flows not simply from "unevenness" but from the contradictions in the mode of production. It states in the Transitional Program:

Colonial and semi-colonial countries are backward by their very essence. But backward countries are part of a world dominated by imperialism. Their development, therefore, has a COMBINED character; the most PRIMITIVE ECONOMIC FORMS are combined with the last word in capitalist technique and culture. In like manner are defined the political strivings of the proletariat of backward countries: the struggle for the most elementary achievements of national independence and bourgeois democracy is combined with the socialist struggle against world imperialism.

The relative weight of the individual democratic

and transitional demands in the proletariat's struggle, their mutual ties and their order of presentation, is determined by the peculiarities and specific conditions of each backward country and to a considerable extent by the degree of its backwardness.

Democratic demands are important and of course will be especially important in regard to the Black and Chicano liberation struggles; but to restrict agitational work to featuring democratic demands (as the YSA does), even in a backward country would be incorrect. To do so in the most advanced capitalist country in the world is even more erroneous.

It is simply incorrect to state that in the United States it is the bourgeois revolution that is incomplete. An incomplete bourgeois revolution means that the revolutionary bourgeoisie has not gained full power over the nation--that some other class (like the aristocracy) remains partially in control. The American bourgeoisie, however, completely took power after the Civil War. George Novack, in Marxist Essays in American History, writes:

The second stage of the American revolution was led by the Radical Republicans, the most resolute representatives of the bourgeoisie. The Radicals were the last of the great line of bourgeois revolutionists. Thrusting aside the conciliators of every stripe and crushing all opposition from the left, they annihilated their class enemy, stripped the slaveholders of all economic and political power, and proceeded to transform the United States into a model bourgeois-democratic nation, purged of the last vestiges of precapitalist conditions.

Thus, what remains incompleated in the United States is not at all the bourgeois democratic revolution, but only a number of democratic attributes or tasks associated with that revolution. These are two qualitatively different things and should not be confused. No bourgeois revolution ever fully completes its tasks. In every modern capitalist country there will undoubtedly be a number of democratic demands associated with the promises of bourgeois democracy which will be raised and fought for in the context of the proletarian socialist upheaval. But this has little in common with the situation of under-developed countries--like prerevolutionary Cuba, the African or Middle Eastern states. There the national bourgeoisie is not solely in full power, as it is in the United States. Consequently the material base and the relationship of class forces is qualitatively different--and the political and social weight of democratic demands is greater in countries where the bourgeois-democratic revolution is not complete, as opposed to the lesser weight of democratic demands in the United States where the revolution is complete--even though certain tasks have not been carried out.

The Permanent Revolution

The theory of permanent revolution derives its material reality from a certain configuration of class forces

in underdeveloped countries. The national bourgeoisie there is too small, weak, corrupt and cowardly to resist imperialism; consequently the workers and poor peasants will have to lead a struggle which will combine tasks of both the bourgeois democratic and proletarian socialist revolution. Despite the peculiarities of national development in the United States--and there are many--this class configuration of the colonial world has little in common with the class situation of our imperialist country.

Unfortunately our leadership has taken the errors perpetrated in their misapplication of permanent revolution to advanced capitalist countries, and transposed these false concepts onto the other so-called mass independent movements which--as we all have seen during this 3-year lull--dominate this period of radicalization, in never-ending succession, without let-up, deepening and intensifying at the very center of the advance of the radicalization itself. In the absence of a firm grounding in a Marxist understanding of social dynamics in general and the course of United States social development in particular, analogies such as the following made by SWP leader Jack Barnes have a dangerous and misleading side to them:

Women are not simply fighting for that equality but fighting for liberation. It is like the difference, as Trotsky explained in discussing the national question, between fighting for equality and self-determination. Equality is what the liberals want, self-determination is the revolutionary solution. For us, the same is true about the women's liberation movement. (emphasis added)

Such glib analogies can have disastrous consequences when used as a substitute for a full-fledged Marxist approach. The Militant of February 20, 1970 stated the following:

Ruthann Miller, SWP candidate for comptroller, claimed for women the same right of self-determination as for Afro-Americans and the Vietnamese.

Faced with this kind of concrete deviation in the movement, SWP leader Barnes, in his presentation at the Oberlin Conference only chooses to employ formulations which would further drive home misconceptions:

These new movements helped us understand more richly what Malcolm X had said many times: "If you love revolution, you'll love nationalism."

Barnes then used as an example the Cuban Revolution which began around a democratic program but--because the leaders were unwilling to compromise goals--became transformed into a socialist revolution. He leaves out the part where the leaders of the Cuban Revolution had to be won away from their bourgeois nationalist outlook over to the alternative ideological program of the socialist class independence in a conscious fashion. Barnes then relates this to feminism:

We look at feminism in much the same way. That is why we, unlike other radical tendencies, aren't nervous when someone says, "If you love revolution, then you'll love feminism." You can't be "too" feminist, any more than you can be "too" nationalist. If anyone tells you that you're too feminist, be careful with them, comrades.

Now how has Comrade Barnes, the National Secretary of the SWP, come to these formulations which are the precise opposite of those always held by Bolshevism and American Trotskyism and which, as the record shows, the YSA is in agreement with. Up until this new radicalization, with its new forms and the massive independent movements out there deepening and increasing everywhere, we communists had always understood that our purpose was to forge and create a vanguard Leninist party whose central task was to bring the Marxist-Leninist Program, the proletarian Trotskyist class program, to all layers of society--although first and foremost, to the working class. We were taught that the only way to achieve liberation for women, the only true road to national liberation, was for the participants in those struggles to be won away from any other world outlook or understanding of reality which was not class-conscious through and through, and which did not give leadership explicitly to the vanguard of the proletariat. Now, we are told that nationalism and feminism--world outlooks which do not put the emphasis clearly on the working class--that these ideologies will lead to socialism if only they are consistently and logically and irreconcilably carried out. Now we learn that one just can't be too nationalist or too feminist.

In the opinion of the Internationalist Tendency our general overall tasks have not changed--despite all the fancy talk about this being a New Radicalization, New Unfolding World Situation, or whatever. Our job remains to teach proletarian socialist consciousness to the masses--ever more ardently than before, because we do stand on the threshold of impending class upheavals of no small magnitude.

Although the aspirations for liberation on the part of women, and the democratic demands of oppressed nationalities, cannot be fully achieved until the socialist revolution, it is not a question of merely pursuing the fight for feminist and nationalist demands in a logical, consistent and irreconcilable fashion which will somehow lead by its own dynamic to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers state. To the contrary, proletarian socialist consciousness does not appear spontaneously and automatically merely through struggle or conflict against the state in the pursuit of certain demands. Lenin said that the workers cannot by themselves go beyond trade union consciousness. What makes feminists, nationalists and students so special that the logic of their struggles takes them beyond nationalist, feminist and student outlooks only if carried out irreconcilably and consistently? The answer is they haven't got anything special except that they maybe got a head start in the radicalization pro-

cess, which is something we should certainly be cognizant of and take full advantage of. Our job is to win nationalists, feminists and students away from their one-sided outlooks and over to the full transitional program. And we don't do that by entering these movements as mere nationalists and feminists and radical students--with our separate transitional programs for nationalists, feminists and radical students. We do it by entering and participating in all these movements as revolutionary proletarian members of the Trotskyist Young Socialist Alliance, as full-blown Marxists.

The YSA leadership also misoriented our cadres to limit their anti-war work to "Out Now," rather than appearing as intransigent anti-imperialists and full partisans of the victory of the Vietnamese revolution: to be the best fighters of the repeal of all abortion laws--rather than being revolutionary socialist women, fully in solidarity with our proletarian and most oppressed Black and Raza sisters; to be student activists, rather than revolutionary Marxists operating on the campus to win the student population to an understanding that the only hope for fundamental social change is the organized working class itself, and teaching students a respect for the history, struggles and power of that class.

As we have explained, the case for the democratic equality of all these movements can be, and has been, argued very effectively on a moralistic non-materialist basis. Just as the working class has the right to its labor party and transitional program, so all the other sectors have the equal right to their own transitional program and political parties--or else one thinks them less important, one is denigrating them, one is hostile to them, one just doesn't understand the new mass movements, one is conservative or just isn't "with it." After all, if workers can have their class consciousness, then why can't women have their feminist consciousness and Blacks and Chicanos have their nationalist consciousness? And of course if one goes and redefines the meaning of nationalism and feminism so that these anti-Marxist world outlooks become synonymous with everything good and positive about the struggle itself, then those of us who speak against the nonproletarian and non-class essence of these ideologies, also become defined as being against those movements. But of course we're not against those movements or struggles--in fact we think that they are important enough to be won over to a working class outlook and program. And we think that the constituencies of those movements are sharp enough and open enough to be won to Trotskyism--without our adapting ourselves and calling ourselves feminists and nationalists, which we are not.

Thus we claim, and we think we have substantiated, that it is a partially nonmaterialist approach which has been used by the present leadership of the YSA to analyze the New Radicalization; and we think their method has served to obfuscate the hard clear scientific Marxist analysis for which the pioneers of American Trotskyism waged the struggle for a proletarian party. For on a materialist basis none of their claims about the new mass movements really hold up. A mass movement means

truly massive--stirring the very depths of the proletarian population. An independent movement means independent from the ruling class and therefore based solidly on the working class; it does not mean a movement "independent" from other movements. And a movement which has a few demonstrations in the streets against the desires of the bourgeois politicians is not therefore "independent of the Democratic and Republican parties"--not if the bulk of the constituency goes back and votes for McCarthy or McGovern when the elections come.

The YSA leadership's strategy is based on the conception that it is the student and middle class layers that constitute the vanguard--they are the most radical milieu and the place where we can recruit the most members at the fastest rate, and gain the most influence in the easiest way. This is the classical short-cut get-rich-quick approach, which misses the point of our overall strategic objectives, described by Comrade Cannon as follows:

To transform the SWP into a proletarian party of action...it is not enough to continue propagandistic activities in the hope that by automatic process workers will flock into the banner of the party. It is necessary on the contrary to make a concerted, determined and systematic effort to penetrate the workers' movement, establish the roots of the party in the trade unions, the mass labor worker militants into the ranks of the party.

The get-rich-quick middle class approach is so all-pervasive that even in regard to the minimal Black and Raza work the YSA carries out, the orientation has not been to the proletarian wing (in the barrios, ghettos, shops, trade schools, unemployment groups). Therefore, when the leadership states that the majority of Blacks, Chicanos, women, etc., are workers, they are making a true statement--but the leadership does not orient in terms of systematic work to the majority of those constituencies, but rather to the overwhelming minority who are in or around 4-year colleges.

III. The Worldwide Youth Radicalization Document: The False Basis of the YSA's Present Orientation.

The "Worldwide Youth Radicalization" document was an attempt by the present leadership of the American Trotskyist movement to provide a theoretical explanation for the widespread student struggles taking place in the 1960s. It was designed to explain what approach Trotskyists internationally should take toward the student struggles. But in fact the document brought out and crystallized the confused and non-class approach toward the campuses that was in reality being carried out by the YSA leadership.

The period following World War II through the 1960s was one of general economic prosperity in the imperialist countries. In order to raise the level of profits, the bourgeoisie introduced technological innovations into production, transportation and marketing tech-

niques. The need was created for a more educated and trained working class as well as "armies" of technicians, scientists, and professionals. This was the basis for the large increases in the number of schools and students. This produced a crisis in the educational system--as a result of the lag in the ability of the schools to handle this expansion, as well as the ideological indoctrination of the bourgeoisie.

In reaction to both the crude reactionary propaganda and the miserable educational conditions, thousands of students looked for alternatives. During this time there occurred the revolutionary upsurges in Algeria, Africa, Latin America and Vietnam against imperialism. At home, however, the motor force of social change, the working class, was relatively quiescent. The American proletariat had been misled by their bureaucratic leadership and temporarily appeased by certain economic gains. The result was the periodic mobilizations of students against both the conditions and content of their own education as well as in solidarity with the colonial revolution. The disillusioned students had to look further than their own working class for a fighting alternative to the capitalist society.

The development of a student radicalization, coming before the waves of struggle unleashed by the working class, was a major characteristic of the 1960s. But, of course, this type of occurrence was by no means a historic first. Traditionally, it is the intelligentsia and the intellectuals which radicalize early and are the first to act against the social conditions oppressing the population. They are relatively privileged in their social position. They have the time, education and are in a situation where they are able to more easily observe and react to social inequality and oppression. Intellectuals and technical professionals have the resources and training to raise social issues and the consequences for their doing so are much less severe than for workers. It is not easy to get radical literature, obtain the facts of world politics and discuss these questions in a coal mine or a steel plant. It is much easier to do so on a university campus or in an intellectual milieu. That is why these privileged layers generally start to move before the working class as a whole. It is also important to understand that what the privileged strata are relating to is the class struggle internationally--a thing which they do not have the power to resolve.

What the "Worldwide Youth Radicalization" document revealed about the views of the leadership of the YSA was not that the widespread student movement signaled a trend toward the rise in workers struggles, but that these student struggles supposedly had a new power, importance and dynamic of their own. The approach taken was not to orient the radicalized students in the direction of the class while aiming to remobilize the class into battle, but to attempt to prove that the students were more and more taking on attributes of the working class itself. The document tries to build a case for this in the following way:

a. The centrality of the workers struggles become a background to the key role that the students play in

international and national politics.

b. The student movement is defined as being shaped directly by the contradictions of capitalism rather than by the absence of a revolutionary working class leadership having hegemony in the class; that is by the relationship of forces in the workers movement and its corresponding level of struggle.

c. The growth in numbers of students is stressed and from this is a great increase in social power of the students is supposedly proven.

d. It is claimed that the student movement can be a consistent and ongoing one possessing a high degree of staying power in struggle and concluding that the campuses will be a major base of operations for the revolutionary vanguard from now through the revolution.

e. The question of winning the students to the revolution is reduced to one of winning students over to our program for the campus revolt instead of winning them to the working class and Transitional Program for proletarian revolution.

f. A qualitative change in the class composition of students is claimed, making them a virtual part of the working class.

In addition to this major theme, the document has several other important features. The terms "youth" and "student" are used interchangeably to give the impression that when it says students, we are essentially talking about almost all the young people around. Thus, the entire document assumes the centrality of the university campus in the political life of the country and the youth living in it. Consequently, the program for "youth" in the document is a series of reforms projected for the university and any link between students and non-students will take place in this meeting ground. Thus, we see a full-blown student orientation, centering on the campuses and the featuring the "new importance" of the student struggles and the increased social power of students that is said to be applicable today on a world scale. This international student strategy is what our leadership has to offer not only in the US but on an international scale, for Argentina, Bolivia, and Europe as well.

What is wrong with the YSA leadership's approach? First of all, youth are not all students. Most of them are workers, unemployed or in the army. Youth come from all classes in society, not just one. It is therefore important to bring a key Marxist concept into the picture--the division of society into classes. When we say "youth" do we mean young workers, young students, young petty-bourgeoisie, young bourgeoisie, or what? It is important to be precise, as Trotsky was in the Transitional Program.

Second, it remains a fact that the sections of the young population least represented on university campuses are working class youth, especially women and the oppressed minorities. If our goal is to reach the most

oppressed and the young proletariat, we will miss the overwhelming majority of them on campus.

Students, like young people as a whole, are also divided socially--that is, into classes. A great bulk of them are from what Trotsky characterized as the "new middle classes," sons and daughters of technicians, managers, clerks, attorneys, physicians, etc. These non-proletarian strata which have very little actual link with the working class. But what about the contention of increased social power? Aren't there more students the before? Aren't there more working class people now attending college? Both of these are true assertions, but both miss the point. Do Marxists see the basis of social power as mere numbers? For example, was the Russian proletariat so powerful and important because it was such a large percentage of the population? Absolutely not, social power flows from the role in production played by a given layer of the population. Students do not carry significant social weight in the production process. They are suspended between the great two classes and are forced to choose sides. That is why we emphasize that not only are a large percentage of students from petty-bourgeois backgrounds, but the student population as a whole is in a situation similar to that of the petty-bourgeoisie in society. They are caught in the midst of a crisis of capitalism, yet they do not possess the power to overcome the crisis.

From this contradiction springs the attractiveness of ultraleftism among student radicals. Substitutionalists and ultraleft demands and actions appear to enable nonproletarian strata to have a big impact on the class struggle and the bourgeoisie. But, it is also through an analysis of the social contradictions of the petty-bourgeoisie that we can establish the Marxist approach to youth and students.

We must begin by recognizing that any orientation to the youth is first of all, an orientation to the young workers--Black, Brown, white, male and female. The YSA must make it the highest priority to establish links with these youth in the places where they work, in the neighborhoods where they live, in the places where they work, and in the struggles they conduct. It is these young workers, whether they are in the army, unemployed, or working, that the revolutionary program must reach first and foremost. The struggles of the working class will be led by young Black and Brown workers, and women workers. The recent battles of the farmworkers and the Chrysler wildcats are harbingers of that future. Young Black, Brown and white workers will be the vanguard of the class and our eyes, our press, and our political intervention must be aimed squarely toward them.

But what about the work on the campuses and in the high schools? Are we against it? Absolutely not. But here again, our view is that the YSA should place emphasis on those schools which have the highest proletarian composition--the junior colleges, technical schools, and high schools; those institutions with the largest number of Black and Chicano students. If we understand that the student population is not homogeneous, that it

is divided along class lines, then we can also know the type of program to forward on the campus. Our goal on the campus is to raise our socialist program of proletarian revolution. The students must be won over as allies to the working class. They must understand that the ultimate power to transform the university, end imperialist wars and smash racism and sexism lies in the proletariat. Our goals are to explain the nature of the class struggle to the students, educate them on the history of the workers movement and teach them to support the struggles of workers. The YSA has to transform the consciousness of students so they understand the difference between the union bureaucracy and the rank and file. We must smash the snobbish and reactionary misconceptions held by campus activists that the workers are all satisfied and bought-off.

As for the YSA leadership's belief in the staying power and consistency of the student movement or struggles, we think history has answered this question. Since 1970, in the United States and internationally there has been a decline in student activism. Comrade Rose now acknowledges this in his May 1973 articles for the ISR. But it should be ABC for Marxists that the social base for the student movement is fundamentally unstable; yet the YSA leadership ignored this and predicted more and more upsurges which never occurred. In the future, we should intervene in and help lead campus struggles, but the theory of a "transitional program for students" and all that implies should be put to rest,

IV. The National Question

The Young Socialist Alliance national leadership has tended to redefine Black and Chicano nationalist ideology as simply meaning: oppressed peoples rejecting the values, standards, the culture of capitalist society, in favor of identification with themselves, relying on their own power, making their own decisions and acting in their own interests.

We find this kind of definition of nationalism hardly adequate, comparable to defining "socialism" as simply meaning cooperation and sharing. In our view, "nationalism" as both an ideology and a road of struggle is a word with concrete meaning. One just can't make up a new content in order to serve one's own purposes of the moment. Even when a word like "nationalism" or "socialism" has a popular or common usage or meaning, Marxists still don't adapt to it because we know that this adaptation and consequent miseducation can ultimately bear dangerous fruit.

Nationalism and Internationalism

The fact is that nationalism is an ideology and a movement that originally arose with the formation of bourgeois national states. It was the intellectual and emotional expression of the need to reorganize society into larger social units. The feudal village was no longer adequate for the expanding productive forces.

But the level of productive forces of our time de-

mand an end to both private ownership of the means of production and an end to national boundaries and national states. The ideology that corresponds to modern conditions is proletarian socialist internationalism.

Nationalism is an ideology which unites all members of all classes of a given society into a cohesive unit--and which also separates or distinguishes this multi-class entity from all others. Thus, its tendency is to blunt the class lines, while at the same time sharpening the distinctions not among classes but between nations. Therefore, we socialists oppose the ideology of nationalism--the ideology of all nationalisms.

But we do not oppose the struggles against national oppression. On the contrary, Trotskyists give support for the rights of every people to national freedom, including the right to national independence (self-determination), and we are in the forefront of opposition to all racist privileges and inequalities among nations. This is an inherent ingredient of genuine internationalism. Consequently when national liberation struggles are dominated by nationalist ideologies we do not therefore withhold support to actual struggles against oppression. We simply recognize the influence of nationalist ideology as a negative factor and we certainly do nothing to encourage it. We do not say--as the YSA leadership does--that we embrace nationalism, or that we love nationalism. And we do not do anything at all which could conceivably give the impression that we think any ideological outlook other than a proletarian socialist world view, which is class conscious through and through, will suffice for a victorious struggle.

Lenin's Approach to Nationalism

Lenin made an important distinction between the nationalism of the oppressed and the nationalism of the oppressor. But what is the nature of that distinction? Did Lenin say that we Marxists must support and encourage the nationalist ideology of the oppressed, and oppose the nationalist ideology of the oppressor only? No--Lenin opposed the ideology of all forms of nationalism and he wrote it down many times. If one searches through all 45 volumes of Lenin's work with a magnifying glass, they will not be able to come up with a single solitary statement in which Lenin advocates or supports nationalist ideology of any kind. You can and will find quotations in which Lenin unequivocally supported "revolutionary movements among the dependent and underprivileged nations," or where he supports the "self-determination of nations," or struggles "against all national oppression," or "bourgeois democratic demands," or struggles of "bourgeois democratic liberation movements." But you will find no quotes supporting any nationalist ideology or outlook--that is, nationalism.

The distinction Lenin made between the nationalist ideology of the oppressed and the oppressor, is in regard to the kind of opposition we counterpose to that non-proletarian ideology and outlook. The nationalist ideology of the oppressed is an understandable reaction to the chauvinism of the oppressor. For example, one

phenomenon of which we are all aware is a widespread hatred of whites among many sectors of the Black population. No socialist would treat this phenomenon and the phenomenon of white racism in the same way. We understand, and are tolerant of the "hate whitey" sentiments among Blacks, whereas we excoriate white racism. But it does not follow that Trotskyists adapt to the views of and promote anti-white sentiments among Blacks.

What we are trying to say is that Marxists must never make ideological concessions to nationalism, although we must make some tactical concessions--that is, lean over backwards, be fully sensitive to the feelings of suspicion and distrust and even hostility on the part of the oppressed. It means that criticism of nationalist ideology (which we must undertake) should be expressed with the greatest of tact and patience, and then largely by Black and Chicano comrades, etc. It means that we do not insist on absolute "formal Equality" in all situations--because this often means in reality perpetuating the inequalities of capitalist society.

National pride, aggressiveness, even hatred of all members of the oppressor nation is a step forward from subservience, feelings of inferiority and passivity. But none of this means that we should call ourselves nationalists, Black nationalists, or Chicano nationalists, or even say that we love nationalism or embrace it, and thus adapt to it ideologically and in our program.

Community Control??

Revolutionary Marxists support the rights of Blacks and Chicanos to control their own institutions, their own lives and that is precisely why we want to raise the question of the slogan of "Community Control." We think "Community Control" might sound good as a slogan in a rhetorical sense--it sounds democratic, just like the name "Peace and Freedom Party" sounds democratic, or the way the slogan of "Peoples Power" sounds so militant. But nevertheless, the YSA challenged and did not adapt to abstractions like Peace and Freedom or Peoples Power because we know that there was a misleading side to them in the context in which they were raised--we saw that the masses organized around or mobilized under those slogans might not have achieved "peace," "freedom" or "power" at all. We saw that given the situation, the concepts embodied in and expressed by such slogans might politically disarm the masses.

We feel that this slogan of "Community Control" and its several variants have some of the exact kinds of drawbacks. Just as we think that the attempts to mobilize under the slogan "peoples power" could very well not lead directly to peoples power, so we also challenge these "Community Control" formulations. The fact is that even through the "peoples power" slogan sounds good, there are two classes of people. Of course it's true that most people are workers, but numbers alone are not sufficient in itself and we think that the overall concept is disarming. The problem with the community control slogan is that the thrust of the demands is very limiting and misleading--especially when you get around

to questions like Community Control of Police and what that really means. Instead, the YSA should advocate what we did in our earlier days, mass self-defence of the Black population and community.

The capitalist system as a whole on a national and international scale systematically shapes the oppression of Blacks and Chicanos in a total way. Taking control over a community, or several communities, and their local institutions, will not solve the problem of jobs, job equality, of equal pay, of racist abuse and discrimination in work or in the unions. Nor, for that matter, the discrimination in housing, education or sanitation. All of these forms of oppression flow from the larger system. One can say that it is true that the right of a local population to control its own local affairs is a legitimate democratic demand--but keep in mind that to mobilize and struggle to win control of dilapidated ghettos, run down, underequipped, understaffed and overcrowded schools, etc., is perhaps not the most effective way for we revolutionaries to organize and encourage the direction of the struggle. Therefore we think it preferable to try to encourage, forward and win the masses of Blacks and Chicanos (and all people living in oppressed communities) to slogans and demands which tend in that outward direction--in the direction of reaching toward the linking up with all workers of all nationalities and both sexes, and maybe even giving those white workers a little shove to get their asses in gear.

The Black Party

We raise the same challenge in regard to the question of a Black party. First, we are not convinced that simply designating the formation as a "Black" organization, a Black Party, is going to insure a proletarian composition or control. It is true that the masses of Blacks are overwhelmingly workers, but remember--numbers alone are not decisive. There may be only a few Black bankers and industrialists. But the fact is that there is also a rapidly growing Black petty-bourgeois elite--wholesale and retail merchants, newspaper publishers, preachers, politicians, technicians, government bureaucrats, business administrators, military officers, high-ranking police officials, etc. Although this elite is far from constituting a big bourgeois, its outlook, mentality, aspirations and ideology are thoroughly bourgeois and the conception of a Black party does not automatically rule out the possibility of this element rising to dominance (due to its money, skill, prestige, etc.)

We do not believe that a Black party really is the preferable variant. Yet the emergence of such a formation cannot be entirely ruled out. Should a sharp rise in militancy develop among Blacks, while the white workers continue to remain relatively conservative, racist and politically passive, Blacks may decide to go it alone. And Marxists cannot ignore or categorically condemn such a party. We should enter it and support every struggle it wages for the rights of Black people, and give critical support to its candidates. But we should do nothing to perpetuate the exclusive national

character of the party. On the contrary, we should work unceasingly for maximum unity with workers of other oppressed minorities, and with anti-racist white workers. In that party we should educate and organize the proletarian elements to struggle against the petty-bourgeois elite. We should fight to convert the petty-bourgeois nationalist party into the vanguard of a UNITED REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY--fighting for the liberation of all oppressed.

Toward the Black and Chicano Struggle

One cannot talk about reaching the movements of Blacks and Chicanos without a systematic and direct intervention into the class--no matter how much one goes about bragging about how nationalist one is, when the YSA leadership turns its back on the struggles of Blacks, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans in a middle-class campus approach which does not reach them, does not speak to their needs. We propose to turn the face of our movement away from groups like NOW and all this concern with legalisms and lawsuits--we should put our top priority on reaching out to and penetrating the movements of Black and Brown workers and oppressed. Special campaign offices, even the headquarters should be in the ghettos and barrios.

We challenge the leadership of the YSA to make the orientation to Blacks, Chicanos and Asian Americans into the top priority of our work. Rebuild the fractions! Organize a national campaign! Turn the face of the YSA in that direction!

V. Feminism and the Women's Liberation Movement

We have demonstrated that the YSA leadership has adopted a non-class and non-materialist approach to the unfolding radicalization in regard to the ideology of nationalism. Unlike the founders of our movement who consistently counterposed the support of national liberation struggles to the petty-bourgeois nationalist ideology, the YSA has adopted the nationalist outlook as its own. Unfortunately, the same is true vis-a-vis the struggle against women's oppression and the ideological outlook of feminism. Instead of leading the struggle for the liberation of women in a revolutionary class way, the YSA leadership has adapted to the bourgeois ideology of feminism.

Marxists have always understood that women constitute a specially oppressed and super-exploited layer of the population and the working class but never before have they taken the approach of adopting the ideology of feminism as their own or something to "love."

Feminism is an outlook which defines the roots of female oppression in terms of the division of society along sex lines--that is, between men and women. It is an ideological world view which sees the division of society into two sexes; and it uses the fact that the entire female sex suffers oppression as a sex as the basis for creating a movement of all classes of women in order to combat this oppression. The feminist perspectives flowing from this is to unite women "as women,"

regardless of their economic position and social class to fight for an end to this oppression.

In contrast, Marxism defines the roots of female oppression in terms of the primary division in society--that is, a division along class lines. A study of Marxist classics such as Engels' Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State, enables one to see that the roots of women's oppression lie in changes of the material conditions of society: i.e., in the realm of production. When the productive forces of society grow to the point where they can no longer rest on the foundations of society (the form of property), a radical change in property relations take place. So we see the transition from non-class society, i.e., primitive communism, to class society, i.e., slavery, feudalism and capitalism. Primitive communism was an equitable classless society based on kinship groups in which everyone worked and everyone shared equally in what was produced, which was barely enough for everyone's minimal subsistence.

As society produced a surplus, however, it was possible for private property, social classes and the state to develop which shaped the role of the family and therefore of women. To insure the accumulation of private property by the ruling class, a monogamous nuclear family was required. As capitalist forms of property developed, the nuclear family was extended to all classes. The family, however, plays a different role among the working class than in the bourgeois class. It is the means to insure and increase the exploitation of the proletariat with women bearing the brunt of this role. Under capitalism, each family is a distinct economic unit responsible for its own survival. Each family must complete with and therefore divide itself from others in its class. This strengthens the position of the capitalist class. Through the family women maintain the present working class and produce the future workers for the bourgeoisie without receiving wages for their labor. When women do work outside the home, as do over one-third of all married women because of economic necessity, they receive less wages than men and serve the role of a reserve army of labor for the capitalists, subject to the fluctuations in production and serving as part time employees in the white-collar and service industries.

The oppression of women is clearly rooted in the very nature of class society. Only through a change in property relations, replacing the private ownership of the means of production with the socialist organization of production and leading to the abolition of classes, can women be liberated. Thus, the fight for the liberation of women must be linked directly with the struggle of the proletariat for its total liberation through a socialist revolution. For the revolutionary party to lead the working class in the liberation of women and men, it is necessary to base its strategy on Marxist ideology; that is, on a class analysis, not on the bourgeois ideology of feminism which equates the bourgeois woman and her maid as "sisters." In the last analysis, "the class analysis," we know the bourgeois

women will defend their own system of private property. Thus, the revolutionary vanguard must oppose the bourgeois ideology of feminism.

"...true emancipation of women is not possible except for communism. You must lay stress on the unbreakable connection between women's human and social position and the private ownership of the means of production. This will draw a strong, ineradicable line against the bourgeois movement for the emancipation of women. This will also give us a basis for examining the Women question as part of the social, working class question and to bind it firmly with the proletarian class struggle and revolution." (Lenin, On the Emancipation of Women, p. 110)

This long standing Marxist analysis of the struggle against women's oppression was held by the American Trotskyist movement and published up to 1969 in the first four editions of Problems of Women's Liberation by Evelyn Reed.

"Thus, class against class must be the guiding line in the struggle for human liberation in general and women's liberation in particular." (p. 43, emphasis in original)

and,

"Historically, the sex struggle was part of the bourgeois feminist movement of the last century. It was a reform movement, conducted within the framework of the capitalist system, and not seeking to abolish it." (p. 43)

and finally,

"The 'women question' can only be resolved through the alignment of working men and women against the ruling men and women. This means that the common interests of workers as a class override the special interests of women as a sex." (Problems of Women's Liberation, Second Edition, 1969, pp. 43-44. Emphasis in original.)

Less than two years later, we are told the truth. In the 1971 Socialist Workers Party draft resolution, Toward A Mass Feminist Movement, made available to all YSA members, we read:

"The truth is that women are at the same time both united by sexist oppression and divided by class society. There is a basis for a unified struggle of women of different nationalities and classes because all women are oppressed as women by capitalism.

"Sisterhood is powerful because of this universal female oppression, and this is the basis for the existence of an independent, non-exclusive mass feminist movement, with an anti-capitalist logic." (SWP resolution, p. 11, Our emphasis.)

It was up to the YSA to determine the correct strategy and tactics for its work in relation to the struggle for women's liberation. Let us examine our intervention in this area over the past few years. Let us see whether we led an independent mass movement with an anti-capitalist "logic" based on a Marxist class analysis, or if we tail-ended a reform movement based on and adapted to feminist bourgeois ideology.

Toward the end of the 1960s, the first women's groups formed primarily among students and other petty-bourgeois layers who had been in various antiwar or radical groups like SDS. In a short time women's groups arose in cities across the nation involving young working women, Black women, housewives as well as students. These women were analyzing their oppression and seeking answers as to the road to their liberation. Many were groping with a Marxist analysis. The YSA began to intervene in campus-based and city-wide groups without any clear political perspective. These small groups of women had been engaged in consciousness-raising on their own for some time and had already begun to formulate the new feminist ideology.

The feminism which began in the last century was a movement to win reforms for women within the framework of the capitalist system--it was not anti-capitalist. The new feminist ideology which characterized the current period was based on the oppression of women as a sex. It noted the pervading sexism of society, an attitude fostered by the ruling class to maintain the notions of female inferiority in order to serve its objective interests. Since the new feminist outlook was based on sex lines, the method of struggle which flowed from this was to construct a multi-class alliance of all women.

It was not so easy to detect that this second wave of feminism was not more revolutionary or anti-capitalist than the first. This stemmed from the fact that the current feminism voiced a rejection of some of the institutions of class society, the family in particular, which had not been a feature of the earlier brand of feminism. The feminists at the beginning of the second wave were in fact just a more radical-sounding brand of the old feminism. Being serious and aware of their sexual oppression, they carried their analysis based on sex rather than class lines, to its extreme logic. Feminist ideology stressed division from men in political struggle. The viewing of men as the main obstacle to liberation is the logical extension of this approach. Women "as women" could win their liberation. Slogans like: "When women say this war will end, this war will end," adopted by the YSA, express this outlook.

At the same time, many women in the process of the search for the roots of their oppression did come to an understanding of the need for a socialist society and identified with the working class. The Trotskyist movement entered this arena not with the traditional analysis and class perspective but by adapting to the alien outlook of the new feminism. While many of the most serious women in this period were won to the ideas of the socialist revolution and joined the YSA, they were miseducated

by our movement. These comrades, as well as wider layers of the women's liberation movement were not given the class methods of struggle for the liberation of women and all humanity because the YSA leadership had lost this perspective in the process of its intervention into this movement.

To explain the contradiction of a bourgeois feminist ideology leading the fight for the emancipation of women in the working class, a new theory was invented--"consistent feminism leads to socialism." The YSA should have maintained the class analysis and method of struggle and brought this into the women's liberation movement to win it away from the bourgeois feminist method. Our task was to raise the level of consciousness of this potential vanguard and thereby enable it to raise the level of consciousness of broader layers of the population. Consistent struggle around the demands raised by the women's liberation groups for Free Abortion on Demand--No Forced Sterilization, Free 24-hour Child Care and Equal Pay and Job Opportunities, waged in the communities and trade unions, would have imparted an anti-capitalist direction to the struggle.

The YSA, however, chose to attempt to lead this growing movement for women's liberation into the abortion repeal campaign which was being directed by the traditional bourgeois feminists in organizations like the National Organization for Women. The theory the YSA leadership developed during our intervention into the women's groups, "consistent feminism leads to socialism," was used to justify our tail-ending of this reformist movement. It was not a class struggle perspective and it had none of the results of one. The Supreme Court had no trouble in giving this democratic right (at least partially) to women. It was a reform won through typical reformist activities such as lobbying. No amount of calls for mass action or for mass lobbying by WONAAC changed this movement into a class struggle one. For class struggle, a class struggle program is needed.

While the YSA, through WONAAC, claimed to be leading the "feminists" in the abortion movement, the women from the women's groups which we abandoned, did not follow us into this reform movement. They stayed in their groups and continued to try and find their way out of the contradiction between their feminist ideology and their desire to win real liberation for women. Some are still grappling with this but most have disintegrated due to a lack of revolutionary leadership and perspective. The YSA could have provided this and used this growing consciousness as a means for developing struggle against the capitalist system. We served rather to dissipate this growing anti-capitalist consciousness. Revolutionaries are not opposed to fighting for democratic reforms but the objective basis existed for revolutionaries to intervene in this movement around the higher demand for Free Abortion on Demand.

The YSA has not yet learned the Marxist lessons. We learned only a tail-endist, classless perspective which we continued to apply in following developments such as the protests against cutbacks in social services and the

meat boycott and protests against high prices. We made no attempt to introduce into these general protests demands of a transitional nature to raise consciousness and lead these movements in actions around them.

To win liberation for women we must reject the feminist ideology and the strategy and tactics which flow from it. The YSA leadership initially began its error by changing the definition of feminism in order to cover up the use of the methods we derived from this ideology. Currently trying to appear as the "orthodox" wing of the world Trotskyist movement, the YSA and IWF have, in the recent period, almost entirely dropped the term "feminism" from their vocabulary while maintaining the same classless strategy.

The YSA must return to the class analysis of the oppression of women, the class perspective for winning the liberation of women, the Leninist perspective for building a revolutionary vanguard capable of directing this struggle through transitional demands leading to the socialist revolution.

VI. Vietnam, the Peace Treaty, and the Antiwar Movement

The work of the YSA in the antiwar movement has been the YSA's largest single campaign in our history. For eight years, we threw our entire membership into the constructing of antiwar coalitions and periodic mass mobilizations around the demand of U.S. Out of Vietnam Now. This was undoubtedly the most important contribution yet made by the YSA to the class struggle internationally. However, since the signing of the Vietnam accords, the YSA has virtually abandoned any work around the question of the Vietnamese revolution and we have pulled out of or dismantled the coalitions and apparatus that we previously built. Was this because the antiwar movement was successful in its goal of ending the war with a complete U.S. withdrawal? No, the NEC document states that there has taken place a "setback" in the Vietnamese revolution with the signing of the peace accords. The explanation given for our pull-out from antiwar activities is that the American masses believe that the war is essentially over and American involvement finished. Thus, if we called for anti-Vietnam war actions demanding an end to U.S. intervention, people wouldn't show up. How could this come about? How could people who had heard a thousand lies from Nixon and Johnson about the war being over yet still come out to march, how could they come to be so misled about Vietnam? We feel that there are real objective reasons for the decline of the antiwar movement and that a balance sheet of our work is necessary.

The YSA's work in defense of the Vietnamese revolution from 1965 until the signing of the accords was characterized by the support of the principled slogan of "immediate withdrawal," the refusal to support capitalist peace candidates, the rejection of petty-bourgeois pacifistic and terroristic tactics, the early orientation to the G.I.s, and the use of referenda on the question of the war. However, the implementation of this basically correct perspective was marred by an almost complete absence of

any concrete and consistent orientation toward mobilizing the working class and by a lack of independent socialist propaganda explaining imperialism and the need for solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution. Even our press, which above all should express the views of American Trotskyism was remiss in this regard. In issue after issue, the framing of the Vietnamese conflict as a class struggle against imperialism, and the need for the socialist revolution to wipe out the puppet regime were not posed. The position of our leadership increasingly became one of making the YSA's public position on the war more and more synonymous with the single-issue approach of the SMC and NPAC. While we should have of course expressed support for NPAC and the SMC, we were also obliged to go much beyond it--explaining the struggle in class terms and calling for the victory of the Vietnamese revolution.

The explanation given for this restriction of our position to that of the single-issue coalitions was that since the antiwar movement was objectively anti-imperialist, it did not need to be explicitly so. We viewed as opponents all those people who urged our movement to raise the issue of imperialism in our speeches and slogans. But was the antiwar movement really anti-imperialist just because it existed and opposed a war during the course of that war? We think not. The real test of objective anti-imperialism, that is the extent to which a movement stands in the way of imperialism, is its class position in relation to the ruling class and its program. In the case of the working class, its objective needs lead it to clash with the capitalists even though it may not be conscious of it. But, in the case of students and the middle classes--the bulk of the ongoing movement--anti-imperialism can only be subjective: that is, resulting from conscious choice in taking sides against the interests of the ruling class. It is scientifically incorrect to speak of any objectively anti-imperialist middle-class movement. By the same logic we could call capitalism anti-capitalist and support it because it creates its own gravedigger in the proletariat!

This approach, in our opinion, of limiting the role of the party to organizational work and supporting the demand of "Out Now," instead of developing the entire Marxist view of the struggle, resulted in the antagonism and loss of possible recruitment and influence among the most militant of the anti-imperialist student youth, foreign students and young Blacks, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans. Although many of these revolutionary-minded youth ultimately adopted sectarian and ultraleft political views, their charges that the YSA was not aggressive in raising consciousness about the character of imperialism and the essential role of the working class, was not without a significant degree of reality. Our lack of propaganda contributed to the general isolation of our movement from the more radical activists, the anti-imperialist milieu, and harmed our recruitment. It prevented us from developing a layer of militants who, although they might not have been won completely to Trotskyism, could have played a role in organizing the antiwar movement and educating wider layers on the true

nature of the Vietnamese revolution.

What occurred was that with the signing of the accords (despite the fact that they solved none of the contradictions in Vietnamese society which gave rise to the liberation struggle) not only the American people but the people who comprised the ranks of the antiwar movement were fooled into giving up the fight against U.S. imperialism in Vietnam. The ranks of the SMC and NPAC had not been trained to view the struggle in Vietnam as revolution versus counterrevolution, as a class struggle demanding the support of American workers to their Vietnamese counterparts. The YSA, and even the candidates and speakers of the SWP, did not do a consistent job of expressing this view. This was a major error of our movement in the work around Vietnam. Another was the virtual abandonment of work among GIs and Vietnam veterans. After an early orientation to GIs which resulted in substantial successes, the YSA phased out GI work and stopped any attempts to achieve consistent contact with and the organization of draftees. After 1969, GI work became sporadic and was given no national perspective. In the same period, although a relatively widespread appearance of Vietnam veterans' groups occurred, our movement never made a national priority of winning these groups to our perspectives for struggle and the Trotskyist view of the conflict in Vietnam.

The negative result of these errors appeared most graphically with the signing of the accords. Virtually the entire antiwar movement became disoriented or demobilized. The Stalinist and ultralefts said the movement was over since "the Vietnamese had won" and the liberals who had abandoned the fight for the 1972 elections, also believed that the U.S. was essentially out of the war. Since they have no great concern for the fate of the Vietnamese revolution, these liberals also departed from the scene. The antiwar movement, despite a few feeble activities, was derailed.

The Peace Accords

An analysis of the basic features of the situation in Vietnam today shows that a movement in solidarity with the revolution remains important and vital. Although the accords have been signed and Saigon controls a section of S. Vietnam, the essential goals of imperialism have not been fulfilled. The revolutionary forces control a large section of S. Vietnam. The masses in these areas remain armed and are in fact operating under a separate government and economy from the Saigon dictatorship. Thus, a type of dual power exists with both sides holding territory and both sides armed. In addition, the workers state of N. Vietnam still exists despite the best efforts of imperialism. The U.S. has been forced to withdraw all but a few of its soldiers and has attempted to build up the Saigon forces to replace their military presence. The record of these attempts at "Vietnamization" has always resulted in disaster. The corrupt and unpopular Thieu regime has never been able to stabilize and strengthen its hold on the masses despite billions of dollars of aid.

This situation does not measure up to a defeat of the Vietnamese. All of the driving forces that have consistently led the Vietnamese people to the road of revolution still exist and in addition they are armed and hold important positions in the South.

Tasks

In our opinion, the tasks for revolutionaries is to contribute to the relationship of forces on a world scale--by supporting the Vietnamese masses: that is by taking the leadership in rebuilding the movement in support of the Vietnamese revolution. Our job would be much easier if we had previously educated a layer of people to understand that when the accords were signed the class struggle didn't stop in Vietnam. The need for international solidarity remains. But now we must attempt to compensate for lost time. The YSA should launch a major campaign explaining the nature of the conflict--a revolutionary civil war and a struggle for socialism against imperialism--and the need for proletarian international solidarity. We must point out that the struggle is not over in S.E. Asia, despite the "settlement." Our movement must not be afraid to raise the slogan of "Support to the Vietnamese Revolution," and "For a Workers and Peasants Government--Down with the Saigon Dictatorship" which help to explain the nature of the conflict. These should be coupled with demands for an end to funding of the Saigon regime and complete military withdrawal. Demonstrations and educational activities should be organized involving those anti-imperialist fighters willing to resume the struggle against imperialism. Those thousands of youth who have developed an anti-capitalist consciousness can be seriously involved in such a campaign. The entire thrust of our campaign must be to rebuild a massive movement in solidarity with the Vietnamese struggle and to relate the working class to this movement. The issue has to be raised in the unions and in the communities of the oppressed minorities. If the YSA does not make such an effort, as required by the objective necessities of the world revolution, we are not doing our duty as internationalists and Trotskyists.

VII. The National Situation in the U.S.

The draft political resolution of the NEC declines to make an assessment of the objective situation in the United States today: that is, to project what we can expect in the coming period. Certain features are noted but no coherent economic or political analysis is given. Despite this, the position that has appeared in the press, statements and previous documents of the YSA leadership is that we are in the "biggest, deepest and broadest radicalization" of the century. We reject this assessment. This estimate is based on the existence of numerous allegedly "mass" and "independent" movements which would continue to grow until the workers added their weight and the revolution would occur. Despite the virtual disappearance of these movements, the YSA leadership maintains that the "radicalization is deepening" even though not in a visible manner.

To Marxists, the importance of a radicalization process is the development of anti-capitalist class consciousness through struggle in real life. For the YSA leadership, the existence of mass working class struggles involving militant forms of initiatives like general strikes and factory occupations and including the physical combat with the bourgeois army and police are but one feature of a radicalization while to us it is the central one. These types of occurrences were features of every previous radicalization. The main characteristic of the American class struggle today is precisely the slowness of the working class to move into action. Until this happens, and the general change in consciousness occurs which accompanies these developments, this will not be the "deepest" or "broadest" radicalization of the century--far from it!

But, if the YSA leadership maintains that we are already in the midsts of the deepest radicalization of the century, it becomes their duty to explain why the YSA has grown so little in the past 3 or 4 years. The Trotskyist movement grew much faster in the '40s. In that "lesser" radicalization the Socialist Workers party had around 2,000 cadres--most of whom were recruited from the unions. Is the reason for our lack of growth mistakes we have made? If so, the leadership has never told us about them. Was the projection for doubling the YSA membership in 1972 unrealistic? But how could such a projection be unrealistic in the "most profound" radicalization since 1900?

The Real Situation in the U.S.

The actual situation facing revolutionaries in the U.S. today is this: we have just witnessed a decline of sectoral struggles based mainly on the petty bourgeoisie. Ahead of us stand the tremendous and important struggles of the working class. The students and intellectuals moved first, but their social position did not allow a consistent or long-term movement--thus we have seen a three-year "lull" of the so-called mass independent movements and a decline of activity on the campuses.

The American bourgeoisie is faced with a relatively new situation. The rise of Japanese and European capitalism since World War II has brought increased competition for world markets and resources. The U.S. is forced to compete with economically advanced countries utilizing high applications of technology and with lower labor costs. The results have been dramatic.

The collapse of the world monetary system, based on the dollar, and two devaluations of the dollar itself, characterize the present situation for U.S. imperialism. It is now involved in a struggle to recoup its losses. To do so, the bourgeoisie has taken the offensive on an international scale as well as at home.

The wage freeze, pay board, wage "guidelines" and phases 1-4 are the tactics of the bourgeois government in its offensive to drive down the standard of living of the working class. Like the bourgeoisie of Europe, the American rulers have utilized the parasitic trade union bu-

reaocracies in "official" government boards to keep wage increases below the rate of inflation. This has resulted in both the stagnation in the real wages of organized workers in the unions and a real decline, continuing since the escalation of the war in Vietnam in 1965, in the buying power of the wages of the unorganized workers, pensioners and other people on fixed incomes. At the same time, inflation has continued to escalate at a record pace, especially raising prices for necessities like food and petroleum as well as imported goods.

The Nixon administration has also recently vetoed the raising of the minimum wage and the 1974-75 budget projects large cutbacks in money for social welfare, education as well as other necessities for working people.

During 1973, many of the key industrial contracts came up for renegotiation. We saw some very militant strikes and struggles: hospital workers, Chrysler wildcats, teachers, firemen, retail clerks, airline employees. In general, however, the bureaucrats have been able to keep the lid on these struggles (under intense government pressure) and the result has been sell-out contracts negotiated without strike action. There have only been a few contracts where the workers forced the bosses to increase wages above the 5.5% guideline imposed by the administration.

In the field of social services, many cutbacks have already taken place. The phasing out of government-financed child-care centers has been temporarily delayed in some areas due to militant protests by parents of children using these centers.

Within the labor movement, in contrast to the general trend of defeats at the bargaining table without a struggle, the United Farmworkers Union remains an exception. Despite being marked by important weaknesses fostered by the Chavez leadership which remains tied to the Democratic Party and pacifist methods of struggle, the struggle of migrant farmworkers for unionization and a living wage has presented an example of militancy to the whole working class.

In an attempt to extricate itself from its current situation of increased competition at the same time that it must make tremendous expenditures to play the role of world cop in stopping national liberation struggles, American imperialism has attempted to build a detente with the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies. The U.S. rulers hope to avoid social upheavals in the colonial countries by asking the Moscow and Peking regimes to utilize their authority in demobilizing the masses. While this policy represents a shift in approach by the bourgeoisie and does contain real dangers in possibly disorienting militants in the colonial world, the detente is not going to be successful in its aims. The underlying crises of world imperialism and the deep dynamic of the class upheavals in Europe, the Mid-East, Asia and Latin America cannot be overcome by deals and agreements. The trend in the world situation has been characterized by the Fourth International as a NEW RISE OF WORLD

REVOLUTION with the emergence of the proletariat on a world scale onto the field of struggle. The detente operates within this context, and is thus limited, although a factor not to be ignored.

The tasks of the revolutionary movement have to be projected within the context of the actual developments in the United States and the world. The large scale attacks on the standard of living and wages of working people is adding to the process of raising the consciousness of the proletariat. The government is openly being revealed as an ally of the bosses. The tremendous betrayal of the union misleadership has set the stage for a growing rift between these bureaucrats and the rank and file. Several rank and file struggles have already broken out. Unemployment, especially among the oppressed minorities, women and young workers, remains at a relatively high level. The cutbacks in funding for education will throw even more people into the unemployment lines as scholarships will be cut back or eliminated altogether.

The proletariat of Europe is showing the way with tremendous strikes revealing new methods of struggle and demands: workers control, factory occupations against layoffs, solidarity strikes with workers in other factories, cities and even countries. The auto strikes at Lordstown and Norwood reflect this higher level of struggle--concern not only with wages but with the productive process itself. The task before us is to begin now to prepare the American working class for the important battles to come.

VIII. The Tasks of the Young Socialist Alliance

The overriding tasks of the YSA is to forward the revolutionary program for the proletarian revolution in the concrete struggles of the proletariat. We do this in order to raise the level of struggle and the consciousness of the workers, and prepare the proletariat for the conquest of power. It is in the process of our participation in the unfolding class battles that we will build our organization, as long as our program is clear and firm.

As a Trotskyist youth organization, our focus is toward the youth. This means first of all a turn toward the young workers. It is on the job, in the army and among the unemployed that we will find the vast majority of young Black, Raza and Asian youth, young women, and militant unionists.

On the campuses, our job is to win over the students to the side of the working class--to integrate student struggles into the working class movement. Our primary focus should be toward those campuses highest in proletarian and minority composition--the junior colleges, technical schools and the high schools.

In the discussion on the perspective for Europe and Latin America, we have heard supporters of the L-T Faction hundreds of times call for a "return to the tradi-

tional approach" of Lenin and Trotsky. The spokespersons for this faction claim that the International Majority "overestimates the importance of students in Latin America," and that the European sections are making "short-cuts" by not relating to the proletariat directly. We have heard cries for a "working class approach" in England, France, Bolivia and Argentina. We are told that the IMT comrades have no program to put forward for a class struggle left wing in the unions.

Unfortunately, orthodox talk is cheap! What is the practice of the major supporters of this faction here in the United States? We have already demonstrated the YSA leadership's attempt to substitute the students for the working class and their false short-cut theory of the "new radicalization" and the alleged "mass movements." Our movement is almost totally absent from the workers struggles and the unions: we are told that we are waiting for a left-wing to emerge bringing "new opportunities" before we will intervene. Apparently, this left-wing will develop without us in a spontaneous manner. The YSA has approached the Black, Chicano and women's liberation movements by adopting the non-Marxist ideological outlooks of nationalism and feminism. The current leadership believes that we are in the deepest radicalization of the century despite the fact that it is growing less visible. All of these are alien to the traditions of Lenin and Trotsky. This is not the approach of the revolutionary movement, the approach taken in the United States in previous periods such as the 1930s and '40s. The reality is that the Internationalist Tendency and the other supporters of the International Majority Tendency in the Fourth International today represent the legacy of Marx, Lenin, Engels, Trotsky and Cannon.

Specific Tasks

In addition to the general approach outlined in the IMT's World Perspectives document and brought out in the document above, the Internationalist Tendency puts forward the following specific tasks:

1. An overall orientation to the young workers, the most militant sectors of the ranks of labor. People now working in useless jobs with no political opportunities should be assigned to work in plants and work places which have large numbers of young Black and Chicano and women workers. Auto plants like Lordstown and Norwood and Chrysler should be consciously colonized. Our cadre should be built in places which have had militant struggles already taking place like Mead and Riches in Atlanta and Polaroid in Cambridge. Comrades should examine job opportunities in city and government jobs--a rapidly growing sector of the class which is undergoing widespread unionization. Work among women workers, in areas like the phone company, should be emphasized.

2. A major campaign of supporting the Farmworkers strike and boycotts is required. In supporting this battle, we should raise our transitional program emphasizing the need for labor solidarity with the strike,

the need for the unions to break with the Democratic and Republican parties and build a labor party, and for self-defense on the picket lines. Work on the campuses should aim toward mass mobilizations in support of the Farmworkers.

3. YSA locals and fractions on the junior colleges and in the high schools must be built. A major effort to penetrate the Eastern and Southern Black colleges is required.

4. We must seek to connect the current struggles in the U.S. with the advanced struggles of the proletariat in Europe. Explain, for example, the Lip struggle and Fiat occupations to the most militant and advanced workers here. We must bring the lessons of the international class struggle to the American workers--tours of European worker comrades throughout the country with public forums, pamphlets, films, etc.

5. Counterpose our program against inflation and high prices to the consumerist approach of the liberals. We must work for a workers offensive against the bosses--for a sliding scale of wages and hours (30 for 40 and escalator clauses)--for the organization of the unorganized--union wages for the unemployed and retired workers--jobs for all--workers control of production--no participation of labor in government pay boards--for international workers solidarity.

6. On the campuses, all our activities should be towards linking the students with the workers struggles. Strike support committees, international solidarity committees and socialist education groups should be formed. Our approach should be to counterpose the Marxist method and approach to questions of philosophy, economics, politics and culture, against the liberal and other bourgeois theories.

7. We must educate on the question of the special oppression of women in class society. Full support to the struggles of women for equal educational and job opportunity, equal pay for equal work and for Free, 24-hour Childcare. We want to pose these as issues for the whole working class, not just women, and we must attempt to involve male as well as female workers in fighting for these demands. In strikes of large numbers of women workers we must link the strike to the oppression and super-exploitation of women and the need for the whole class to fight against it. We should take the question of equal pay, training and job opportunity as well as child care into the unions. We must demand that the bosses pay for child care. The questions of abortions should be linked to the need for free medical care and socialized medicine.

8. YSA members must become the most uncompromising fighters for the demands of Black and Chicano people. This means working and living where they live and work, and participating in their struggles. Our goal is to raise the consciousness of these fighters to a proletarian internationalist one, viewing the struggle as a class conflict, stressing the objective lines between minority

and white workers. In the labor movement and on the campus, we must be the most vocal and active opponents of any form of racism, explaining the need to overthrow capitalism to eliminate the material base for racism and sexism. We cannot do this if we bend to the non-class outlook of nationalism and explain the struggle as purely a democratic one for "community control." We must lead the fight for an opening of the white job trust unions to Black and Raza workers--linking this fight with the demand of Jobs For All. We must oppose the deals of the union bureaucrats and the bosses in the expulsion of undocumented Latino workers.

9. As internationalists, we are duty bound to conduct international campaigns. Besides Vietnam (which is taken up above), we should project:

(a) Solidarity with the ex-Ligue Communiste, which was recently banned by the French government. We must explain the importance of the banning of the ex-Ligue as well as stress the need to fight the fascists and solidarize with the immigrant workers. We can draw the parallel between undocumented and unorganized Raza workers in the U.S. with immigrant workers in Europe. We can explain how the Stalinist and reformist union leadership in Europe does not fight for these workers and against the fascists as our comrades do. We can educate on the rise in the workers struggles in Europe and the revolutionary role of our sections in the Fourth International. For Socialist United States of Europe.

(b) A massive solidarity campaign with the Chilean workers, especially the revolutionaries in the MIR and the Trotskyist of the Fourth International. We can utilize this campaign to explain the betrayal of reformism and class collaborationist politics and the need for a revolutionary party in the context of acute class contradictions existing in Latin America. We must already begin to explain that the situation in Argentina is potentially extremely explosive and mass pressure against a similar coup is necessary. The path we project is the Permanent Revolution--Forward to the Latin American Socialist Revolution: the only escape from imperialist domination. This campaign should especially orient to Latino and Chicano militants here.

(c) The recent war in the Middle-East demonstrates the deep contradictions existing there and the instability of the detente deal to halt social upheavals. After the largest scale war since 1948, fed by major military airlifts from the United States and the Soviet Union, we can expect more such explosions. While the bargaining is still going on, preparations are made for further Israeli aggression. Our task is to support the Palestinian liberation struggles--not by pretending that there exists some "democratic solution" of setting up a "democratic state" or "democratic and secular Palestine" which are not defined in their class nature, but to pose the necessity of the Socialist United Arab East. The slogan of the "Democratic and Secular Palestine" is a petty-bourgeois nationalist betrayal and cannot be supported by our movement. Our Israeli comrades have shown the way--we should feature their work and propaganda in

our press and day-to-day work. Our task is to explain the nature of the struggle--a struggle for national liberation which forms part of the fight for the socialist revolution and against imperialism in the Mid-East. We should try to build solidarity committees which organize mass demonstrations in support of the Palestinian people and against U.S. and Zionist aggression. A special focus of our efforts must be toward Arab workers and students as well as Black and Chicano people. Our slogans should be: Support the Palestinian People, Against Israeli and American Imperialism in the Mid-East, No U.S. Troops or Weapons for Israel, For the United Socialist Middle East, Solidarity With the Arab Socialist Revolution.

One of our most important tasks in regard to each of these three international solidarity campaigns is to expose the role of the Stalinists, Communist Parties and reformist groups in the Mid-East, France and Chile. With the contradictions the current detente will create within the ranks of the Moscow and Peking oriented communist parties, we should use the above campaign to politically approach the ranks of these organizations. Our efforts must be aimed at driving a wedge into these organizations, dividing their most militant and revolutionary followers from their leaderships, and weakening these organizations by winning away their best cadres.

10. The political scandals growing out of Watergate must be utilized in two ways. First of all, we should use the anti-government sentiment to reinforce in the minds of the workers the role of the government in attacking their standard of living (pay boards, wage guidelines, veto of minimum wage, cuts in schools, child care and vocational training.) We should also educate on the extra-legal methods of repression used against the labor movement, revolutionary organizations and the Black, Chicano and anti-war struggles. We can show that

the bosses and their tools in government office are willing to do anything to attack the working class. Our approach should be to counterpose the revolutionary alternatives of a break with the boss parties and the building of a labor party and the need to overturn the capitalist system, to the demands of the labor bureaucrats, liberals and Stalinists who ask merely for the ousting of Nixon and the Republicans. Slogans can be: For Self-Defence Against the Illegal Attacks by the Bosses Government; Break with the Two Parties of Watergate, War, Racism and Strikebreaking; For a Workers Government and Socialism to replace the rotten system of capitalism.

This list includes some of the most important aspects of the work for revolutionary socialists in the coming period in the United States. It must be seen in the context of the worldwide struggle for the construction of the Leninist Vanguard--the Fourth International--to lead the proletariat in the World Socialist Revolution. Our political activities will bring around us the most uncompromising fighters for the proletariat, and it is these people whom we must recruit and transform into cadres. The gathering of these cadres remains our central necessity.

But these cadres need to be armed with our program, our most important weapon. An individual, recruited to the YSA must be taught the history, traditions and methods of the revolutionary class struggle--Marxism. Individuals must be transformed into developed Marxists and revolutionaries capable of leading the proletariat to victory. This will be done not only in classes and discussion but most importantly in the participation in the day-to-day class struggle amongst the most oppressed and exploited layers of the proletariat.

December 17, 1973

NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD THE YSA

By Mike Weisman, Atlanta Local

In the past year or so, there have been a whole new series of struggles and opportunities into which the YSA has intervened and recruited. Nineteen new members, including seven Blacks and thirteen students, have been recruited in the past five months in Atlanta. Our recruitment flowed from the correctness of our political program and the actual work we carried out. In addition, we have also had an aggressive approach to recruitment. Our recruitment was based on the fact that we are viewed as an activist organization with solutions to international, national and local problems. It took a great deal of energy and stemmed from our active intervention into the political life of Atlanta. It was this work that initially put us in touch with the people who later joined. Four areas stand out as the ones through which we met the largest number of people -- campus work, Black work, the '73 election campaign, and the fight to ratify the ERA.

Responding to Local Opportunities

Nearly two years ago, the Atlanta local made the decision to reinitiate campus work in a serious way. At that time, we had no college students and one high school student. We placed all of our energies on the GSU campus which was located a few blocks from the bookstore and in which we had carried out successful work in the past. We carried out a systematic campaign within the YSA to build the strongest possible fraction each school quarter. By this fall we had a fraction of eleven comrades, the strongest fraction ever. A large fraction is especially necessary at GSU because it is a commuter school, and there are only a few hours each day during which consistent work can be carried out. We ran an aggressive campus campaign, became participants in several campus coalitions (i.e. in defense of the Indians at Wounded Knee, against OEO cuts, etc.), had regular sales and ran a seminar series. It was through this work that we recruited six GSU students.

We also took an aggressive approach to work in the Black community. We knew a lot was going on. Atlanta is a majority Black city, and it was clear that, to gain influence in the city, work needed to be carried out in the Black community.

We set out to become participants in various struggles that occurred. Our initial intervention was in the Mead strike during the Fall of 1972. Our suggestions were the initiating force in the projection of support demonstrations for the strike. Building the actions was the most important thing that we did. We intervened in strike meetings and proposed the character of the demonstrations. We got leaflets printed and distributed them all over the city.

During the Rich's strike, the YSA played a similar role.

We helped build picket lines and participated on them. A few support actions were called and the YSA was a major publicizer of them. Our reputation in the strike was such that on one occasion strikers helped us sell 80 Militants and our mayoral candidate, Debby Bustin, was invited to speak at some of the strike meetings.

Most recently, we have played a major role in several coalitions that have formed in response to a series of police killings.

As a result of this work, we are just beginning to gain a reputation in the Black community for being consistent supporters of the struggles of Atlanta's Black people. We were and continue to be audacious about looking for chances to participate in the struggles of the Black community. This audacity has made the YSA a more attractive organization for young Black militants to join. We have recruited seven Black comrades this fall, all of them students. Our experience has confirmed that students remain the most recruitable people in the Black community.

1973 was the first time that candidates of the Socialist Workers Party achieved ballot status in an Atlanta mayoral election. This was the major reason why we gained a phenomenal amount of media coverage. This time was effectively used to offer the socialist alternative. It was also used to build the various struggles that broke out. For example, during the Rich's strike, Debby Bustin publicized the wage demand that was adopted by the strikers, and she advertised upcoming actions in support of the strike. Through our support to the campaign, the YSA was able to come into contact with many people interested in our ideas.

It has been through the women's liberation movement that we have done the most consistent recruiting in the past two years. Georgia did not ratify the suffrage amendment until 1969, and the ERA has not yet been ratified. The fight for the ratification of the ERA has become the central focus for the women's liberation movement in Atlanta. The interest in the ERA is so great that this work exceeds the abortion work that we carried out preceding the Supreme Court decision last January. We are currently involved in Georgians for the ERA which, as was reported in the Dec. 7 Militant, sponsored a conference of 200 and is now building a demonstration for January 12. As a result of the ERA campaign, there are quite a few women interested in our movement. As in the case of Black work, our election campaign has been an effective tool for both building the movement and attracting people to us as a result of our vocal support.

RECRUITMENT

We have found that it is not enough for us to say and do the right things. In order to recruit, the local must be genuinely geared toward it. The YSA must be aggressive about recruitment. We want everyone who finds out about the YSA to also know that, if they agree with our ideas, they should join. And they should join NOW. When we began to recruit in Atlanta, the local became more confident and more aggressive and this, in turn, facilitated further recruitment.

We met most potential members through the work done by our various fractions and committees. The activities of the campaign committee and the women's liberation, GSU and Black work fractions were most often the activities in which potential members were interested. Further, comrades working in these areas knew potential recruits (their questions, etc.) best. Because of these factors, we decided to organize our recruitment work through our fractions and committees.

We projected that each fraction and committee would have regular discussions of the people interested in the YSA. Further, individual comrades were given responsibility for making sure that specific people were kept informed of our upcoming activities, and that other YSA'ers would have discussions with the potential member about their questions and our ideas. This method worked only when the fractions had regular discussions and the exec was on top of them.

We also expended a great deal of energy trying to involve these potential members in our activity -- be it an ERA conference, a campus election campaign or a demonstration against police terror. Involvement in activity is an extremely important aspect of recruiting members to our movement.

While this was and is important, it is not sufficient by itself. Most people who are considering the YSA have a large number of questions ranging from our explanation of the energy crisis to the effect that joining the YSA will have on their personal lives. We must answer these questions in order to recruit to the YSA. These goals were all best achieved through the fraction organization of recruitment.

During the summer, in the midst of our election campaign, we set up a three class series about the YSA. We had found that similar questions were coming up and that there was a great deal of interest in a class on socialism and the YSA. We sent out a mailing suggesting some topics and soliciting ideas about the classes. We then organized an extensive phoning campaign to have discussions with those most interested in the class. We held the class at a comrade's home which provided an informal atmosphere. Each class began with a 15-20 minute presen-

tation which was followed by a very full discussion. In the presentation and in the discussion, we encouraged all present to ask any questions that they might have. We said that once the questions were answered, they should join the YSA. At the second class, four people asked to join the YSA.

We learned three major lessons from the class series. First, we should project recruitment classes with specific people in mind. The YSA can and should sponsor forums and the like on campuses, but recruitment classes are useful vehicles only at specific times (during a campaign when a number of people have been attracted, in the course of building a women's liberation action, etc.). Second, it became apparent that when we projected the classes as classes about the YSA and why people should join, the people who came (and quite a few did) wanted to talk about the YSA and what joining would mean. The classes were thus able to address themselves directly to these questions. Third, in order for the classes to succeed, it was necessary to phone each week and offer rides to those planning to attend. YSA recruitment classes can be a valuable recruitment tool when they are held in conjunction with well organized recruitment work and designed to fill specific needs.

Developing New Comrades

Our goal is to recruit and develop new comrades. Recruiting a new comrade is not the same thing as fully involving them in the YSA. Our approach to recruitment is to make it as easy as possible for people to join the YSA. Anyone who agrees with our ideas and who wants to be in the YSA should be taken in as a member. This means that in some ways recruitment continues after someone joins the YSA.

The development of comrades is a primary task of the exec. In Atlanta, we have tried a number of things with varying degrees of success. What will be done will vary from time to time and from comrade to comrade. However, one thing is certain. The EC must continually think about how comrades are developing.

In Atlanta, we encouraged fraction heads to pay particular note to the work that all the comrades were carrying out. We also took special steps to encourage comrades to sell. One comrade on the YS sales committee was assigned to talk to comrades as they joined about sales and the importance that we place on our press.

We decided that YSA meetings needed to be viewed as political and educational events. Comrades who prepared reports usually prepared them with this in mind. For example, when the campus ERA group was having a discussion on whether to invite men to meetings, the women's liberation director presented a report which fully explained the YSA's approach to the question.

A full educational program is an important component of developing new cadre. There are a large number of possibilities. An "Introducing the YSA" class can be held and educational can be given before or after YSA meetings. The most successful educational series that we carried out in Atlanta was a three class series on State and Revolution and Permanent Revolution. We feel that the exec should take responsibility for planning a full educational program which, when combined with our political activity, helps

develop well-rounded comrades.

We have important new opportunities in the next year to expand our influence and to recruit to the YSA. We should look for and intervene into local struggles and make recruitment an integral part of all our work.

December 17, 1973