

# Discussion Bulletin

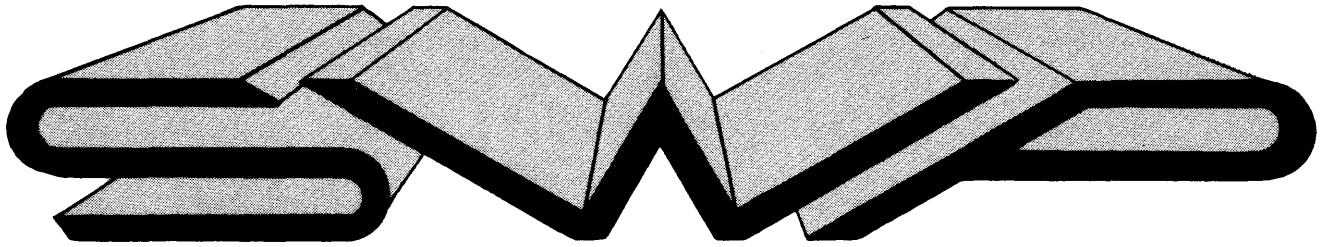
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**SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**  
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October, 1967

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## Some Secondary Aspects of Party Work

By James Griffin

### I. How the SWP Should Memorialize the Detroit Shooting.

The brutal, indescribably shocking and tragic murder of Comrade Leo Bernard, and the near slaying and serious injury of Comrades Walt Graham and Jan Garrett in Detroit on May 16, 1966, must not be forgotten for a moment. This event had, has, and will always have immense significance in the history of our movement and of the struggle for socialism. We must have some memorial markers both for ourselves and to give to present-day movements and future generations of revolutionaries and to the generations that will live after the revolution and will wish to know those who paved the way and fought for their liberation.

I would therefore urge the following procedures as steps in this direction, some to be considered by the Political Committee in planning the convention, some to be considered either by the convention, if time allows, or by the incoming National and/or Political Committees:

(1) A brief address to the convention, possibly by one of the victims, reviewing the personal, legal and political developments prior to and after the assassination and the overall significance of the case.

(2) A statement by the same or another speaker to the convention on the Emergency Medical Fund for Bernard, Garrett and Graham.

(3) A statement to the convention on the histories of the victims themselves, especially of Leo.

(The above could be combined or separate, or just part of the material could be presented.)

(4) The production of a pamphlet on the case including (a) an introduction by a leader of the YSA, (b) short personal histories of the victims, once again stressing Leo's own life and development, (c) excerpts from statements, speeches, articles, etc., of the victims, especially of Leo, (d) possibly speeches or excerpts of speeches from the memorial meetings that have taken place, especially the Detroit memorial meetings, and (e) closing remarks or summation by a party spokesman.

(The pamphlet could also perhaps include a short description of the facts and events of the case itself and of the work and success of the Emergency Medical Fund. Frank Lovell has already written some Militant articles which give a good history and analysis of the case.)

Although, as I understand, the National Office has already considered and rejected the idea of such a pamphlet, I think that the historical importance and weight of this event should be thoroughly and seriously reconsidered. The necessity of showing the degree of dedication and life-and-death seriousness of our movement that is symbolized by the whole case and of exposing the role of the Detroit and other authorities in avoiding their direct responsibility for the murder and maiming is great. It has been, perhaps because the shooting is so painful to think of, neglected somewhat. I seriously believe we need such a pamphlet.

In addition, as time goes on, we should miss no opportunity to mention and bring up the case for reflection and example when appropriate in all of our publications. This would especially be called for on various anniversaries of the attack and in comparison with similar or related incidents that we and others may be struck by. In the future, I am sure that further memorial meetings will be held periodically as another vehicle to tell the story of May 16.

I hope these considerations will be thought through by the comrades and implemented.

## II. Demonstrations, Propaganda and New Left Pessimism.

I would like to state what I believe to be a not drastic or crucial but yet important criticism of an aspect of the tone and format of the Militant and of our tactical view of mass antiwar actions along with the form of our interventions in them over the last year.

Our important and vital involvement in the broad united front antiwar coalitions, concretized in the Spring or now National Mobilization Committee and the Student Mobilization Committee, puts a grave responsibility before us. We make up the bulk of and without question the leadership of the militant left wing of this coalition. As such we must at one and the same time be tolerant, fluid in our attitudes towards tactical and secondary questions, cooperative, but on the other hand we must be staunch and clear upholders of the concept of building a mass movement to force an end to the war.

The latter responsibility demands that we be the chief defenders of the twin slogans "Bring the Troops Home Now" and "Let the Vietnamese People Decide Their Own Destiny." We must guard against all attempts to either openly attack this orientation and knock it aside, or all subtle efforts to erode slowly the foundations of these principled demands.

The liberal elements within the coalition, along with some of the young "New Leftists" who sometimes become sucked along, and all of the labor, civil rights, social-democratic and Stalinist hacks that have been dragged into or have

stumbled into the united front have attempted as always, are attempting and will attempt as the movement develops, to derail it at various junctures into the coalition politics trap.

This effort on their part takes countless forms. The more conscious coalitionists and class-collaborationists try to take advantage of the healthy, searching, but uneducated and superficial concepts of the youth "New Leftists." The young radicals look for a way to power and influence for the antiwar movement and radicalism generally. They, partially correctly, but also incorrectly, look to electoral political action as a possible method. But without a class analysis they are easy prey for the gimmickry of peace politics of various flavors. Their view of the nature and potential of single-focus, united front movements and actions is hazy, and it seems natural to them that political action is the logical next step for the antiwar movement as a movement.

These radical-democrats look back at the mass demonstrations that have taken place and they, lacking a long view and historical knowledge of how mass movements are built (and that indeed they have been and can be built), "feel" something lacking in the power of the demonstrations. They don't sense that they are adequately striking back at the system and are laying the foundations for a broader and stronger movement.

Simultaneously in their minds' eye two goals loom on the horizon -- the search for "political power" in combination with other current "movements" and the desire to "broaden" the base of the antiwar and "peace" forces, even though the specific question of who to approach in society so as to effectively and genuinely broaden the movement often remains unclear in their minds.

Some of these people, although this tendency is not at all as common as it was two years ago, begin to flinch on the question of the withdrawal demand. They head in the direction of something more similar to the old "peace" movement rather than the antiwar movement as presently and potentially developing. Their concepts of how to build mass movements and how genuine independent class political action develops -- how real power for change is built -- are diluted and twisted into the coalition politics road (as the recent New Politics convention demonstrated) by the professional agents of the 57 varieties of coalitionism and collaboration with the "progressive" racists and warmakers.

Thus I would recommend the following rather minimal general changes in action and tone of propaganda, on our part which I believe, along with our general perspective, may help to alleviate somewhat the problems I have outlined:

(1) The tone and temper of both editorials and regular news and reports in our press and statements on leaflets, brochures, campaign literature, etc., should avoid using "peace movement," "peace coalition," and "peace forces" type of verbiage in describing the antiwar movement to the degree that our point of departure in viewpoint from the "peace movement" wing of the general antiwar coalition becomes clouded and a little unclear, as I believe has been the case somewhat. We must not play up the jargon and approach of opponents. We must make things clear to the young militants so that they can learn what a mass movement is, whose slogans and analysis can lead to one, and the class basis of our formulations as opposed to others.

(2) Our statements at, concerning and our intervention in planning, building toward and carrying out concrete mass actions against the war must move somewhat forward from the position of bending over backwards in regard to tactical considerations that have been adopted, and necessarily so, up to but not including the gigantic April 15 mobilization.

How actions are carried through, in what spirit and forcefulness, often takes on an importance, in relation to proving to young student and black radicals the effectiveness and future potential of mass demonstrations and manifestations, that is not and has not been fully appreciated by antiwar organizers and planners. Seemingly minor considerations like the use of sturdy wooden picket sticks instead of flimsy cardboard ones even when a petty city ordinance or ruling prohibits it formally; the use of megaphones by militant chant leaders and adequate sound equipments to carry speeches to the mass even though officials say no; the "taking over," by a simple flowing of thousands of people, of streets, sidewalks, lawns, etc., when needed to accommodate marchers; the passing out of thousands of leaflets to onlookers and passers-by regardless of litter laws that might be thrown at us -- these and other "violations" of petty and irksome "regulations" (many which arise at the last minute and have no real basis in law) can mean the difference between a militant, spirited, rousing and educational action or a drab, damp, tiring, depressing and demoralizing one.

The mere occurrence of mass actions is not enough. The way in which and the force with which they are carried out become both more and more important and more and more possible to improve upon given the ever broader antiwar sentiment that unfolds in the population and the more massive demonstrations that take place. Our propaganda must urge, unfold and symbolize the militancy and the rejection of middle class "peace" conceptions that these mass actions will concretely begin to display.

Half a million people should not be pushed around. They must feel their weight and realize their historical

significance if they are to be expected to take the ball and run with it further to greater heights of mass mobilization and not get caught up in misconceptions and doubts about the possibility of mass movements vis a vis local organizing and mass demonstrations. Young radicals are very impressionistic -- they must be impressed by actions or they will be wary of them.

### III. Attacks on Political GI's -- A New Test by the Rulers?

Although I do not know all of the details concerning the political backgrounds of or even the specific number of socialist (Trotskyist and otherwise), pacifist, and antiwar activist, etc., individuals who have been drafted over the last year or so, one thing which I am sure has occurred to others, has seemed apparent: the capitalist class has made, is making, and is contemplating certain political tests and feelers by the drafting of politicals and the persecution of people in the army who become antiwar and/or radical generally.

The Ft. Hood Three, Lt. Howe, Sgt. Stapp, Capt. Levy, our own Comrade Petrick -- these are only a few in the list of such individuals. There are many more who have been in the news, most of them very briefly and sketchily, and there are undoubtedly many more who have not even reached the news and who are now rotting in stockades and military prisons.

The ruling class, it would seem, has several tentative objectives in mind in relation to these soldiers:

(1) To test the responsiveness of the antiwar movement to defense of antiwar spokesmen and adherents within the armed forces;

(2) To gauge the accuracy of concepts on the part of antiwar activists as to rank-and-file soldiers being potential converts and allies, and to further see to what degree and how the antiwar movement will attempt this;

(3) To intimidate, if they can, new militants and activists and impress them with the pseudo-all-powerfulness of the state;

(4) To intimidate the troops at home and abroad, especially in Vietnam, and do the same to the general population in the U.S.;

(5) To test specific political tendencies as to their relationship to their soldier-members. Along this line, I believe they have us clearly in mind and that they know who the backbone of the antiwar movement is. They know if they can break us or scandalize us with subversion and treason charges, etc., they can do it to other tendencies more easily

still, both within and without the armed forces. The ruling class will break the backbone of the movement if they can. This, especially in relation to Comrade Petrick, is what they are playing with and pondering now.

These are some of the general categories of information-gathering and the possible attacks and directions of repression that the ruling circles have hoped for to roll back sentiment and protest that has gathered for over two years in this country.

Our tasks in relation to these ruling-class projections are, of course, to generally thwart their hopes for inroads against democratic rights and opposition to their imperialist war-drive. We must educate the antiwar movement and people generally as to the desirability, nay, the necessity, and feasibility of defending the rights of GI's to discuss and decide political positions. We must also stress the potential that exists for attracting troops to the antiwar movement and, in the future, to encourage them to organize around their opposition to the war. We must, with others in the antiwar movement, mobilize publicity and defense as widely as possible when cases occur and must show that the hand of the imperialists can be stopped and pushed back, and that they are not omnipotent and not at all unfearful about exposure and mass opposition.

More than this, however, must be kept in mind. Another aim of the capitalists and their agents is kept in their hip pocket as a future option in possible conjunction with other repressions and crackdowns -- the "drafting" of large numbers of or key radicals, antiwar activists, black power militants, etc., and the sending of them to compounds and "special labor camps" either in or out of the country so as to keep them quiet and remove them from action. This is not at all a real possibility now but as the war intensifies and their need for a quiescent population becomes more acute, the rulers will take full advantage of every blow and precedent of reaction that they have been allowed to get away with.

This, in relation to the present attacks on the rights of troops, means that every radical and activist, especially our comrades, that the rulers decide is young enough, inexperienced enough, integrated and "Bolshevized" little enough and perhaps underconfident and unable enough not to be a serious "security" risk to them inside the military, may become a likely prospect for the draft, which has not been the case for some time. If the first batch of these draftees can be victimized, intimidated, demoralized and "deactivizd" the way will be open for further such implementation of this method of political imprisonment. If a chunk here and a chunk there can be chipped off from the radical vanguard and silenced, then not only can more of the same be done to other militants, but possibly blows can be struck at the internal morale of the Trotskyist movement and its ability to



function can be impaired. (If Petrick was supposedly such a new and weak link, then the intelligence sources of the ruling sources certainly got garbled.)

Just as the Minneapolis "Sedition" Trial of our comrades in 1941 was one of the chief precedents for the general war-time crackdown on radicalism and labor militancy generally, so it is in a much different context with Petrick and other soldiers, in and out of our movement, but in the antiwar movement, today. While in 1941 our movement was extremely isolated and vulnerable and unable to direct large forces against the reaction, we are in a position of influence and respect within movements today which is entirely different, and this during another imperialist war drive.

Thus, we are able now to initiate and urge on the building of broad defense efforts to battle against the attempts to lay the groundwork for another period of widespread reaction. This has been done well, as the Bloomington and the Petrick cases clearly show. The brass hats got much more than they bargained for if they thought that Petrick and we were timid sheep who could be shorn easily by military clippers. Their fingers, it would seem, have been well singed and the cry of "Hands Off Howie!" has even the Pentagonorians biting their nails.

But we must be cautious still and alert if a comrade here and another there are snared as time goes on. We must realize that all comrades who may be put in to this situation will not be able to move into the arena like Petrick has so magnificently done. The National Office and the locality from where such comrades may come in the future must keep careful track of them and be sure that their rights and persons are not abused and that regular correspondence takes place. Visits, if possible, should be arranged in camp and on base. Furloughs should be times of encouragement, fortification and warmth, and at no time should contact with and concern for them be made secondary.

I think also that as youth comrades reach the point of political knowledge, dedication, experience, and have personal perspectives which indicate that they are here for the duration of the long haul, they should be recruited to the party without further ado. The government appears to make a fairly careful distinction between membership in the two different organizations. Some party members, still of draft age, have been excluded from the military by their draft boards because they were party members and had been for a period of time.

Then too we must not allow fear of and concern over the draft to become a criterion for recruitment to the party. No one should be rushed in because of that. Many times, though, an unnecessary period passes before young people are

finally considered and recruited to the party and this must be watched.

We would certainly rather not have to fight another Petrick case if we can help it, so we should try to avoid this to the degree possible in our recruiting timeliness.

Detroit, Michigan

September 19, 1967

On the Mideast Conflict

By Gary Collins and  
Leonard Gordon

Many questions have been raised by readers of the Militant concerning its support to the Arab cause in the Mideast. We do not feel that these questions have been effectively answered. Indeed, there are so many contradictory aspects to the Mideast question that we have strong reservations about the position expressed in the Militant. Note that we do not use the term "Arab Revolution," for we do not really know what revolution is being considered. Is it the overthrow of King Farouk by the Egyptian military which resulted in the Nasser regime, the coup by Boumedienne in Algeria (which the P.C. draft political resolution refers to as a set-back to the revolution), the overthrow of Kassem by the Iraqi military -- which has finally resulted in the Aref regime, or the succession of coups and counter-coups in Syria which has resulted in the Baathist regime of Attassi? Surely, the "Arab revolution" does not include the reactionary feudal regimes in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan.

To talk of the rise of Arab nationalism and the development of anti-imperialist attitudes on the part of the Arab masses is one thing and to talk of an Arab revolution as a real political category is another. We should not be misled when Nasser parades his bourgeois nationalist regime under the name of "Arab socialism." Stranger things have happened -- in Ceylon bourgeois nationalism even dressed itself in the garb of Trotskyism. The left nationalist regimes of the Arab world are "progressive" inasmuch as they are part of the revolutionary upheaval against colonialism which began during World War II and which continues to this day. They are nationalist bourgeois regimes which have taken only a half-step in a revolutionary direction and they cannot endure in this no-man's-land between imperialism and socialism. They will either be pushed aside by the masses struggling for real revolutionary goals or by the reactionary direct agents of imperialism, generally within the military. The overthrow of Nkrumah and Sukarno could be a picture of Nasser's future, since Nasser is of the same stripe as these "revolutionary" leaders.

The Militant, in its critical support to the Arab cause, has placed much emphasis on support and very little on criticism. It correctly exposed the "myth of a progressive Israel." It proved that the State of Israel is still capitalist and that the vaunted Kibbutzim are unproductive economically, exist mainly to guard the borders, and provide a left cover for the social-democratic government. However, what was absent was a detailed picture of social relations in Egypt and Syria. How far have the left nationalist regimes gone in a revolutionary direction? When the document of the

Fourth International hails the "revolutionary conquests of Egypt and Syria" (World Outlook, June 30, 1967), it does not point out whether these conquests are of a bourgeois nationalist nature or of a socialist nature. The Militant has not exposed the existence of the unholy alliance between Nasser and the feudal monarchs and reactionary capitalist regimes to carry out their holy war (jihad). The deal with French imperialism for Algerian oil made by Boumedienne, the suppression of left opposition within the "progressive" Arab countries (Ben Bella is in prison if he is still alive), the recent Arab summit conference between all the Arab countries except Syria serve to point up what we as revolutionary socialists can expect from these governments.

According to the New York Times Nasser at this conference made an agreement with King Faisal of Saudi Arabia to withdraw Egyptian troops from Yemen and not to protest the resumption of oil deliveries to the Western imperialists in return for a substantial grant (\$112 million a year), from the oil rich sheikdoms to bolster Egypt's sagging economy. We only mention the negative aspects of these regimes because all the positive aspects have been covered in the Militant. Trying to grasp an understanding of the Mideast conflict by seeing who favors which side is a fruitless exercise which both Peter Buch and Harry Ring indulge in ("Johnson's Mideast Gain," by Harry Ring, Militant, June 19, and "The Myth of a Progressive Israel," by Peter Buch, Militant, July 10). Comrade Ring states, "Radical-minded Americans who align themselves with Israel against the Arabs should ponder the question of why it is that on this issue they find themselves in the same camp as the most reactionary forces in the country." Comrade Buch's remarks are in a similar vein. Using this logic the SWP found itself "in the same camp as the most reactionary forces in the country" in 1956 when it hailed the Hungarian Revolution. We are not trying to prove that the Hungarian Revolution was a counter-revolution any more than we would try to prove that the UAR is reactionary because Franco-Spain gave it support. This is simply not effective propaganda.

We would like to have seen a more balanced and more in-depth treatment of the Arab governments in the Militant. An example of the lack of appreciation of the nature of the "progressive" Arab regimes appeared in an article by Barry Sheppard on "The Role of Anti-Semitism in the Mid-East." He gives the impression that only the reactionary regimes are incapable of leading their people "in a resolute struggle against imperialism and its Zionist agents," and by omission indicates that the left Nationalist regimes can and will! The "progressive" leaders are criticized only for "policies proved to be inadequate or wrong." Do we really expect otherwise?

The above-mentioned article was the only one in which the Militant discussed the reactionary role of anti-Semitism

in the Middle East. We do not believe that this article which criticized the Arab leadership was sufficient or detailed enough considering the importance of the problem.

No attempt has been made by the Arab governments to appeal to the masses in Israel. The only appeal has been to drive them into the sea. The open declaration by the Arabs that they would annihilate the Jews could only serve to unite the remnants of a people who feel that they have already been subjected to such a threat and attempted fulfillment. Whatever class conflicts existed in Israel were laid aside as long as destruction was imminent. To be sure, Dayan, Rabin, Eban and the other neo-biblical heroes made the most of the situation for territorial aggrandizement. But the Militant is obliged to answer one vital question: Would a victory for the Arabs (i.e. liquidation by military means of the State of Israel) have been a victory for the Arab Jewish masses? We agree with the statement of the Israeli Socialist Organization which says (Militant, June 5): "Those nationalist Arab leaders who call for a jihad for the liberation of Palestine ignore the fact that even if Israel would be defeated militarily and cease to exist as a state, the Hebrew nation will still exist. If the problem of the existence of this nation is not solved correctly, a situation of dangerous and prolonged national conflict will be re-created, which will cause endless bloodshed and suffering and will serve as a new pretext for imperialist intervention.

"In addition it should be understood that the Israeli masses will not be liberated from the influence of Zionism and will not struggle against it unless the progressive forces in the Arab world present them with a prospect of coexistence without national oppression."

We feel, therefore, that the slogans, "Hands off the Arab revolution" or "Defend the Arab revolution" are misleading. A more appropriate slogan would be, "U.S. Imperialism -- Hands Off the Middle East!" In our propaganda we would explain that U.S. intervention in the Mideast would be for the purpose of protecting vested American economic interests and reversing the gains made by the bourgeois nationalist revolutions.

Another aspect of the handling of the conflict in the Mideast is the extensive use of morality in condemning Israel. Instead of a rational and detailed analysis of the background of the conflict, an analysis of the development of Zionism, of the development of Arab nationalism, of the facts relating to the development of existing antagonisms which have been a constant factor in the middle East, and the roles of the U.S. and the Soviet Union in their relations with the Middle East countries, the Militant has emphasized moral judgments. An example is the headline in the June 19 Militant, "Thousands of Arab refugees flee in wake of blitzkrieg"; "Use of Napalm inflicts toll in Jordan." Is the type of war fought or the weapons used the key factor to be emphasized

in blaring headlines? Is the question of who attacked who first of importance to us as revolutionary socialists?

If the Egyptians had utilized the "blitzkrieg" and napalm as they have supposedly used poison gas in Yemen would the headlines have then condemned the Egyptians rather than the Israelis? The leading article in the June 19 issue condemned the atrocities committed as a result of the Israeli victory and use of napalm. Should this have been the main emphasis? We are not anti-Zionist because of Israeli atrocities or because Israel was the "agressor." We should be careful about how we use the word "agression," as it rarely says anything meaningful about a military situation. The term is used by both sides in the Mideast as defensive coloration and justification for military adventures.

If China should attack India (i.e. fire the first shot) would we condemn China as an agressor? As far as the agression itself is concerned, the Militant did not discuss the blunders, and provocations by Nasser which led to the Israeli attack, e.g. blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba. In seeking to aid the reader to understand the nature of the conflict the Militant must present the whole truth and deal with all the facts.

As for the criticism of the Soviet Union for not doing enough, the Militant did not spell out what it thought the Soviet Union should have done. As far as their abandoning their demand for an Israeli pull-back before a cease-fire, this was determined by the military facts of the situation. The Arabs were being defeated and there was no way that the Israelis could be forced to pull back other than by direct Soviet military intervention. This, of course, would have meant a direct confrontation with U.S. imperialism. The impression we got from the Militant was that the Soviet Union should have intervened militarily. How else could it have taken a stronger position? If this is not what the Militant meant to imply then it should have made clear what was expected of the Soviet Union. A more correct criticism would have been to take the Kremlin to task for egging on Nasser in the first place and to recount the history of the Soviet Union in the Middle East.

Further, the Militant did not adequately show the relationship between Israel and oil and how Israel serves to protect U.S. oil interests in the Middle East. The Militant did not point out that it is not only the Israeli ruling class that is the enemy of the Arab masses, but their own rulers, who use the enmity toward Israel to divert attention from their own corrupt and backward regimes and to maintain a false multi-class unity on this basis.

Also absent from the pages of the Militant was information about the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, how it was established

by British imperialism, its Arab Legion trained by them and equipped by the United States.

Now we come to the question of how the party and its press takes a position in international disputes. In this case there is the Zionist state allied with U.S. imperialism opposing the Arab states, some of whom are allied with U.S. imperialism and some of whom reflect the pressures from below but basically represent the interests of the nationalist bourgeoisie. We should have analyzed the situation and the contending forces, explained how the situation came about, demand that the U.S. keep its hands off, and express the socialist solution to the problem. In presenting slogans we want to make clear that we defend left-nationalist regimes against imperialist attack, without creating illusions about the nature of those regimes. (If Malaysia had attacked Indonesia under Sukarno would we have raised the slogans: "Long live the Indonesian Revolution! Long live the Revolutionary Conquests of Indonesia!") At the same time we should not throw them into a bag with Faisal and Hussein and label that bag "The Arab Revolution."

Boston, Mass.

September 30, 1967

Some Comments on the Role of Teachers

By Evelyn Sell

The recent teachers' strikes brought to life the section (pgs. 7-8) entitled The Role of Public Workers in the PC Draft Resolution on American Politics. This section of the resolution was necessarily brief and I would like to make some general remarks and practical suggestions in keeping with the line of the resolution.

General Remarks

A tremendous amount of public and private interest has been and will continue to be focussed on American education in all of its ramifications. This is to be expected for two reasons:

1. Statistics alone. There are significant numbers of people directly and indirectly involved in education. Education is now Big Business involving billions of dollars. And size counts in America. The latest educational statistics are for 1966 and they show that the total student population (Kindergarten through university) is 55,900,000; there are 2,045,000 classroom teachers in elementary and secondary schools; the expenditures of educational institutions is \$48.8 billion. In 1965 the proportion of the population between the ages of 5-34 years enrolled in school was -- 59.7 percent! When the school year opened in Sept., 1966, almost as many Americans were enrolled in schools on a full-time basis as there were Americans working at full-time jobs.

2. The role of schools. The educational system is the traditional means used by an exploitative ruling class to maintain the status quo and allow only those changes which help perpetuate its own continued well-being. We are now living through a period of intense social and political struggles for change and against established authorities and powers. Every major crisis in this country, therefore, automatically is reflected in and becomes a part of the educational system. The Cold War crisis: frantic efforts on the part of the government to make lots of scientists real quick, National Defense Act loans, large sums of money pouring into educational research and curriculum development, New Physics, New Math, New etc., an upsurge in profitable production of textbooks, teaching machinery, all classroom materials. The Hot War crises: teach-ins, the student antiwar movement, teacher involvement in the antiwar movement. The Black Struggle: school boycotts, picket lines, demonstrations, Freedom Schools, integrated textbooks, new courses on Afro-American history, Headstart.



The college campuses and the schools have become battlegrounds where students, parents and teachers have challenged the acts and pronouncements of the powers-that-be all the way from a school principal to the state and federal governments. Ignoring the lousy, racist and conservative teachers -- of which there are many! -- what have teachers been able to contribute to the struggles against the war and racism?

Teachers across the country paid for and signed the largest such antiwar ad the New York Times ever carried. Professors organized Teach-Ins. At the last American Federation of Teachers convention, the militant teachers were able to push through a motion that the AFT take no position on the war in Vietnam and that its delegates go to the national AFL-CIO convention and try to get that body to pass a similar motion -- a step forward, at least, from the unconditional support for Johnson's policies proffered by Meany and Co. And there are lots of teachers in classrooms teaching the truth about the situation in Vietnam. There were a helluva lot of teachers marching in New York on April 15.

Teachers organized and staffed the Freedom Schools in the deep South and many were beaten for doing so. When the black students boycotted Northern High in Detroit, a large group of the Northern High teachers supported them and the Detroit Federation of Teachers supported them, too. The Federation of Teachers has held two "Racism in Education" Conferences in order to give educators a better understanding of the problems and demands of Afro-Americans. In their contract negotiations with school boards, some teacher unions have pressed items which would further quality education for black children.

The PC resolution made good points about the role of teachers as unionists and I won't repeat those ideas.

### Practical Suggestions

There are now a number of members who are working as teachers. Other members are considering becoming teachers. I think it would be valuable for us to get together and discuss in more detail the possibilities that do exist for political activity on the part of teachers in general and ourselves in particular. Some of us have had some experiences in a teacher union, in strike activity, in setting up campus Student Teacher groups, etc.

If it is at all practically possible, we should try to have a meeting at the party convention. Perhaps a special panel could be arranged.

A national newsletter could be started to dispense information, help co-ordinate efforts.

Each area could possibly assign one person to be responsible for getting articles into the Militant on teacher and school activities.

The ISR might wish to run an article on the current situation in American education.

If the members who are teachers could get together in a meeting, I'm sure other ideas could be made on projects which would enhance the party's political and educational work. A fuller discussion on education today would be able to cover many important points which are not even mentioned here: the relationship between teachers and the demand for black control of schools in the ghettos, the role of black teachers in the schools and in the union, the New Caucus formed at the AFT convention and what it signifies, schools and slums, the poverty program and its effects on schools, academic freedom fights now going on in schools, etc.

Detroit, Michigan

September 28, 1967